

Social History of American Architecture
Fall 2009
HIST 6481-03

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Office hours: M/W 1:30-4:30, Center for Public History (Pafford 207, X96141); Wednesdays at the Atlanta History Center, 12:30-1:30 by appointment; and other hours by appointment

Course Description

This graduate class is designed to provide more advanced discussion on using vernacular architecture as a source in social and cultural history. All students must have taken the course *American Architecture*, which provides a survey on this topic. This course will incorporate readings in vernacular architecture historiography, fieldwork analyzing historic buildings, and primary research and original writing on a topic of the student's choice. Students may consider projects that will develop into thesis projects or thesis essays.

Course Objectives

1. To read more widely on American vernacular architecture studies, focusing on key scholars and scholarship of the field;
2. To demonstrate an understanding of the historiography of vernacular architecture studies as it relates to the study of American social and cultural history;
3. To obtain more experience in conducting fieldwork and analyzing historical buildings;
4. To use vernacular architecture as a source in a substantial original research project;
5. To gain experience in analytical and writing skills.

Required Readings

Michael Ann Williams, *Homeplace: The Social Use and Meaning of the Folk Dwelling*. University of Georgia Press, 2004.

Sally McMurray, *Families and Farmhouses in Nineteenth Century America: Vernacular Design and Social Change*. University of Tennessee Press, 1997.

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

Thomas Hubka, *Big House, Little House, Back House, Barn: The Connected Farm Buildings of New England*. University Press of New England, 1994.

Additional reading on African American middle-class housing and urban landscapes will be added.

Class requirements

Book Reviews (40 points)

Each student will write a book review of four to five pages on the required books/readings listed above. The review should assess (1) the author's main thesis or argument, (2) the ways in which the author supports his or her argument, (3) the sources that the author uses, and (4) the validity and strength of the author's argument and supporting evidence. The book reviews must be word-processed, double-spaced, with appropriate footnotes. Each book review will be valued at 8 points.

Class Research Project (45 points)

Each student will conduct an original research project that involves using architecture as a source to study social and cultural history. The project must involve the use of primary sources (on both architecture and history) and secondary literature to contextualize the topic. The projects will vary, based on each student's interests, but may include original research papers (approximately 25-30 pages) and National Register nominations. Specific instructions on the papers will be provided as the projects evolves. On various weeks, students will be required to provide updates regarding their papers.

As part of our focus on historiography, students will be expected to review and become familiar with the historiography related to their project.

Class participation and fieldwork (15 points)

This class will involve three types of participation:

1. Students will be expected to attend the six formal class discussions, listed on the syllabus below. Five of these meetings are focused on book discussions, and in the sixth meeting, each student will present her research to the group for discussion.
2. Students will be expected to participate in list-serve discussions by submitting their weekly assignments to the list-serve and by discussing topics related to their research and fieldwork on the list-serve. These weekly assignments will be submitted on the two weeks in between our formal class meetings. Specific topics for these assignments will be identified in advance, based on student interest and need.
3. Students will be required to participate in fieldwork excursions. These trips will be organized and scheduled by our class based on the class research projects. While all students will be involved in fieldwork of their own, we will organize fieldwork experiences for the benefit of the whole group and to provide additional training in fieldwork and architectural analysis.

Class Schedule

Please note: This schedule is subject to revision.

August 29:	Due: assignment by email
September 3:	Discussion of <i>Homeplace</i> , 6-8 p.m. Due: Book review on <i>Homeplace</i>
September 9:	Due: assignment by email
September 16:	Due: assignment by email
September 23:	Discussion of <i>Families and Farmhouses</i> , 6-8 p.m. Due: Book review on <i>Families and Farmhouses</i>
September 30:	Due: assignment by email
October 7:	Due: assignment by email
October 14:	Discussion of <i>The Patina of Place</i> , 6-8 p.m. Due: Book review on <i>The Patina of Place</i>
October 21:	Due: assignment by email

October 28: Due: assignment by email

November 4: Discussion of *Big House, Little House, Back House, Barn*, 6-8 p.m.
Due: Book review on *Big House, Little House, Back House, Ban*

November 11: Due: assignment by email

November 18: Discussion on readings on African American architecture, 6-8 p.m.
Due: Review on assigned readings

November 25: No meeting or assignment, Thanksgiving Break

December 2: No class, work day.

December 9: Final class meeting discussion about research projects, 6-8 p.m.
Due: Final research project