

Research on the Innovative Path and Ideological and Political Empowerment of Song Dynasty Aesthetics in Environmental Space Design Curriculum

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Abstract: The aesthetic ideals of elegance, spatial logic of artistic conception, and practical concepts contained in the aesthetics of the Song Dynasty provide profound cultural resources and teaching basis for environmental space design courses. This article proposes an innovative path for integrating Song Dynasty aesthetics into environmental space design courses from four dimensions: updating teaching concepts, constructing hierarchical modules, analyzing typical cases, and designing open-ended propositions; At the same time, with the cultivation of cultural confidence through the spirit of literati, the cultivation of harmonious values through spatial narrative, and the strengthening of design attitudes through the spirit of craftsmanship as the core, a three in one ideological and political empowerment strategy of "aesthetics ethics responsibility" is constructed. This framework not only enhances students' aesthetic judgment and design transformation ability, but also achieves the organic unity of professional training and value guidance, providing practical theoretical reference for the integration of aesthetic education and moral education in design majors.

Keywords: Song Dynasty Aesthetics; Environmental Space Design Course; Innovation Path; Empowering Ideological and Political Education

1. Introduction

In recent years, with the continuous improvement of cultural confidence and the deepening of curriculum ideological and political construction, how to effectively integrate excellent traditional Chinese culture into university design courses has become an important issue in teaching reform. As a peak in the development history of Chinese aesthetics, the Song Dynasty's aesthetic ideals of elegance

and simplicity, spatial concepts based on artistic conception, and functional ideas of using things are highly compatible with the humanistic, experiential, and ethical pursuits pursued by the environmental space design profession^[1]. However, when introducing traditional aesthetics into the current environmental space design curriculum, it mostly stays at the superficial borrowing of formal symbols, lacking a systematic transformation of spiritual core and design logic, and has not yet formed an effective path for organic integration with ideological and political education. Therefore, this article focuses on the topic of "Innovative Path and Ideological and Political Empowerment of Song Dynasty Aesthetics in Environmental Space Design Curriculum", aiming to construct a curriculum reform framework that combines cultural depth and educational effectiveness from four levels: teaching philosophy, content organization, method strategy, and evaluation mechanism, in order to provide theoretical reference for the integration of aesthetic education and moral education in design majors.

2. The Core Characteristics of Aesthetics in the Song Dynasty and Its Inner Connection with Contemporary Environmental Design

2.1 The Aesthetic Ideals and Ecological Wisdom of the Song Dynasty's Emphasis on Elegance and Simplicity in Aesthetics

The aesthetics of the Song Dynasty took "elegance" as its character and "simplicity" as its realm, opposing formalities and emphasizing the beauty of nature and subtlety. This aesthetic ideal inherently contains profound ecological wisdom: respecting the natural color of materials, conforming to environmental mechanisms, and pursuing the harmonious unity of artificial and natural elements. In environmental space design, Song Shiya's Yiguan can be transformed into respect for the original conditions of the site, advocacy for low intervention design strategies,

and the creation of spatial whitespace and a sense of breathing^[2]. It reminds designers that a high-quality living environment does not stem from the accumulation of elements, but rather from the presentation of a clear and distant meaning behind the object through restraint and selection.

2.2 Song Dynasty Aesthetics Emphasizes the Creation of Artistic Conception and Spatial Narrative Logic

The aesthetics of the Song Dynasty placed "artistic conception" at the core of artistic creation and evaluation, advocating that space is not only a physical container, but also a carrier of emotions and meanings. Through techniques such as density and coherence, the interplay of reality and illusion, and the variation of scenery, Song Dynasty gardens and paintings exhibit strong spatial narrative abilities - the viewer's gaze and body are guided to interpret space in time^[3]. Introducing this logic into contemporary environmental design courses means cultivating students to shift from "doing forms" to "telling stories": how the sequence of space triggers emotional changes, how the warmth and coldness of materials convey cultural memories, and how the brightness and darkness of light shape the spirit of a place.

2.3 The Use of Aesthetic Objects and Concepts in the Song Dynasty as a Supplement to Modern Functionalism

The aesthetics of the Song Dynasty, while pursuing spiritual realm, did not detach from daily life and practical rationality. The important principles of "using objects for practical purposes" and "using tools to convey messages" emphasize that objects and space should serve the real needs of people and generate beauty on the basis of their practical use^[4]. This concept may seem similar to modern functionalism, but in fact it has fundamental differences: functionalism tends to move towards efficiency oriented instrumental rationality, while the Song Dynasty's use of materialism always integrated the taste, etiquette, and cultivation of "people" into it. In environmental design, this concept can effectively compensate for the spatial indifference and lack of humanity caused by a purely functional orientation. If design courses can guide students to understand that "use" is not only about physical size and flow efficiency, but also includes behavioral habits, psychological

feelings, and cultural symbols, it can achieve the unity of functional training and humanistic influence in professional teaching.

3. Innovative Path of Integrating Song Dynasty Aesthetics into Environmental Space Design Curriculum

3.1 Updating the Teaching Philosophy from Formal Imitation to Artistic Conception Translation

The introduction of traditional aesthetics in current environmental space design courses often remains at the level of direct replication and collage of Song Dynasty architectural components, decorative patterns, or furniture forms. Although this form of imitation is easy to operate, it is difficult to touch the spiritual core of Song Dynasty aesthetics and is prone to being appropriated on a symbolic surface. The true integration should realize the updating of teaching philosophy from "imitation" to "translation": the so-called translation refers to guiding students to deeply understand the internal logic of Song Dynasty aesthetics about blank space and sparsity, artistic conception and narrative, material use and carrying, and abstracting it into operable spatial organization principles and design methods^[5]. For example, instead of directly copying the style of Song style doors and windows, a strategy for contemporary spatial interface design is transformed through analysis of the relationship between transparency, hierarchy, and landscape borrowing. This concept update requires teachers to first complete cognitive transformation, shifting the focus of teaching from "teaching style" to "teaching logic", and from "looking at form" to "understanding meaning", so that students can create spatial works with contemporary language and Song Dynasty charm while respecting traditional spirit.

3.2 Building Hierarchical Modules: Aesthetic Perception, Spatial Analysis, and Design Transformation

The integration of aesthetics teaching in the Song Dynasty should not be done in one step, but should follow cognitive laws to construct progressive modules. The first module is "aesthetic perception". Through the systematic appreciation of multiple types of works such as paintings, calligraphy, gardens, and artifacts in the Song Dynasty, supplemented by immersive

images and virtual reality experience, it helps students to establish the overall impression and perceptual cognition of the aesthetic style of the Song Dynasty, and form an intuitive judgment of "what is Song rhyme". The second module is "spatial analysis", which selects typical topics such as the spatial organization logic in "Zao Fa Shi", the far-reaching and peaceful composition of landscape paintings in the Song Dynasty, and the path and line of sight control in literati gardens, and guides students to use modern spatial analysis tools (such as axonometric drawing, horizon analysis, sequence diagrams) to carry out rational disassembly, and transform vague aesthetic feelings into clear graphic language. The third module is "design transformation". Based on the previous two modules, specific design exercises are set up. Students are required to apply the spatial logic of the Song Dynasty obtained from analysis to the small environmental space scheme, complete the complete closed-loop from cognition to expression, from analysis to creation, and ensure that the aesthetics of the Song Dynasty really enters the students' design thinking system.

3.3 Introducing Typical Cases of Song Dynasty Aesthetics as Spatial Prototype Analysis Method

Case teaching is the core element of curriculum design, and introducing typical aesthetic cases from the Song Dynasty is not simply about displaying pictures, but rather using them as "spatial prototypes" for methodological refinement. Specifically, students can choose typical objects such as the street market space in the Qingming Riverside Scene, the landscape dwelling mode in the Thousand Miles of Mountains and Rivers Scene, the spatial structure of Suzhou Song Dynasty garden ruins, and the architecture and scenes in Song Dynasty tomb murals to guide students to abstract transferable spatial prototypes from them. For example, the gathering and dispersing relationships in the Hongqiao area, the rhythm of water facing buildings, and the transition between streets and courtyards in the Qingming Riverside Scene can all serve as prototypes for contemporary commercial districts or cultural settlements design. In teaching, students should be guided to complete the analysis chain of "prototype recognition logic extraction contemporary translation scheme generation", so that Song painting and Song garden are no

longer distant images, but become spatial grammar that can be interpreted. This method not only respects the richness of historical materials, but also avoids the lazy thinking of simply copying, which helps cultivate students' abstract thinking and creative transformation ability.

3.4 Establishing Open Design Proposition: Contemporary Spatial Reconstruction of Song Dynasty Life Scenes

The hierarchical module and prototype analysis method ultimately need to be grounded in real design practices, and an open-ended proposition of "Contemporary Space Reconstruction of Song Dynasty Life Scenes" should be established to effectively integrate the aforementioned teaching content. This proposition requires students to conduct in-depth research on the daily behavior and spatial usage of a certain social class in the Song Dynasty (such as literati, common people, and literati), and select contemporary real venues (such as community activity centers, bookstores, tea spaces, and shared office areas) to complete a complete design plan from functional positioning to spatial organization. The "openness" of the proposition is reflected in three aspects: firstly, the object is open, and students can independently choose the type and content of the Song Dynasty life scene; Secondly, the venue is open, which can be combined with specific plots or virtual settings of the city where it is located; The third is strategic openness, encouraging students to boldly experiment with contemporary materials, structures, and construction methods while respecting the aesthetic spirit of the Song Dynasty. Through this proposition, students not only completed the overall absorption and comprehensive application of Song Dynasty aesthetics, but also established the historical dimension and transformation ability of design thinking in the dialogue between ancient and modern times, making the course learning have a clear sense of direction and achievement orientation.

4. Curriculum Ideological and Political Empowerment Strategies Based on Song Dynasty Aesthetics

4.1 Cultivate Students' Cultural Confidence and Professional Ethics with the Spirit of Song Dynasty Literati

The core of the spirit of literati in the Song

Dynasty lies in the truth-seeking attitude of "investigating things to gain knowledge", the social concern of "benefiting the world", and the personality cultivation of "being self-sufficient", which together constitute the spiritual background of intellectuals in traditional Chinese culture. Introducing this spiritual resource into ideological and political education in environmental space design courses can effectively cultivate students' cultural confidence and professional ethics. Cultural confidence is not a slogan like identification, but rather a deep learning of the aesthetic, gardening, and utensil concepts of Song Dynasty literati, which enables students to truly feel the height and depth of traditional Chinese design wisdom, and thus establish a sense of subjectivity that does not blindly follow Western paradigms. Professional ethics is reflected in that design should not only serve commercial demands, but also carry humanistic care and social responsibility. The literati of the Song Dynasty emphasized the concept of "although created by humans, as if opened by heaven" in garden design, and pursued the design of objects that are "beneficial to users". These ideas can be transformed into the professional creed of contemporary designers - respecting users, respecting the site, and respecting nature, and guarding the ethical bottom line in every design decision.

4.2 Cultivating Harmonious Coexistence of Human Settlement Values through Spatial Narrative Teaching

Space narrative teaching is not only a training of design methods, but also has profound ideological and political education functions. The creation of artistic conception in the aesthetics of the Song Dynasty is essentially a value transmission - the sequential organization of space, visual control, and arrangement of movement and stillness, behind which lies the understanding and expression of the relationships between humans and nature, humans and others, and humans and themselves. By guiding students to organize their space through narrative logic, they can continuously ask in the process of deducing the plan: Does this space respect the user's behavioral habits and emotional needs? Has it responded to the ecological conditions and cultural memory of the venue? Has the possibility of promoting interpersonal communication and community cohesion been created? These issues point to the

human settlement values of "harmonious coexistence". When students design topics such as community centers, elderly care spaces, and public green spaces, the ideal state of "feasible, desirable, touristic, and livable" in Song Dynasty gardens becomes a reference. In this process, ideological and political education no longer relies on external indoctrination, but rather on the intrinsic value orientation and design consciousness of students in professional training.

4.3 Exploring the Spirit of Craftsmen in the Song Dynasty and Strengthening the Design Attitude of Striving for Excellence

The Song Dynasty is known as a peak in the history of Chinese arts and crafts, reflecting the ultimate pursuit of precision, standardization, and detail quality in architectural construction, the official kiln system in porcelain firing, and the mortise and tenon craftsmanship in furniture production. This craftsmanship spirit is rooted in the ideological soil of the Song Dynasty's Neo Confucianism of "investigating objects", emphasizing the importance of understanding principles through repeated scrutiny of specific objects. Exploring this spiritual resource in environmental space design courses can help strengthen students' design attitude and professional ethics of striving for excellence. Specifically, students can be guided to learn the work style of Song Dynasty craftsmen in the deepening stage of the plan, which follows the basic design specifications and drawing standards, while constantly polishing the construction nodes, material handover, light and shadow details, and other aspects. Teachers can use teaching activities such as multiple rounds of modification, peer evaluation, and model validation to help students understand that good design is not a random flash of inspiration, but a gradual approximation through persistent deliberation. Once this attitude is internalized, it will benefit students throughout their entire career.

4.4 Building a Three in One Evaluation System for Ideological and Political Education: Aesthetics, Ethics, and Responsibility

The effective implementation of ideological and political education in courses requires corresponding evaluation mechanisms to ensure, and the construction of a three in one evaluation

system of "aesthetics ethics responsibility" for ideological and political education can enable the ideological and political goals empowered by aesthetics in the Song Dynasty to move from conceptual to operational and verifiable levels. The "aesthetic" dimension evaluates whether students truly understand and can apply the core principles of Song Dynasty aesthetics (such as elegance, blank space, artistic conception, and material use), rather than just imitating styles; The "ethical" dimension evaluates whether students have reflected respect for users, venues, and cultural traditions in their design plans, and whether they have responded to humanity and goodwill beyond functionality and form; The dimension of "responsibility" evaluates whether students have the awareness to consider design within a larger society and ecosystem, and whether they actively think about the long-term impact and public value of design behavior. Specific scoring indicators and assessment methods can be designed for each of the three dimensions, such as ethical statements in the design description, responsibility reflection in the plan report, and value analysis in the peer evaluation process, so that ideological and political education is no longer an empty slogan, but an inherent component of professional evaluation.

5. Conclusion

In summary, the aesthetics of the Song Dynasty provided profound ideological resources and methodological basis for environmental space design courses, based on its aesthetic ideals of elegance and simplicity, the spatial logic of artistic conception, and the functional concept of using things in practice. Through the updating of teaching concepts from formal imitation to artistic conception translation, the systematic construction of hierarchical modules and prototype analysis methods, and the open proposition of contemporary reconstruction of Song Dynasty life scenes, Song Dynasty

aesthetics has been effectively integrated into the professional teaching system. On this basis, cultivating cultural confidence with the spirit of literati, cultivating harmonious values with spatial narrative, strengthening design attitudes with the spirit of craftsmanship, and constructing a three in one evaluation mechanism of "aesthetics ethics responsibility" have achieved the organic unity of ideological and political empowerment and professional training. This path not only enhances students' aesthetic judgment and design transformation ability, but also responds to the dual demands of cultural consciousness and ethical care in contemporary human settlement environment design at the value level, and has important teaching reform significance and promotion value.

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