

# Susan Ask

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## Education

**Ph.D. Student** **University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign.** Landscape Architecture, with a graduate minor in European Union Studies. Expected 2025.

Mixed-methods studies of nature-based strategies for climate action, focused on identifying opportunities, conflicts and future scenarios in the United States and the European Union.

**M.E.S.** **Yale University.** Ecosystem Science and Management. 1999.

*Nature and Second Nature: an ecosystem perspective on American efforts toward green architecture in the 20<sup>th</sup> century.*

**B.A.** **University of Kansas.** Environmental Studies. 1991.

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## University Teaching Experience

**Teaching Assistant.** LA 250: Environmental Site Analysis. University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign. Fall 2024.

In this lecture and lab course, I teach students to gather, analyze and use publicly available data to characterize environmental site conditions quantitatively and qualitatively. Data includes ecological, hydrologic, geologic, demographic and cultural information, from government agencies, community science and private sources.

**Instructor.** LA/NRES/UBPL 446: Sustainable Planning Seminar. University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign. Urbana, Illinois. Spring 2023 and Spring 2024.

I taught this interdisciplinary seminar for upper-level undergraduate and graduate students. The course includes discussion of readings and case studies, as well as analysis of climate footprints. I led discussions, prepared materials, managed communication with students, graded all papers and projects, updated the readings and revised the syllabus. My work was recognized on the university's list of Teachers Ranked as Excellent by their Students both times I taught the course.

**Teaching Assistant.** LA 101/590: Introduction to Landscape Architecture. University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign. Urbana, Illinois. Fall 2023.

In this survey course for undergraduate and graduate students (LA101/501), I graded weekly quizzes and interacted with students, responding to questions about the course and logistics.

**Guest Lecturer at University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign.**

LA 437: Regional Design Studio with Brian Deal. Spring 2023 & Spring 2024.

“Climate change, landscape design and the carbon cycle”

LA 589: Sustainable Urban Design Theory with Pollyanna Rhee. Fall 2023.

“Ecosystem services”

SCAN 225: Vikings to Volvos with Theo Malekin. Spring 2023.

“Sustainability and Environmental issues in Scandinavia in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century”

**Adjunct Faculty.** North Park University. Chicago, Illinois. March 2010 – 2018.

I taught ‘Natural History of Illinois’— a science course with lecture, field and lab components— offered in person and online. This was an undergraduate course with enrollment of up to fifteen students. I designed a new syllabus and created an online version of the course.

**Guest Lecturer.** DePaul University, Urban Agriculture Unit. Chicago, Illinois. August 2018.  
“Community Gardens: growing food and relationships in the city”

**Guest Lecturer.** Northwestern University. Chicago, Illinois. July 2014.  
“Sustainable Communities and Gardens”

**Guest Lecturer.** University of Chicago. Chicago, Illinois. October 2013.  
“Climate Change and Sustainable Development”

**Guest Lecturer and Tour Leader.** Truman College. Chicago, Illinois. September 2012.  
“Urban Agriculture and Community Gardens”

**Guest Lecturer.** Illinois Institute of Technology, IPRO 310. Chicago, IL. November 2008.  
“Environmental Ombudsman: a story of campus sustainability”

**Invited Studio Reviewer at University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign.**

LA 336: Design Workshop Studio with Stephen Sears. Spring 2024 final review.

LA 336: Design Workshop Studio with Beth Scott. Spring 2024 final review.

LA 234: Site Design Studio with Ana Valderrama. Spring 2023 & Spring 2024 mid-term and final reviews.

LA 336: Design Workshop Studio with David Hays. Spring 2023 mid-term and final reviews.

LA 336: Design Workshop Studio with Conor O’Shea. Spring 2023 final review.

LA 537: Regional Landscape Planning and Design Studio with Brian Deal. Fall 2021 & Fall 2023 final review.

## Research Experience

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**Doctoral Research Assistant.** Landuse Evolution and Impact Assessment Model Lab (LEAM Lab), University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign. November 2020 – present.

Studying ecosystem services, carbon sequestration, greenhouse gas emissions and future scenarios, focusing on Illinois and Sweden. Facilitating the development of a statewide natural and working lands plan.

**Doctoral Research Assistant.** Sustainable Energy Design Assistance Center (SEDAC), University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign. November 2020 – August 2024.

Facilitated the development and implementation of a climate plan and strategies for the Illinois Department of Natural Resources, assisted with green jobs programs, supported grant-writing efforts and community engagement projects.

**Research Assistant.** Illinois Natural History Survey, Chicago & Champaign-Urbana, Illinois. May – August 2020.  
Digitized and coded herbarium records as part of a project to make historical records more accessible.

**Research Assistant.** Illinois Natural History Survey, Chicago & Champaign-Urbana, Illinois. March – December 2006.

Conducted a survey of existing ecological monitoring programs in the Chicago Wilderness region and recommended priorities for future monitoring effort and strategies for modifying field methodologies to enable better analysis of aggregated data.

**Research Technician.** Washington Natural Heritage Program, Olympia, Washington. April – August 1999.

Analyzed and categorized soil types for an ecological classification system on the Olympic Peninsula.

**Zoology Project Leader.** Colorado State University, Fort Collins, Colorado. June – October 1998.

Led field research into the effects of ski resort development on small mammal populations in the Vail Valley.

- Zoology Crew Leader.** Colorado Natural Heritage Program, Fort Collins, Colorado. June – October 1997.  
Conducted field research to determine the range of *Zapus hudsonius prebleii*, a candidate for endangered species listing.
- Preserve Stewardship Assistant.** The Nature Conservancy of Texas, Silsbee, Texas. February – June 1997.  
Conducted stewardship and monitoring activities including prescribed burns, snake population studies and insect sampling.
- Field and Laboratory Technician.** Yale University, New Haven, Connecticut. January 1995 – January 1996.  
Conducted field research and laboratory analysis of forest ecology, including nutrient cycling and biomass measures.
- Herbarium Assistant.** Kansas Biological Survey, University of Kansas, Lawrence, Kansas. May – November 1990.  
Processed herbarium specimens and created a map of pre-settlement vegetation in Kansas.

## Professional Experience

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- Executive Director and Founder.** Animalia Project. Chicago, Illinois. February 2011 – present.  
I founded this non-profit organization to provide training and engagement programs on climate change and urban sustainability.
- Climate Change Specialist.** Chicago Botanic Garden. Chicago, Illinois. June 2014 – August 2015.  
As Co-Principal Investigator for US Environmental Protection Agency-funded program, I created tools and trainings to help conservation organizations collaborate with community organizations on climate change initiatives.
- Extension Specialist.** University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign. March 2007 – September 2014.  
***Watershed Specialist.** Illinois-Indiana Sea Grant. University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign. Chicago, Illinois. February 2011 – September 2014.*  
As Co-Principal Investigator for a US Environmental Protection Agency-funded program, I coordinated multiple partners in four states to jumpstart watershed-friendly landscaping practices among professionals, municipalities and homeowners.
- Extension Educator.** University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign. Cook County, Illinois. August 2009 – January 2011.*  
I created educational programming on gardening, climate change and sustainability for residents and professionals.
- Environmental Liaison to City of Chicago.** University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign. Chicago, Illinois. March 2007 – August 2009.*  
I developed innovative partnerships in environmental science, expanding the reach of Extension into the Chicago region and developing new collaborations with governmental agencies and non-profit organizations.
- Conservation Biologist.** Wisconsin Natural Heritage Inventory. Madison, Wisconsin. November 2004 – August 2005.  
I served as the statewide liaison to landowners for wetlands monitoring and managed a geographic database of research sites.
- Conservation Coordinator.** Mount Agamenticus Steering Committee. York, Maine. April 2000 – December 2003.  
As the first-ever Conservation Coordinator, I led the participation of 7 partner organizations to develop and manage a stewardship program for Mount Agamenticus on 5,000 acres of cooperatively managed land in Maine.

**Sustainability Consultant.** United Nations Development Programme, New York, New York. January – October 1996.  
I developed sustainability programs to reduce the environmental footprint of the New York and international offices.

**Sustainability Program Manager.** University of Kansas, Lawrence, Kansas. August 1990 – August 1994.  
As co-creator of one of the first campus sustainability programs in the nation, I collaborated with multiple departments to develop and implement policies and programs to achieve a more sustainable campus.

## Academic Publications

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Zeng, Y., Deal, B., Ask, S., & Huang, T. (2024). The Landscape of Tranquility in Sweden: Lessons for Urban Design from Crowdsourced Data and Deep Learning. *Land*, 13(4). <https://doi.org/10.3390/land13040501>

Hatchett, L., Ask, S., Pollard, N., & Brown, L. (2014). Cook County Green Corps African American Trainee Experience in a Green Job Training Program. *Journal of Sustainability Education*.

Hamburg, S. P., & Ask, S. I. (1992). The Environmental Ombudsman at the University of Kansas. *New Directions for Higher Education*, 77, 55–63.

## Academic Conference Presentations

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**Symposium Presenter.** Climate Change and the Infrastructure of Research Symposium. Center for Advanced Study, University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign. April 22, 2024.  
“Prairie University: evaluating support for native plants on campus” with Lily Dawn.

**Conference Presenter.** Council of Educators in Landscape Architecture Annual Conference. St. Louis, MO. March 22, 2024.  
“Landscape-scale action to meet global climate goals: guidance for decision-makers through the Illinois Ecosystem Services Planning Support System” with Brian Deal, Tianchen Huang and Tom Heavisides.

**Conference Presenter.** American Society for Environmental History Annual Conference. Denver, CO. April 5, 2024.  
“Landscape design and ecosystem services in 20<sup>th</sup> century Chicago: extraction or speculation?”

**Workshop presenter.** Resources for Ecology Education – Fair and Share (REEFS Workshop) at the Ecological Society of America Annual Meeting, Portland Oregon. August 8, 2023.  
“Field journaling for a non-traditional classroom: independent student field observations and reflections on nature.”

**Panelist.** Environment Panel at Illinois EU Studies Conference: Sustainable Europe, European Union Center, University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign. Urbana, Illinois. April 21, 2022.  
“The European Green Deal: Discourses of nature conservation as an investment and a responsibility.”

## Invited Presentations (Recent)

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### Erlanger Lecture

“Ways of looking at a landscape: views of climate change and climate action.” Invited lecturer for the semi-annual Erlanger Evening lecture for the combined PhD program in Architecture and Landscape Architecture, University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, Urbana, Illinois. October 5, 2023.

## Academic Fellowships and Awards (Recent)

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**Teacher Ranked as Excellent by their Students.** University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign. Spring 2023 and Spring 2024.

This designation is based on student evaluations and is the university's most widely recognized measure of excellence in teaching. I received this recognition for courses where I was the principal instructor.

**Ecological Society of America REEFS Award.** Resources for Ecology Education – Fair and Share. Summer 2023.

I received this financial award for sharing my teaching resource in a teaching workshop conducted as part of the Ecological Society of America's annual conference.

**Anna Jensen Memorial Scandinavian Award.** Department of Germanic Languages and Literatures, University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign. Summer 2022.

I received a travel grant to support my study of Swedish language and landscapes.

**Foreign Language and Area Studies Fellowship.** European Union Center, University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign. Summer 2022.

I studied Swedish language and culture in an intensive 9-week program at the Uppsala International Summer Session, in Uppsala, Sweden. Funding was provided by the US Department of Education.

**Foreign Language and Area Studies Fellowship.** European Union Center, University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign. Academic Year 2021 – 2022.

I received this award from the US Department of Education to study Swedish, a less commonly taught language, for two semesters at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign.

**Image of Research Semi-finalist.** Graduate College, University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign. 2021.

My photograph and essay were selected as a semi-finalist in this university-wide photo competition, in the graduate student division.

**Bellafore Doctoral Fellowship.** Department of Landscape Architecture, University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign. 2020 – 2021.

I was awarded this departmental fellowship for my first year of doctoral studies.

## Grants (Selected)

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**Co-Principal Investigator.** US EPA Environmental Education Grant. 2014-2016.

*Connecting Climate and Communities Initiative.* \$138,000.

**Co-Principal Investigator.** US EPA Great Lakes Restoration Initiative Grant. 2009-2013.

*Lawn to Lake Program.* \$670,000.

## Service to University and Profession (Recent)

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**Committee of the Department.** Department Landscape Architecture, University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign. 8/24 – present.

I was selected by faculty members to serve as the PhD student representative to the Committee, participating in fortnightly faculty meetings. I am helping engage students in the department's strategic planning process.

**Peer Reviewer for Sustainable Cities and Society.** August 2023 – present.

I provide peer review for journal articles on ecosystem services, urban ecology and nature-based strategies.

**Undergraduate Research Symposium Judge.** Office of Undergraduate Research, University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign. Spring 2024.

I served as a judge for undergraduate student research symposium, judging poster presentations in the Food, Plants and Animals section.

**Events Committee.** Department of Landscape Architecture, University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign. 2023-2024.

I participated in planning visits from scholars and practitioners in landscape architecture.

**Erlanger Evening Co-planner.** PhD Program in Architecture and Landscape Architecture, University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign. Spring 2023.

I co-organized the Spring 2023 Erlanger Evening, with presentations by PhD students and socializing among students and faculty.

**Student Advisory Committee.** Department of Landscape Architecture, University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign. 2021-2022.

I served as a doctoral student representative on a committee advising the Department Head and participated in the External Academic Program Review of the department.

## Language Skills

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English: Fluent

Swedish: Intermediate / B2

French: Intermediate / B2

Norwegian: Beginner (Heritage) / A2

## Professional Associations

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American Association for the Advancement of Science (AAAS)

American Society for Environmental History (ASEH)

American Society of Landscape Architects (ASLA)

Ecological Society of America (ESA)

Society for the Advancement of Scandinavian Study (SASS)