



## History of American Landscapes and Architecture

### COURSE GUIDE

HIS/IAR 624

Fall 2010

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Hours: by appointment gladly given

*A landscape "happens not by chance but by contrivance, by premeditation, by design."*

*-John Stilgoe, Common Landscape of America*

## Course Objectives

This course is designed as an advanced reading seminar in the history of American landscapes and architecture. We will explore a variety of approaches 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.
- Apply different interpretive approaches to evaluate a particular landscape or building as a cultural artifact in historical context.

\*Note that though this course is not a traditional, art historical survey of styles and periods, accurate use of specialized terminology is an important part of your professional development. The McAlester survey is a useful reference tool for understanding specialized architectural vocabulary.

### **Role of this course in the graduate curriculum:**

This course plays an essential role as a requirement for historic preservation students and an elective for museum studies students. If you are a preservation student you should learn strategies for explaining the historical significance of any type of building you may need to evaluate—whether it be house, barn, store, or skyscraper. If you are a museum studies student you should learn how to look at architectural evidence to bring it to life for your visitors. If you are a regular history student this course can expand your toolkit of historical practice beyond traditional documents to understand strategies for using artifacts as historical evidence.

## Evaluation

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Presentation and Bibliography	30%
Unit Case Studies	60%
Participation	10%

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 (10%)**

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.
4. Synthesizing the Scholars Essays. This element of the participation grade is designed to help you synthesize the readings. Your essays should address at least three or more readings. Do not exceed 5 pages, double-spaced or 1250 words.

### **Architectural Analysis Presentation and Bibliography (30%)**

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. You will also practice professional presentation skills. This assignment involves the creation of a Ppt presentation and annotated research bibliography focusing on the history and analysis of a particular style or form of American architecture.

- Identify famous or important examples that represent the purest expression of the style
- Evaluate vernacular examples that show the influence of your style but that are not necessarily pure academic representations of the style.
- Identify local representative examples (if applicable)
- Explain distinguishing features of style and form using accurate architectural terminology
- Provide a 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 (60%; 30 % each)**

The goal of each case study is to go beyond basic reading knowledge of the materials we discuss to begin to APPLY 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](mailto:lctolber@uncg.edu).

### **Criteria for evaluation of case studies:**

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 that demonstrates complex understanding of the limits and possibilities of particular scholar's arguments.
- Synthesis of multiple scholars' arguments paying attention to points of consensus or disagreement among scholars. [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.]
- Accurate use of appropriate architectural terminology.
- Polish and presentation of prose.
- Accuracy and completeness of citations.

### Due Dates:

**Case Study 1:** . Interpreting Houses. You will select one house from an approved list for this analysis.  
Due by 5:00 p.m. on Friday 8 October.

**Case Study 2:** Interpreting Landscape Systems. You will focus on either Suburban or Commercial landscapes for this analysis.  
Due by 5:00 p.m. on Friday 3 December.

## Course Readings

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

- Dolkart, Andrew S. *Biography of a Tenement House in New York City: An Architectural History of 97 Orchard Street*. Santa Fe: The Center for American Places; Distributed by the University of Virginia Press, 2006.
- Gelernter, Mark. *A History of American Architecture: Buildings in Their Cultural and Technological Context*. Hanover: University Press of New England, 1999.
- Herman, Bernard L. *Town House: Architecture and Material Life in the Early American City, 1780-1830*. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2005.
- 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.
- McAlester, Virginia and Lee. *A Field Guide to American Houses*. New York: Knopf, 1984. [recommended]
- Small, Nora Pat. *Beauty and Convenience: Architecture and Order in the New Republic*. Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 2003.
- Upton, Dell. *Another City: Urban Life and Urban Spaces in the New American Republic*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 2008.

### **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. [Use Journal Finder]
- Bishir, Catherine W. "Jacob Holt: An American Builder," *Common Places*, pp. 447-481. [ereserves]
- Cohen, Lizabeth, "From Town Center to Shopping Center: The Reconfiguration of Community Marketplaces in Postwar America" Jackson, Kenneth T., (commentary).; *American Historical Review* 1996 101(4): 1050-1081. [Use Journal Finder]
- Fine, Lisa M. "The Female 'Souls of the Skyscraper'" In *The American Skyscraper: Cultural Histories*. Edited by Roberta Moudry. New York: Cambridge University Press, 2005. pp. 63-82. [ereserves]
- Longstreth, Richard. "Sears Roebuck and the Remaking of the Department Store, 1924-1942." *Journal of the Society of Architectural Historians*, 2006 65(2): 238-279. [Posted to Bb]
- 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]
- Martin, Ann Smart. Commercial Space as Consumption Arena: Retail Stores in Early Virginia, *Perspectives in Vernacular Architecture*, Vol. 8, People, Power, Places (2000), pp. 201-218. [Use Journal Finder]
- Pogue, Dennis J. "The Domestic Architecture of Slavery at George Washington's Mount Vernon." *Winterthur Portfolio*. Vol. 37, No. 1 (Spring 2002): 3-22. [Use Journal Finder]

Rubin, Barbara. "Aesthetic Ideology and Urban Design," *Annals of the Association of American Geographers* 69:3 (September 1979): 339-361. [Use Journal Finder]

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. Raleigh, NC: North Carolina State University, 1978. [ereserves]

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 Press, 2009: 179-195. [posted to Bb]

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

## Course Schedule

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**25 August**                      **Introductions**

**1 September**    **What's the difference between vernacular and academic approaches to architectural history?**

Required Reading:

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]

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

Gelernter, Chapter 5. *Culture Realigned, 1820-1865*.

## Interpreting Domestic Buildings and Spaces

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*8 September*                      *18<sup>th</sup> Century Southern Contexts*

Required Reading:

*American Architectural History* Reader:

4. Space : parish churches, courthouses, and dwellings in colonial Virginia / Dell Upton –

Pogue, Dennis J. "The Domestic Architecture of Slavery at George Washington's Mount Vernon." *Winterthur Portfolio*. Vol. 37, No. 1 (Spring 2002): 3-22. [Use Journal Finder]

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

Recommended Reading:

Gelernter, Chapter 3. *Colonial Culture, 1650-1763*, and Chapter 4. *The Age of Revolution, 1763-1820*

*15 September*                      *Town Houses*

**Synthesizing the Scholars Essay** due in class: Is Herman's approach to studying town houses best understood as vernacular or academic? Why? Be sure to address at least three different readings. Do not exceed 5 double-spaced pages or 1250 words.



Required Reading:

Herman, Bernard L. *Town House: Architecture and Material Life in the Early American City, 1780-1830*. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2005.

Recommended Reading:

Gelernter Chapter 4. The age of revolution 1763-1820

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

Required Reading:

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

*American Architectural History Reader:*

7. The Greek revival: American-ness, politics and economics / W. Barksdale Maynard –

8. Independence and the rural cottage / Gwendolyn Wright

Recommended Reading:

Gelernter, 5. Culture realigned 1820-65

McAlester, *Field Guide to American Houses*, pp. 2-437.

*29 September Nineteenth-Century Urban Tenement*

Required Reading:

Dolkart, Andrew S. *Biography of a Tenement House in New York City: An Architectural History of 97 Orchard Street*. Santa Fe: The Center for American Places; Distributed by the University of Virginia Press, 2006.

Recommended Reading:

Gelernter, 6. Enterprise and turmoil 1865-85 [Note: what is the most useful information for understanding urban tenements in this chapter?]

*6 October Twentieth-Century Suburban Houses*

Required Reading:

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]

*American Architectural History Reader:*

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

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.

Recommended Reading:

Gelernter 7. The age of diversity 1885-1915; 8. Between the World Wars 1915-45; 9: Modern Culture, 1945-1973

[Note: focus on how Gelernter presents suburban houses and landscapes in these chapters]

McAlester, *Field Guide to American Houses*, pp. 438-500.

**8 October Case Study 1 due by 5:00 p.m.**

[October 11-12, Fall Break]

# Interpreting Commercial Buildings and Spaces

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## 13 October *From Backcountry Stores to the Department Store*

### Required Reading:

Martin, Ann Smart. Commercial Space as Consumption Arena : Retail Stores in Early Virginia, *Perspectives in Vernacular Architecture*, Vol. 8, People, Power, Places (2000), pp. 201-218. [Use Journal Finder]

### *American Architectural History* Reader:

11. Creating New York's nineteenth-century retail district / Mona Domosh –  
Longstreth, Richard. "Sears Roebuck and the Remaking of the Department Store, 1924-1942." *Journal of the Society of Architectural Historians*, 2006 65(2): 238-279. [Posted to Bb]

## 20 October *New Commercial Building Types in the 1920s*

### Required Reading:

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 Press, 2009: 179-195. [posted to Bb]

### *American Architectural History* Reader:

10. "A city under one roof," Chicago skyscrapers, 1880-1895 / Daniel Bluestone  
Fine, Lisa M. "The Female 'Souls of the Skyscraper'" In *The American Skyscraper: Cultural Histories*. Edited by Roberta Moudry. New York: Cambridge University Press, 2005. pp. 63-82. [ereserves]

### Recommended Reading:

Gelernter 7. The Age of Diversity, 1885-1915; 8. Between the World Wars 1915-45 [How does Gelernter's interpretation of skyscrapers and commercial architecture in these chapters compare with the other assigned readings?]

## 27 October *Post-WWII: Inventing the Shopping Center*

**Synthesizing Essay** due in class: What's the difference (if any) between studying commercial buildings compared to buildings designed for domestic purposes? What is more important in evaluating this question, whether the building is vernacular or academic; or the time period in which the building was created? Be sure to address at least three different readings. Do not exceed 5 double-spaced pages or 1250 words.

### Required Reading:

Cohen, Lizabeth, "From Town Center to Shopping Center: The Reconfiguration of Community Marketplaces in Postwar America" Jackson, Kenneth T., (commentary).; *American Historical Review* 1996 101(4): 1050-1081. [Use Journal Finder]

### *American Architectural History* Reader:

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

# Interpreting Urban Landscape Systems

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3 November      *Antebellum Cities*

Required Reading:

Upton, Dell. *Another City: Urban Life and Urban Spaces in the New American Republic*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 2008.

Recommended Reading:

*American Architectural History* Reader:

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

10 November      *1920s Suburbs*

Required Reading:

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

Recommended Reading:

Gelernter 8. Between the World Wars 1915-45

17 November      *Downtown in the Twentieth Century*

Required Reading:

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

24 November      Thanksgiving

1 December      *Debating Style and Commercial Space in the Twentieth Century*

Required Reading:

*American Architectural History* Reader:

16. The search for modernity: America, the international style, and the Bauhaus / Margaret Kentgens-Craig
- Rubin, Barbara. "Aesthetic Ideology and Urban Design," *Annals of the Association of American Geographers* 69:3 (September 1979): 339-361. [Use Journal Finder]

Recommended Reading: Gelernter, 7 The Age of Diversity, 1885-1815; 8. Between the World Wars, 1915-1945; and 9: Modern Culture, 1945-1973 [how does Gelernter's interpretation of modernism compare to the other assigned readings?]

**3 December, Case Study 2 due by 5:00 p.m.**