History of American Landscapes and Architecture

COURSE GUIDE

HIS/IAR 624            Fall 2009
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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 know and be able to do the following:

• Identify and explain the most important influences on the design of domestic and commercial landscapes from the colonial era through the mid-twentieth century.

• Explain how individual buildings and larger sites or landscape systems document cultural and social change over time using specific architectural examples.

• Define the distinguishing characteristics of particular architectural styles and building types and use specialized architectural vocabulary/terminology accurately.
• Explain the differences between vernacular and academic building traditions and the approaches scholars have used to study them.
• 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
Architectural Analysis Presentation and Bibliography  25%
Unit Case Studies      75%

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.

Participation
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. For this reason, 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.

Architectural Analysis Presentation and Bibliography (25%)
Ppt presentation to the class and annotated research bibliography focusing the history and analysis of a particular style or form of American architecture. The purpose of this assignment is to create a shared resource for your peers that can be used as a quick reference to your selected style.
• Identify famous or representative examples
• Evaluate vernacular examples that show the influence of your style but are not necessarily pure academic representations of the style.
• Identify local representative examples
• Explain distinguishing features of style/form
• Brief history of the style including date range and major cultural influences
• Annotated Bibliography of at least 12 useful references (scholarly books and journal articles; may also include relevant primary sources) for understanding the history of the style/form—Post to Bb.
Case Study Building/Landscape Analyses (75%; 25 % each)
The goal of each case study is to go beyond basic reading knowledge of the materials we
discuss to begin to USE the knowledge you are acquiring in a "real world" case study. In each
case you will evaluate evidence from a particular building or landscape by applying appropriate
arguments from assigned readings to put the designated site in historical context. The case
studies may also introduce you to different types of primary sources (HABS drawings and
Sanborn insurance maps, for example) that are useful for doing architectural history. Above all,
you will practice really looking at and analyzing the historical evidence that is documented in
particular buildings or landscapes. Case studies are not intended as research papers; therefore,
you are not required to consult references beyond the assigned reading or additional resources
identified in the assignment. You will find the McAlester field guide to be a useful reference for
identifying appropriate architectural vocabulary for specific features of your selected case study,
but be sure to focus your analysis on arguments presented by scholars in appropriate assigned
readings.

Each paper should do the following:
• Use specific and appropriate visual evidence from the selected site to develop
  your analysis. It may be necessary to take photographs of specific building or
  landscape features for your analysis.
• Use specific arguments from appropriate assigned scholars to interpret and
  evaluate your selected landscape in an appropriate historical context. Be sure to
  evaluate divergent interpretations among the scholars.
• Use appropriate architectural vocabulary to describe key features of your case
  study as part of your analysis.

All unit essays should be typed and double-spaced, 7-10 pages long, with appropriate citations
in Turabian style [http://library.uncg.edu/depts/ref/handouts/turabian.html]. You will submit your
essays electronically to my email address: lctolber@uncg.edu.

Criteria for evaluation of unit essays:
For each essay, I will evaluate how effectively you accomplish the following:
• Analysis of specific architectural and spatial evidence documented by the selected case
  study.
• Creative application of historical and methodological content of assigned readings.
• Application and understanding of appropriate authors' arguments. [Note: You are not
  required to mention every author assigned in a particular unit, but you should certainly
  address the content of more than one or two authors in the unit.]
• Use of appropriate architectural terminology.
• Polish and presentation of prose, and accuracy of citations.

Case Study 1: Due by 9:00 a.m. on Monday 5 October. Style and Form in Early America:
Choose ONE of the following sites and use appropriate assigned reading to evaluate the
architecture and landscape design in historical context:
Drayton Hall (18th century)
• http://memory.loc.gov/cgi-bin/ampage?collId=hph%20photo&fileName=sc/sc0100/sc0132/photos/browse.db&action
  =browse&recNum=0&title2=Drayton%20Hall,%20Ashley%20River%20Road%20(State%20Route%2061),%20Charleston%20vicinity,%20Charleston%20County,%20SC&
displayType=1&itemLink=D?hh:4::{temp/~ammem_uJah::}
The Hermitage: (19th century)
- [http://memory.loc.gov/cgi-bin/ampage?collId=hhphoto&fileName=tn/tn0000/tn0022/photos/browse.db&action=browse&recNum=0&title2=The%20Hermitage,%20U.S.%20Highway%2070%20North%204580%20Rachel%27s%20Lane,%20Nashville%20vicinity,%20Davidson%20County,%20TN&displayType=1&itemLink=D?hh:22:/temp/~ammem_vdaf::](http://memory.loc.gov/cgi-bin/ampage?collId=hhphoto&fileName=tn/tn0000/tn0022/photos/browse.db&action=browse&recNum=0&title2=The%20Hermitage,%20U.S.%20Highway%2070%20North%204580%20Rachel%27s%20Lane,%20Nashville%20vicinity,%20Davidson%20County,%20TN&displayType=1&itemLink=D?hh:22:/temp/~ammem_vdaf::)

Dunleith (19th century):
- [http://memory.loc.gov/cgi-bin/ampage?collId=hhsheet&fileName=nc/nc0000/nc0039/sheet/browse.db&action=browse&recNum=0&title2=Dunleith,%20677%20Chestnut%20Street,%20Greensboro,%20Guilford%20County,%20NC&displayType=1&maxCols=2&itemLink=D?hh:1:/temp/~ammem_sNL0::](http://memory.loc.gov/cgi-bin/ampage?collId=hhsheet&fileName=nc/nc0000/nc0039/sheet/browse.db&action=browse&recNum=0&title2=Dunleith,%20677%20Chestnut%20Street,%20Greensboro,%20Guilford%20County,%20NC&displayType=1&maxCols=2&itemLink=D?hh:1:/temp/~ammem_sNL0::)

Blandwood (19th century) [http://www.blandwood.org/blandwood.html](http://www.blandwood.org/blandwood.html)

**Case Study 2:** Due by 9:00 a.m. on Monday November 2) Suburban Landscape: Compare and contrast suburban design of suburbs created in two distinct time periods: Local examples include College Hill, Westerwood, Aycock, Fisher Park, Sunset Hills, Lindley Park, and Starmount. For information about the history of local neighborhoods see
- Marvin A. Brown, *Greensboro: An Architectural Record*
- Gayle Hicks Fripp, *Images of America. Greensboro, Volume II: Neighborhoods*
- Sanborn Maps available through Jackson Library databases.

**Case Study 3:** Due by 9:00 a.m. on Monday 7 December) Commercial Landscape: compare and contrast downtown Elm St. commercial district and Lawndale Shopping Center
- Marvin A. Brown, *Greensboro: An Architectural Record*
- Gayle Hicks Fripp, *Images of America. Greensboro, Volume II: Neighborhoods*
- Sanborn Maps available through Jackson Library databases.

**Course Readings**

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


Recommended Textbooks:


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


## Course Schedule

### 26 August

**Introductions**

### Unit 1: Early American Houses: Contesting American Ideals

#### 2 September

**The Georgian Revolution**


**Recommended Reading:** Gelernter, Chapters 2 and 3

#### 9 September

**Southern Contexts**

**Required Reading:**

*American Architectural History* Reader:


16 September  **Rebuilding America in the New Republic**


*Recommended Reading:* Gelernter 4. The age of revolution 1763-1820

23 September  **Style and Form: Changing Tastes in the Nineteenth Century**

*Required Reading:*

American Architectural History Reader:

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

8. Independence and the rural cottage / Gwendolyn Wright –


*Recommended Reading:*

Gelernter, 5. Culture realigned 1820-65


30 September  **Entrepreneurial Vernacular—Sorting the New Nineteenth-Century City:**

*Required Reading:*

American Architectural History Reader:

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

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]


5 October  **Case Study 1 due by 9:00 a.m.**
Unit 2: Defining and Redefining Suburban Landscapes

7 October     Working-Class Vernacular
Recommended Reading:
Gelernter, 6. Enterprise and turmoil 1865-85

14 October    Middle-Class Victorians at Home
Required Reading: *American Architectural History Reader:*
14. The prairie house / James F. O’Gorman –
Recommended Reading:
Gelernter 7. The age of diversity 1885-1915

21 October     Entrepreneurial Vernacular: Developers Suburbs
Recommended Reading: Gelernter, 8. Between the World Wars 1915-45

28 October    Post-WWII: Domestic
Required Reading: *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 –
Recommended Reading: Gelernter, 9: Modern Culture, 1945-1973

2 November   Case Study 2 due by 9:00 a.m.
Unit 3: Consumer Landscapes in Modern America

4 November  Style in Modern America
Required Reading:
American Architectural History Reader:
12. Architecture and the reinterpretation of the past in the American renaissance
   / Richard Guy Wilson –
16. The search for modernity: America, the international style, and the Bauhaus
   / Margaret Kentgens-Craig –
   American Geographers 69:3 (September 1979): 339-361. [Use Journal Finder]

11 November  Interpreting the Skyscraper
Required Reading:
American Architectural History Reader:
Fine, Lisa M. “The Female ‘Souls of the Skyscraper’” In The American Skyscraper:
   Cultural Histories. Edited by Roberta Moudry. New York: Cambridge University
Nye, David E. “The Sublime and the Skyline: The New York Skyscraper.” In The
   American Skyscraper: Cultural Histories. Edited by Roberta Moudry. New York:

18 November  Downtown: Isenberg, Sewell, Longstreth
Required Reading:
Isenberg, Allison. Downtown America: A History of the Place and the People Who Made
   1-4.
Longstreth, Richard. “Sears Roebuck and the Remaking of the Department Store, 1924-
   [Posted to Bb]
Sewell, Jessica “Sidewalks and Store Windows as Political Landscapes” Perspectives in
   Vernacular Architecture Vol. 9 Constructing Image, Identity, and Place:

25 November  Southern Commercial Landscapes: Hanchett, Tolbert,
Required Reading:
Hanchett, Thomas W. Sorting Out the New South City: Race, Class, and Urban
Tolbert, Lisa C, “The Aristocracy of the Market Basket: Self-Service Food Shopping in
   the New South.” In Food Chains: From Farmyard to Shopping Cart. Edited by
   Warren Belasco and Roger Horowitz. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania

2 December  Post WWII: Commercial
Required Reading:
Cohen, Lizabeth, “From Town Center to Shopping Center: The Reconfiguration of
   Community Marketplaces in Postwar America” Jackson, Kenneth T.,


Recommended Reading: Gelernter, 9: Modern Culture, 1945-1973

7 December Case Study 3 due by 9:00 a.m.