



# History of American Landscapes and Architecture

## COURSE GUIDE

HIS/IAR 624

Fall 2007

Prof. L. Tolbert

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Hours: by appointment

### Course Objectives

A landscape “happens not by chance but by contrivance, by premeditation, by design.” –John Stilgoe, *Common Landscape of America*

This course is designed as an advanced reading seminar in the history of American landscapes and architecture. The course will introduce you to a variety of methods developed by architectural and cultural historians to interpret buildings and landscapes as cultural artifacts with historically specific meanings that must be understood in particular context over time. An important objective of the course is to go beyond classroom reading and discussion to application of specific scholars' arguments and methodologies through analysis of particular buildings and landscapes.

By the end of the semester you should be able to do the following:

- Identify and evaluate major periods in the development of the American landscape from the colonial era through the mid-twentieth century.
- Demonstrate an understanding of the ways that buildings and landscapes document cultural and social change over time.

- Define particular architectural styles, use specialized architectural vocabulary/terminology, and explain the differences between vernacular and academic building traditions.
- Compare and contrast the methodologies developed by a variety of scholars to interpret landscape and architecture as historical evidence.
- Use different interpretive approaches to evaluate a particular landscape or building in historical context.

## Evaluation

Participation	10%
Essay Tests	60%
Methodology Analyses	30%

All written assignments should be typed, with appropriate citations in Turabian style [<http://library.uncg.edu/depts/ref/handouts/turabian.html>]. You will submit your written assignments electronically to my email address on the appropriate due date. Late assignments will be penalized. Communication is essential ....you should make arrangements in advance if you are unable to meet a course deadline.

### **Participation (10%)**

This assessment will be based on three criteria:

1. Consistent attendance—this is a seminar, not a traditional lecture course. We will be critically evaluating the content of the readings and practicing the application of analytical skills during each class period. You will not be able to make up for your absences by copying someone else's notes. Consistent attendance is essential to your learning in this course. Therefore, beyond the part attendance plays in the overall participation grade, **there will be a 3% reduction of your final grade for each absence after the first 1.** Beyond even this penalty, a student who seriously neglects attendance and preparation risks failing the course.
2. Thorough preparation for class—readings must be completed before class and assignments must be turned in on time.
3. Regular contributions to class discussions—the success of this course for your learning depends on active intellectual engagement with your peers.

### **Essay Tests (60%)**

You will complete two take-home midterms consisting of a choice of essay questions. The questions will be distributed 1-2 weeks in advance of due dates. All midterms

should be typed and double-spaced, 7-10 pages long, with appropriate citations in Turabian style [<http://library.uncg.edu/depts/ref/handouts/turabian.htm>]. You will submit your essays electronically to my email address: [lctolber@uncg.edu](mailto:lctolber@uncg.edu) on the due dates identified below.

Due dates:

23 October midterm

4 December final

**Methodology Analyses (30%)**

You will complete three assignments that require you to evaluate the methodology used by specific scholars in the assigned reading. I have selected scholars whose work exemplifies the methodological problems associated with architectures produced in different historical contexts. Use the form posted on Blackboard to complete your analyses.

Due dates:

18 September Nora Pat Small, *Beauty and Convenience*:  
[agricultural vernacular in the early republic]

9 October Kingston Heath, *The Patina of Place*  
[turn-of-the-century urban industrial]

13 November Carolyn Loeb, *Entrepreneurial Vernacular*  
[20<sup>th</sup> century suburban landscape]

**Course Readings**

**Books** (Available at the UNCG bookstore)

Eggenger, Keith L., ed. *American Architectural History: A Contemporary Reader*. New York: Routledge, 2004.

Gelernter, Mark. *A History of American Architecture: Buildings in Their Cultural and Technological Context*. Hanover: University Press of New England, 1999.

Heath, Kingston Wm. *The Patina of Place: The Cultural Weathering of a New England Industrial Landscape*. Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 2001.

Isenberg, Allison. *Downtown America: A History of the Place and the People Who Made It*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2004.

Loeb, Carolyn. *Entrepreneurial Vernacular: Developers' Subdivisions in the 1920s*. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2001.

Small, Nora Pat. *Beauty and Convenience: Architecture and Order in the New Republic*. Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 2003.

**Book Chapters/Journal Articles** (Available on electronic reserve or online as noted.)

Adams, Annmarie, "The Eichler Home: Intention and Experience in Postwar Suburbia," *Perspectives in Vernacular Architecture, Vol. 5, Gender, Class, and Shelter*. (1995), pp. 164-178.

Archer, John. "Ideology and Aspiration: Individualism, the Middle Class, and the Genesis of the Anglo-American Suburb." *Journal of Urban History* 14:2 (1988): 214-253. [Use Journal Finder]

Bishir, Catherine W. "Jacob Holt: An American Builder," *Common Places*, pp. 447-481. [ereserves]

Brucken, Carolyn. "In the Public Eye: Women and the American Luxury Hotel." *Winterthur Portfolio* 31 (1996): 203-220. [Use Journal Finder]

Carter, Thomas. "Taking Measure: The Need for Standards in Vernacular Architecture Field Documentation," *Vernacular Architecture Newsletter*, No. 109 (Fall 2006): 1-6.

Cohen, Lizabeth. *A Consumer's Republic: The Politics of Mass Consumption in Postwar America*. New York: Knopf, 2003. [selected chapters, ereserves]

Hofstra, Warren. "A Scholarship of Fieldwork?" *Vernacular Architecture Newsletter*, No. 108 (Summer 2006): 1-4.

Hubka, Thomas C. "Nomenclature and the Classification of American (Vernacular) Housing," *Vernacular Architecture Newsletter*, No. 111, (Spring 2007): 1-8. [ereserves]

Marsh, Margaret. "From Separation to Togetherness: The Social Construction of Domestic Space in American Suburbs, 1840-1915." *Journal of American History* 76:2 (September 1989): 506-527. [Use Journal Finder]

McLennan, Marshall S. "Response to Warren Hofstra, 'A Scholarship of Fieldwork?'" *Vernacular Architecture Newsletter*, No. 109 (Fall 2006): 6-7.

Shaw, Diane. "Vernacular Urbanism and the Mercantile Network of New Cities," and "Gentrifying the Sorted City: Social Sorting in the Commercial District," in *City Building on the Eastern Frontier: Sorting the New Nineteenth-Century City*. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2004.

Southern, Michael. "The I-House as a Carrier of Style in Three Counties of the Northeastern Piedmont." In *Carolina Dwelling: Towards Preservation of Place: In Celebration of the North Carolina Vernacular Landscape*. Edited by Doug Swaim. North Carolina State University, 1978. [ereserves]

Vlach, John Michael. "The Shotgun House: An African Architectural Legacy," *Common Places*, pp. 58-78. [ereserves]

Wells, Camille, "The Planter's Prospect: Houses and Rural Landscapes in 18<sup>th</sup> c. Virginia," *Winterthur Portfolio* 28 Spring 1993: 1993 28(1): 1-31. [Use Journal Finder]

## Course Schedule

**21 August**                      Introductions

**28 August**                      **Colonial Worlds: Early America Influences**

Gelernter:

1. First civilizations 12,000 BC-AD 1500
2. Cultures transformed and transplanted 1500-1650
3. Colonial culture 1650-1763

*American Architectural History* Reader:

2. "Modifying factors" in Native American architecture / Nabokov and Easton
3. Church design and construction in Spanish New Mexico / Marc Treib

**4 September**                      **Workshop on Form and Style: Learning to Look at Architecture**

*American Architectural History* Reader, Introduction / Keith L. Eggener –

Southern, Michael. "The I-House as a Carrier of Style in Three Counties of the Northeastern Piedmont." In *Carolina Dwelling: Towards Preservation of Place: In Celebration of the North Carolina Vernacular Landscape*. Edited by Doug Swaim. North Carolina State University, 1978. [ereserves]

Vlach, John Michael. "The Shotgun House: An African Architectural Legacy," pp. 58-78. [ereserves]

Hofstra, Warren. "A Scholarship of Fieldwork?" *Vernacular Architecture Newsletter*, No. 108 (Summer 2006): 1-4.

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Carter, Thomas. "Taking Measure: The Need for Standards in Vernacular Architecture Field Documentation," *Vernacular Architecture Newsletter*, No. 109 (Fall 2006): 1-6.

Hubka, Thomas C. "Nomenclature and the Classification of American (Vernacular) Housing," *Vernacular Architecture Newsletter*, No. 111, (Spring 2007): 1-8.

**11 September      Architecture and Region: Southern Enlightenment**

Gelernter 4. The age of revolution 1763-1820

*American Architectural History* Reader: 4. Space : parish churches, courthouses, and dwellings in colonial Virginia / Dell Upton

Wells, Camille, "The Planter's Prospect: Houses and Rural Landscapes in 18<sup>th</sup> c. Virginia," *Winterthur Portfolio* 28 Spring 1993: 1993 28(1): 1-31

**18 September      Architecture and Region: New England Enlightenment**

Small, Nora Pat. *Beauty and Convenience: Architecture and Order in the New Republic*. Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 2003. [methodology analysis due]

**25 September      Form, Style, and National Identity**

Gelernter, 5. Culture realigned 1820-65

*American Architectural History* Reader:

1. National design : mercantile cities and the grid / John R. Stilgoe –

7. The Greek revival : Americanness, politics and economics / W.

Barksdale Maynard –

Shaw, Diane. "Vernacular Urbanism and the Mercantile Network of New Cities," and "Gentrifying the Sorted City: Social Sorting in the Commercial District," in *City Building on the Eastern Frontier: Sorting the New Nineteenth-Century City*. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2004.

**Architects and Builders in the Market Economy**

*American Architectural History* Reader 6. The first professional : Benjamin Henry Latrobe / Mary N. Woods

Bishir, Catherine W. "Jacob Holt: An American Builder," pp. 447-481.

**2 October            Nineteenth-Century Domestic Ideals**

*American Architectural History* Reader:

5. The plantation landscape / John Michael Vlach –

8. Independence and the rural cottage / Gwendolyn Wright –

Archer, John. "Ideology and Aspiration: Individualism, the Middle Class, and the Genesis of the Anglo-American Suburb." *Journal of Urban History* 14:2 (1988): 214-253. [use journal finder]

**Defining Public and Private Space: Gendered Approaches to the Study of Landscape**

*American Architectural History* Reader:

9. First impressions : front halls and hall furnishings in Victorian America / Kenneth L. Ames –

11. Creating New York's nineteenth-century retail district / Mona Domosh –

Brucken, Carolyn. "In the Public Eye: Women and the American Luxury Hotel." *Winterthur Portfolio* 31 (1996): 203-220. [use journal finder]

### **9 October Housing Workers in an Industrial Economy**

Gelernter, 6. Enterprise and turmoil 1865-85

Heath, Kingston Wm. *The Patina of Place: The Cultural Weathering of a New England Industrial Landscape*. Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 2001 [methodology analysis due]

**16 October Fall Break**

**23 October [No Class] midterm due**

### **30 October Redesigning Urban Space**

Gelernter 7. The age of diversity 1885-1915

*American Architectural History* Reader:

10. "A city under one roof," Chicago skyscrapers, 1880-1895 / Daniel Bluestone

12. Architecture and the reinterpretation of the past in the American renaissance / Richard Guy Wilson

Marsh, Margaret. "From Separation to Togetherness: The Social Construction of Domestic Space in American Suburbs, 1840-1915." *Journal of American History* 76:2 (September 1989): 506-527. [Use journal finder]

### **6 November Modernism and National Identity**

Gelernter, 8. Between the World Wars 1915-45

*American Architectural History* Reader:

14. The prairie house / James F. O'Gorman

15. Wright, influence, and the world at large / Anthony Alofsin

16. The search for modernity : America, the international style, and the Bauhaus / Margaret Kentgens-Craig

**13 November                    Suburban Contexts and the Role of the Developer**

Loeb, Carolyn. *Entrepreneurial Vernacular: Developers' Subdivisions in the 1920s*. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2001. [methodology analysis due]

**20 November                    Main Street**

Isenberg, Allison. *Downtown America: A History of the Place and the People Who Made It*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2004.

**27 November                    Modernism and Consumer Society**

Gelernter, 9: Modern Culture, 1945-1973

*American Architectural History* Reader:

17. People who live in glass houses : Edith Farnsworth, Ludwig Mies van der Rohe, and Philip Johnson / Alice T. Friedman

18. Mirror images : technology, consumption, and the representation of gender in American architecture since World War II / Joan Ockman

Cohen chapters Cohen, Lizabeth. *A Consumer's Republic: The Politics of Mass Consumption in Postwar America*. New York: Knopf, 2003. [ereserves]

Adams, Annmarie, "The Eichler Home: Intention and Experience in Postwar Suburbia," *Perspectives in Vernacular Architecture, Vol. 5, Gender, Class, and Shelter*. (1995), pp. 164-178.

**4 December                    Final due. Summations and Evaluations.**