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Program: Virtual International Tours of Historic & Contemporary Landscapes

The intention of the program is to provide a means of international travel to students through a virtual environment, not actual visitation. The main purpose of the program is to provide a set of “Virtual International Tours of Historic and Contemporary Landscapes” which can enhance students’ critical thinking and problem solving skills with an interactive, detailed and more immersive three-dimensional environment depicting designed natural and built environments. The content will be narrated by an experienced scholar of landscape architecture with an acknowledged expertise with historic and cultural landscapes. The course will employ the means of digital graphic software creating 3D virtual environments for improving students’ learning outcomes by learning the design development patterns of natural and built environments in a diverse range of cultural, philosophical, and religious contexts from the prehistory to the 21st century, and providing a framework comparing landscape architecture styles across cultures and time. In this culture-historical approach to landscape architectural history, students will develop an awareness of the cultural and stylistic differences among design traditions from Europe, Asia, Africa, and America through time. Design of the landscape is considered a direct reflection of human values and preferences of each era and philosophical and religious ideals will be explored through the context of design. An understanding of how cultural identity is expressed and revealed through the arrangement of the built and natural environment will be stressed and these expressions will be utilized as evidence for the transmission of design and technology across cultures. By learning how to appreciate, understand, and respect the natural and built environment of different cultures, students will gain insights into how the world we build has always reflected who we are and gain insight as to the ideals and historic customs of American and non-American countries thereby increasing an atmosphere of multiculturalism.