



History of American Landscapes and Architecture

COURSE GUIDE

HIS/IAR 624

Spring 2004

Prof. L. Tolbert

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Hours: Mon. & Wed. 1:00-2:00

and by appointment

Course Objectives

This course is designed as an advanced reading seminar in the history of American landscapes and architecture. The course will introduce you to the 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. The course will take you beyond our 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:

- Explain major changes in the development of the American landscape from the colonial period through the mid-twentieth century.
- Demonstrate an understanding of the ways that architecture 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.
- Use different methodological approaches to evaluate particular landscapes in historical context.

Attendance Policy

Faithful attendance is essential for 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.

Evaluation

Participation	10%
Building/Landscape Case Study	40%
Methodology Assessments	50%

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%)

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. For this reason, consistent attendance is essential to your learning in this course. See above for an explanation of the course **attendance policy** which has an impact on your overall grade in the course beyond its importance for evaluating your participation.
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.

Methodology Assessments (50%, 25% each)

You will complete written evaluations of approaches to the study of landscape and architecture demonstrated in the assigned reading for units 1 and 2. Papers will consider the following issues for selected readings in the unit:

- Explain how the author defines the central research problem of the study.
- Explain the significance of the timeframe for the research problem.
- Describe the most important primary source material for the scholar's study.

- Explain the importance of field work (if relevant) for the scholar's analysis.
- Explain any key terms or concepts the scholar defines for readers of the study.
- Explain the most important ways that the scholar uses architecture or landscape as evidence. In what ways, for example, does the scholar consider building technology, materials, space, form, or style as evidence? What are the most important features or parts of a building or landscape for the scholar's analysis?
- What is the scholar's academic specialization and what, if any, interdisciplinary theories, concepts, or approaches does the author employ to develop the interpretation of landscape or architectural evidence?
- You may use illustrations in your analysis if you find them useful for explaining your ideas.

Due dates:

Unit 1, email by 5:00 p.m. on Friday, 24 September.

Unit 2, email by 5:00 p.m. on Friday, 29 October

Case Study Building/Landscape Analysis (30%)

One of the most important goals of this course is to teach you to go beyond basic reading knowledge of the course through direct application of the knowledge you are acquiring to a "real world" case study. Choose a particular building or landscape as the focus of your research and analysis and use appropriate scholarship from assigned readings and additional research to put the site in historical context. Useful resources for identifying an appropriate study site include:

Marvin A. Brown, *Greensboro: An Architectural Record*. Preservation Greensboro, 1995.

Bishir, Catherine and Michael Southern. *A Guide to the Historic Architecture of Piedmont North Carolina*. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2003.

HABS/HAER website: <http://memory.loc.gov/ammem/hhhtml/hhhome.html>

Each paper should do the following:

- Use specific and appropriate visual evidence from the case study site to develop your analysis. In order to do this effectively, your paper must be illustrated. Presentations should also be illustrated. Use appropriate architectural vocabulary in your analysis.
- Use specific arguments from assigned scholars and additional research to interpret and evaluate the case study landscape in an appropriate historical context.
- Consider at least three different methodological approaches that provide different insights in the evaluation of your building or landscape as historical evidence.

Due dates:

18 October Preliminary Case Study Bibliography and Topic Description due.

29 November-6 December Case Study Presentations and Workshop

10 December Final Case Studies due, about 15-20 pages and illustrated.

Course Readings

Books (Available at the UNCG bookstore)

- Bauman, John F., Roger Biles, and Kristin M. Szylvian, eds. *From Tenements to the Taylor Homes: In Search of an Urban Housing Policy in Twentieth-Century America*. University Park, PA: The Pennsylvania State University Press, 2000.
- Ford, Larry R. *Cities and Buildings: Skyscrapers, Skid Rows, and Suburbs*. Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1994.
- Foster, Gerald. *American Houses: A Field Guide*. Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 2004.
- Heath, Kingston Wm. *The Patina of Place: The Cultural Weathering of a New England Industrial Landscape*. Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 2001.
- McAlester, Virginia and Lee. *A Field Guide to American Houses*. New York: Knopf, 1984.
- Upton, Dell and John Vlach, eds. *Common Places: Readings in American Vernacular Architecture*. Athens, GA: University of Georgia Press, 1986. [Note: see the course schedule for specific chapters assigned in CP.]
- Wood, Joseph S. *The New England Village*. Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1997.
- Wood, Roger H. and Richard J. Wood. *American Domestic Architecture, 1600-1990*. e-book.

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

- Chappell, Edward A. "Housing a Nation: The Transformation of Living Standards in Early America." In Cary Carson, Ronald Hoffman, and Peter J. Albert, eds. *Of Consuming Interests: The Style of Life in the Eighteenth Century*. Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 1994. [ereserves]
- Doucet, Michael J., and John C. Weaver. "Material Culture and the North American House: The Era of the Common Man, 1870-1920." *The Journal of American History* 72 (December 1985): 560-587. [JSTOR]
- Pogue, Dennis J. "The Domestic Architecture of Slavery at George Washington's Mount Vernon." *Winterthur Portfolio*. Vol. 37, No. 1 (Spring 2002): 3-22. [ereserves]
- Prussin, Labelle. *Hatumere: Islamic Design in West Africa*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1986, pp. 3-23. [ereserves]
- 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]
- Wells, Camille, "The Planter's Prospect: Houses and Rural Landscapes in 18th c. Virginia," *Winterthur Portfolio* 28 Spring 1993: 1993 28(1): 1-31. [JSTOR]
- Various authors. *Journal of Urban History* 27/3 (2001). Read all articles in this volume focusing on research in suburban history. [IngentaSelect—online database]

Course Schedule

16 August Introductions

Unit 1: Colonial America

23 August **Chronology and Methodology**

Read:

Wood, *American Domestic Architecture*, Ch. 1-2.

In *Common Places*:

Kniffen, "Folk Housing: Key to Diffusion," pp. 3-26

Kniffen and Glassie, "Building in Wood in the Eastern United States," pp. 159-181.

Hubka, "Just Folks Designing," pp. 426-432.

Foster, *American Houses*, pp. xiii-218.

McAlester, *Field Guide to American Houses*, pp. 2-175.

30 August **Seventeenth Century**

Read:

In *Common Places*:

Isham and Brown, "Early Rhode Island Houses, pp. 149-158.

Prudon, "The Dutch Barn in America," pp. 204-218.

Cummings, "Inside the Massachusetts House," pp. 219-239.

Neiman, Fraser D. "Domestic Architecture at the Clifts Plantation: The Social Context of Early Virginia Building," pp. 292-314.

St. George, "Set Thine House in Order," pp. 336-366.

6 September **LABOR DAY HOLIDAY**

13 September **Eighteenth Century**

Read:

Chappell, Edward A. "Housing a Nation: The Transformation of Living Standards in Early America." In Cary Carson, Ronald Hoffman, and Peter J. Albert, eds. *Of Consuming Interests: The Style of Life in the Eighteenth Century*. Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 1994.

In *Common Places*:

Chappell, Ed. "Acculturation in the Shenandoah Valley: Rhenish Houses of the Massanutten Settlement," pp. 27-57.

Upton, Dell. "Vernacular Domestic Architecture in Eighteenth-Century Virginia," pp. 315-335.

Gowans, "The Mansions of Alloways Creek," pp. 367-393.

Glassie, Henry. "Eighteenth-Century Cultural Process in Delaware Valley Folk Building," pp. 394-425.

20 September Landscape of Slavery

Read:

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

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

Prussin, Labelle. *Hatumere: Islamic Design in West Africa*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1986, pp. 3-23.

Unit 1 Methodology Analysis due Friday, 24 September by 5:00 pm.

Unit 2: Nineteenth-Century United States

27 September Chronology

Read:

Wood, *American Domestic Architecture*, Ch. 3-5.

Foster, *American Houses*, pp. 219-290.

McAlester, *Field Guide to American Houses*, pp. 176-437.

4 October Village as a Vernacular Type

Read:

Wood, Joseph S. *The New England Village*. Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1997.

11 October FALL BREAK

18 October House Type vs. House Style

Read:

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.

In *Common Places*:

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

Borchert, James. "Alley Landscapes of Washington," pp. 281-291.

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

Preliminary Case Study bibliography and topic description due.

25 October Industrialization and Landscape

Read:

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

Unit 2 Methodology Analysis due Friday, 29 October by 5:00 pm.

Unit 3: Twentieth-Century United States

1 November Chronology

Read:

Wood, *American Domestic Architecture*, Ch. 6-9.

Doucet, Michael J., and John C. Weaver. "Material Culture and the North American House: The Era of the Common Man, 1870-1920." *The Journal of American History* 72 (December 1985): 560-587. [JSTOR]

Foster, *American Houses*, pp. 291-366.

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

8 November Suburbanization

Read:

Various authors. *Journal of Urban History* 27/3 (2001). Read all articles in this volume focusing on current research in suburban history. [IngentaSelect—online database]

15 November Urbanization

Read:

Ford, Larry R. *Cities and Buildings: Skyscrapers, Skid Rows, and Suburbs*. Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1994.

In *Common Places*:

Rubin, Barbara. "Aesthetic Ideology and Urban Design," pp. 482-508.

22 November **Federal Policy and Twentieth Century Landscape**

Read:

Bauman, John F., Roger Biles, and Kristin M. Szylvian, eds. *From Tenements to the Taylor Homes: In Search of an Urban Housing Policy in Twentieth-Century America*.
University Park, PA: The Pennsylvania State University Press, 2000.

29 November **Case Study Presentations**

6 December **Case Study Presentations**

10 December **Final Case Studies Due**