

Instructor: **Jolene Mathieson, M.A.**
Title: **Landscape and Liberty**
Course: **Seminar Ib**
Number: **53-542**
Time: **Mondays, 10-12**
Room: **Phil 1250**
Starts: **07.04.2014**

Course description:



Andy Goldsworthy,
Sheepfolds, 1993



René Magritte
La condition humaine, 1933



William Gilpin
Landscape, ca. 1790

Landscapes, it is argued, should not be ‘seen’ as inanimate objects to be viewed or gazed upon, but rather, as dynamic cultural processes by which nations and other social communities define themselves. In his *Landscape and Power* (1994), for example, W.J.T. Mitchell contends that a landscape is “a process by which social and subjective identities are formed” (1). With this governing notion, our seminar will engage with the rich heritage of British landscape aesthetics in the eighteenth century: we will be interested in understanding how representations of nature, land, and our position in the ‘natural’ environment function to construct political and personal values and identities. Working in chronological as well as thematic fashion, we will visit a number of landscapes across the British nation by considering canonical texts from an array of media and genres: essays on aesthetics and philosophy, poems, paintings, gardens, a travel narrative, and even a map. Picking up a copy of Joseph Addison’s daily paper, *The Spectator*, we will begin in the bustling city of London. Here we will be introduced to the notions of pleasure, knowledge, the beautiful and the sublime; other stops on our itinerary include a stroll in a royal park, a picturesque tour through the Lake District, and a deserted village. Contemporary critical views and a virtual tour of Stowe Gardens will supplement our travels.

Texts: All required texts will be available at AGORA. **Credit requirements:** Regular attendance and active participation, short writing assignments, and a research paper.