

LLC Syllabus

Frederick Law Olmsted: Landscape Architect, Social Reformer Fall 2022

When? Thursdays, 10:00 am-noon at Temple Beth-El
September 15 – November 17, 2022

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Readings We will read and discuss an excellent biography of Frederick Law Olmsted (FLO); it's a fast and enthralling read.

Martin, Justin, *Genius of Place: The Life of Frederick Law Olmsted*. Boston: DaCapo Press, 2011.

Course Description

We will explore both the wide variety of Olmsted's landscape designs and his years as a social reformer. He is famous for New York's Central Park, but also worked on parks all around the country, and on Niagara Falls, Yosemite, and the 1893 Chicago World's Fair.

He invented the profession of landscape architecture as well as the concepts of parkways and integrated park systems (such as Boston's Emerald Necklace). He led the first campaign in the US to preserve natural scenery, and almost singlehandedly made city parks an essential part of American life.

NOTE: 2022 is the 200th anniversary of FLO's birth, and there are many commemorative events taking place throughout the country.

Format

Each participant will be expected to do the assigned reading each week, and to present on a topic chosen from the syllabus. Each class (from 3rd through 8th) we will spend 15 minutes at the end of class discussing the assigned reading. Field trips and guest speakers will complement our other work.

Course Schedule

Class	Date	Topic and People	Reading	Presenters/Discussion Leaders
1	Sept. 15	<p>Introduction to class</p> <p>Introduction to Olmsted</p> <p>FILM: <i>Frederick Law Olmsted, Designing America</i></p>		<u>Mary Beth Maitoza & Cathy Hurst</u>
	Sept. 15	<p>OPTIONAL FIELD TRIP: 6 pm, Salve Regina University, O'Hare Academic Center, Bazarsky Lecture Hall, 100 Ochre Point Avenue, Newport.</p>		<p>Sara Zewde, principal of Studio Zewde and professor of landscape architecture at Harvard, will lecture on Frederick Law Olmsted's <i>Cotton Kingdom</i>, dispatches from his travels through the antebellum South.</p> <p>https://whatsupnewp.com/2022/03/newport-garden-club-celebrates-the-bi-centennial-of-frederick-law-olmsted/</p>
2	Sept. 22	<p>FIELD TRIP/GUEST SPEAKER CLASS: The class will meet at The John Brown House Museum, 52 Power St., Providence.</p> <p><i>NOTE: Please try to come by 9:45 or so to allow for parking and gathering inside the Museum.</i></p> <p><i>NOTE: While we will end the tour of the grounds at the JNBC at noon, you are welcome to come inside and have a brief tour of this beautifully restored 1791 building.</i></p>		<p><u>Morgan Grefe</u>, Executive Director of the Rhode Island Historical Society, will present on some local Olmsted designs, and the RIHS's plans to rebuild the Museum grounds to resemble the original design more closely.</p> <p><u>Dietrich Neumann</u>, Director of the Center for Public Humanities and Professor in the Department of the History of Art and Architecture at Brown University, along with <u>Ron Potvin</u>, Asst. Director and Curator, will lead a tour of the grounds of the neighboring John Nicholas Brown Center.</p>

3	Sept. 29	1822-1851. 1852-1857. TOPICS: Literary mania, shifting ideas on slavery, Compromise of 1850/Fugitive Slave Act, launch of the <i>New York Times</i> , Germans in Texas	Martin, ch. 1-5 Martin, ch. 6-9	<u>Mary Beth Maitoza</u> <u>Jan Sargent-Tracy</u>
	Oct. 1	OPTIONAL FIELD TRIP: 11 am. Jamaica Pond Bandstand, 507 Jamaicaway, Boston MA		Jamaica Plain Historical Society walk around Jamaica Pond. We will learn about the movers and shakers such as Francis Parkman and James Michael Curley who made their homes on the Pond's shores, and discover how the Pond was transformed by Frederick Law Olmsted—from private estates and warehouses into the parkland we know today. https://www.jpshs.org/2022-walking-tours
4	Oct. 6	1857-1861. TOPICS: City of New York in mid-19 th century, design of Central Park, Hudson River School artists, architect Calvin Vaux, Central Park today	Martin, ch. 10-14	<u>Shirley DiMatteo & Carrollyn Grace</u>
5	Oct. 13	1861-1862. TOPICS: Women's relief associations in US at start of war; Katherine Prescott Wormeley, Newport resident who worked for the USSC; state of medicine in US at the time; the Port Royal Experiment 1862-1863. TOPICS: Abraham Lincoln, Emancipation Proclamation, British authors view America	Martin, ch. 15-16 Martin, ch. 17-18	<u>Doree Goodman</u> <u>Michael Boday</u>

6	Oct. 20	1863-1864. TOPICS: Gold mining in California, John Charles Frémont, infinite variety of plants and trees in Central America	Martin, ch. 19	<u>Trudy & Richard Sharpe</u>
		1864-1865. TOPICS: History of Yosemite exploration, Native Americans in Yosemite and area, Photographer Albert Bierstadt, NYC Mayor George Opdyke, Chinese immigrants' Mountain View Cemetery	Martin, ch. 20-21	<u>Mark Rubinstein</u>
	Oct. 22	OPTIONAL FIELD TRIP: FLO National Historic Site 99 Warren Street Brookline MA Time and date TBD		<i>NOTE: We will travel to Brookline to tour FLO's home/office/garden, aiming for a 10:30 am arrival in Brookline. More details to follow.</i>
7	Oct. 27	1865-1871. TOPICS: Brooklyn's Prospect Park, California parks, croquet mania, Southern Famine Relief Commission, Riverside design as model suburb, Buffalo's park system	Martin, ch. 22-23	<u>Jonathan Shiff</u>
		1871-1877. TOPICS: McLean Asylum, Boss Tweed & Spider Sweeny, Frederic Church, John Claudius Loudon, Capitol grounds, Mount Royal, Alexander Pope ("Genius of the Place")	Martin, ch. 24-25	<u>Betty Havrylik</u>

8	Nov. 3	1877-1884. TOPICS: Back Bay Fens, Arnold Arboretum, Franklin Park, H.H. Richardson	Martin, ch. 26-27	<u>Sheila Brush</u>
		1885-1890. TOPICS: Niagara Falls, Stanford University	Martin, ch. 28	<u>Jill Tobak</u>
9	Nov. 10	1890-1897. TOPICS: Biltmore Estate, Chauncey Beadle, Gifford Pinchot, Richard Morris Hunt, Chicago 1893 World's Fair, Daniel Burnham/John Root GUEST SPEAKER	Martin, ch. 29-31	<u>Gail Donovan</u> – Chicago 1893 World's Fair <u>Benjamin Haavik</u> , Team Leader Property Care, Historic New England; "Landscape Preservation 101: a primer on preserving and restoring historic landscapes." https://www.historicnewengland.org/american-institute-for-conservation-names-ben-haavik-professional-associate/
10	Nov. 17	GUEST SPEAKER WRAP UP AND CELEBRATION/ TOPICS: Review and sharing	Martin, ch. 32 and Epilogue	<u>Jane Carey</u> , Chair of Garden History and Design Committee, Newport Garden Club; Curator, Olmsted in Newport, 2022 Exhibit at Newport Art Museum <u>Class</u>

Choosing and Preparing Your Topic

The course schedule above lists the chapters to be read for each class, and your presentation should use the chapter(s) for that segment of class as a jumping off point. We are not looking for book reports on the reading since you should assume everyone has read the material.

The course schedule contains suggested topics for presentation, or you may choose your own topic(s) that relate(s) to the reading. You may wish to include visuals of places, parks, and people which are discussed in the chapter, explore the greater historical context in which FLO's experience takes place, find videos which illustrate a portion of the content, explore some of the primary research materials referenced in the book's notes, create a class debate on a controversial topic, etc.

Refer to the References/Links section at the end of the syllabus for further ideas for exploration.

Guidelines for Presentations

Your session should be no longer than 40 minutes in length (including at least 15 minutes of class questions/discussion time).

There are many different formats you may use for your session. You are welcome to do a PowerPoint presentation, or to use flip charts or handouts. Or you may wish to point the class ahead of time to an article or video that helps to illustrate your topic, and then manage a discussion of it. You may wish to send some discussion questions out to the class ahead of time. If your topic offers clearly contrasting points of view, you and a classmate may choose to use a debate format in class, or to manage a debate within the class.

Please use relevant research material from a variety of sources—not just a Wikipedia article. Use your own words. And please try not to read your presentation. It's OK to work from notes, but be sufficiently familiar with the material that you can take a breath and make eye contact with the class!

Audiovisual support (whether it's photographs, drawings, maps, musical recordings, video, etc.) will help to tell your story.

Guidelines for Presentations (cont.)

No matter what format you've chosen for your presentation, please have a plan for involving the class, and stimulating discussion, debate, and the sharing of experience. If you want to send material to the class ahead of time, you can send it yourself, or you can send it to us and we will forward it to the class. If you plan to do this, please try to get this information to your classmates as early as possible.

We encourage you to consult LLC's guidelines for session leaders.

<https://www.lifelonglearningcollaborative.org/resource-s-for-class-members-session-leaders/>

Classroom Technology

The TV/computer setup in each room accepts thumb drives and provides Internet access. Individual laptops may NOT be connected to these setups. *Only the class coordinator or a trained designee* should set up the TV/computer at the beginning of class and break it down at the end of class. If you have not been trained, do not set up or change the classroom technology.

The technology is set up to accommodate PowerPoint or PDF files and Google Slides. Apple Keynote slides must be converted to PDFs; PowerPoint slides may be shown either as PowerPoint files or as PDF files. All PowerPoint and PDF files should be saved to a thumb drive. For slide shows made in Google Slides: "Share" the completed show with classroom@llccm.org; you will be able to access this mailbox, download the presentation, and present your slide show to the class.

You can find more detail on the technology in LLC's "Chrome Box Instructions."

Refer to LLC's guidelines for the development of PowerPoint or Google slides here:

<https://www.lifelonglearningcollaborative.org/presentations-in-powerpoint-or-google-slides/>

LLC Policies

Food: Food is NOT allowed in the classrooms. Beverages are allowed but must be covered. If you bring a snack or lunch for between classes, it must NOT include pork, shellfish, or meat mixed with dairy. You may eat in the coffee room; please clean up after yourself!

Parking: Do NOT park in any assigned spaces. Vehicles parked in assigned spaces will be towed at owner's expense.

Cancellations: All information about class cancellations for any reason (including weather) will be communicated to the class by the coordinator through email. Please do NOT call the Temple Office.

Links/References

NOTE: By and large the properties designed through 1895 were designed by Frederick Law Olmsted, Sr., and the properties designed from 1896 on were designed by his sons (Olmsted Brothers). Because one of his sons was named Frederick Law Olmsted, Jr., sometimes properties designed by the sons are incorrectly credited to the father.

Course as a whole:

Frederick Law Olmsted 200th anniversary site

<https://olmsted200.org>

Class 3:

Scholar Sarah Zewde takes a new look at FLO's *Cotton Kingdom*

<https://www.gsd.harvard.edu/2021/01/in-cotton-kingdom-now-sarah-zewde-retraces-frederick-law-olmsteds-route-through-the-southern-states/>

Interview with Sarah Zewde

<https://articulateshow.org/videos/a-natural-collaboration/>

Class 4:

Providence Athenaeum lecture on Olmsted's Central Park by Sarah Cedar Miller, historian emerita of the Central Park Conservancy

<https://providenceathenaeum.org/media-archives/ex-libris-central-park/>

Central Park Conservancy

<https://www.centralparknyc.org>

Class 5:

Library of Congress Research Guide on Katherine Prescott Wormeley

<https://guides.loc.gov/civil-war-soldiers/katharine-wormeley>

1898 *New York Times* article about Katharine Prescott Wormeley and the US Sanitary Commission

<https://timesmachine.nytimes.com/timesmachine/1898/04/16/102071050.pdf>

Class 6:

FLO's 1865 report on the management of Yosemite

https://www.nps.gov/parkhistory/online_books/anps/anps_1b.htm

2022 article on Olmsted and Yosemite

https://www.nps.gov/parkhistory/online_books/anps/anps_1b.htm

Class 7:

Article on Riverside, Illinois—America's first planned suburb

<https://chicagodetours.com/frederick-law-olmsted-riverside/>

Buffalo Olmsted Parks Conservancy

<https://www.bfloparks.org>

Class 8:

2022 article from the *Boston Globe* on Olmsted and the “Emerald Necklace”
<https://www.bostonglobe.com/2022/06/11/arts/200-frederick-law-olmsted-continues-shape-public-space/>

Emerald Necklace Conservancy
<https://www.emeraldnecklace.org>

Class 9:

Olmsted, the 1893 Chicago Worlds’ Fair, and Jackson Park
<https://olmsted200.org/the-devil-in-the-white-city-murder-magic-and-madness-at-the-fair-that-changed-america/>

Class 10:

Newport celebrates FLO centennial
<https://whatsupnewp.com/2022/03/newport-garden-club-celebrates-the-bi-centennial-of-frederick-law-olmsted/>

Selected list of Olmsted’s works
https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_Olmsted_works

FLO 200th anniversary celebration partners (includes many Olmsted designs)
<https://olmsted200.org/celebration-partners/>