



History of American Landscapes and Architecture

COURSE GUIDE

HIS/IAR 624

Fall 2008

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 explain the defining characteristics of major periods in the development of the American landscape from the colonial era through the mid-twentieth century.
- Explain how buildings and landscapes document cultural and social change over time.
- Define particular architectural styles and use specialized architectural vocabulary/terminology accurately.
- Explain the differences between vernacular and academic building traditions and the approaches to studying 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

Participation and Reading Responses	15%
Midterms	50%
Research Bibliography/PowerPoint Presentation	35%

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 essentialyou should make arrangements substantially **in advance** of the due date if you are unable to meet a course deadline.

Participation and Reading Responses (15%)

This assessment will be based on three elements:

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. I will evaluate your comprehension of reading assignments through periodic one-page reading responses.
3. Regular contributions to class discussions—the success of this course for your learning depends on active intellectual engagement with your peers.

Midterm and Final (50%)

You will complete **two** take-home tests consisting of a choice of essay questions. The questions will be distributed 1-2 weeks in advance of due dates. All answers should be typed and double-spaced, about 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 on the due dates identified in the course schedule below.

Reading Landscape: Research Bibliography and PowerPoint Presentation (35%)

The primary goal of this assignment is to practice reading a specific landscape or building using interpretive strategies developed by scholars whose work you've encountered in the course and through independent research. You will analyze visual evidence, put your building/landscape in appropriate historical context, create a meaningful research bibliography useful for understanding your subject, and present your analysis of the subject to the class in a PowerPoint presentation at the end of the semester. See the guidelines posted to Bb for more specific instructions. Presentations will be scheduled for Nov. 12 and 19.

Course Readings

Books (Available at the UNCG bookstore)

Egger, 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.

McAlester, Virginia and Lee. *A Field Guide to American Houses*. New York: Knopf, 1984.

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. [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]

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]

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. North Carolina State University, 1978. [ereserves]

Sweeney, Kevin. "Meetinghouses, Town Houses, and Churches: Changing Perceptions of Sacred and Secular Space in Southern New England, 1720-1850." *Winterthur Portfolio* 28 (Spring 1993): 59-93. [Use Journal Finder]

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 18th c. Virginia," *Winterthur Portfolio* 28 Spring 1993: 1993 28(1): 1-31. [Use Journal Finder]

Course Schedule

27 August Introductions

3 September **Form and Style: Learning to Look at Architecture**

American Architectural History Reader:

Introduction / Keith L. Eggener

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

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]

Writing Exercise: In no more than one single-spaced page, explain the difference between form and style using specific examples from the assigned reading.

10 September **Rebuilding the American Landscape in the 18th Century**

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 18th c. Virginia," *Winterthur Portfolio* 28 Spring 1993: 1993 28(1): 1-31.

Sweeney, Kevin. "Meetinghouses, Town Houses, and Churches: Changing Perceptions of Sacred and Secular Space in Southern New England, 1720-1850." *Winterthur Portfolio* 28 (Spring 1993): 59-93.

Writing Exercise: Choose **either** Wells **or** Sweeney to evaluate the following questions: In no more than one single-spaced page, what types of primary sources does the author use to evaluate the landscapes they studied? Consider both archival and physical evidence. How do the different types of primary source materials provide support for the author's thesis? Use specific examples from the reading to explain your reasoning.

17 September Multiple Perspectives on Architecture in the Early Republic

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

Writing Exercise: In no more than one single-spaced page explain Small's thesis. Be sure to explain, using specific examples, how she employs both archival and physical evidence to support her thesis.

24 September Form and Style/National and Regional Identities

Gelernter, 5. Culture realigned 1820-65

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

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 –

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. [ereserves]

1 October Defining Public and Private Space

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

American Architectural History Reader:

8. Independence and the rural cottage / Gwendolyn Wright –
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]

8 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.

Writing Exercise: In no more than one single-spaced page explain how Heath's thesis relates to the overall goal of this course: to understand buildings and landscapes as cultural artifacts with historically specific meanings that must be understood in particular context over time. Use specific examples from the reading to explain your reasoning.

10 October **Midterm due by 5:00 p.m.**

15 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]

22 October **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 –

29 October **The Role of the Developer**

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

Writing Exercise: In no more than one single-spaced page address the following question: The three case studies Loeb evaluates represent very different suburban landscapes. To what extent do commonalities among the different suburban developments support Loeb's argument that together they document the emergence of an entrepreneurial vernacular?

5 November **Main Street**

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

Writing Exercise: In no more than one single-spaced page explain how Isenberg's thesis relates to the overall goal of this course: to understand buildings and landscapes as cultural artifacts with historically specific meanings that must be understood in particular context over time. Use specific examples from the reading to explain your reasoning.

12 November **Ppt Presentations**

19 November **Ppt Presentations**

26 November

Thanksgiving Holiday

3 December

Modernism and Consumer Society at Midcentury

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 –

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.

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

Final due Monday December 8 by 5:00 p.m.