

## **ABSTRACT**

*It is important to educate students that landscapes need to be beautiful as well as useful. These are attributes that should be considered integrally and holistically in the design of contemporary urban landscapes. Contemporary landscape architecture is appropriately concerned with the degradation of our urban environments, yet within the current economic climate the discipline is often relegated to a discussion of functional ecosystem services. But the true value of landscape architecture extends beyond performance criteria in the engagement of the unique conditions and specificity of a place. Unless urban landscape design projects are seen and experienced as cultural amenities, they won't be valued, loved, or taken care of by the citizens they are meant to serve. For landscapes in the city to last through inevitable change, they must adapt and evolve to meet the needs of their local community, ensuring ongoing involvement and appreciation. In addition to providing larger scale environmental value, they must integrally engage people in their everyday experiences. The collaborative Gutter to Gulf research/design studio exemplifies this approach of mobilizing technical performance to create engaging experiences. Student work in New Orleans over the past six years illustrates resilient landscape strategies that operate at multiple scales and demonstrate the holistic integration of aesthetics and function. Landscape projects function simultaneously at the scales of regional ecology, urban morphology and individual experience.*