

History of American Architecture
ARHI 3140 and Honors By Contract
MW, 2:00-3:15
Fall 2018

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History of American Architecture

Course Description:

We cannot escape the art of architecture: we live in houses, condos or apartments located in cities or suburbs, we learn in schools, we work in offices; on vacations we visit cities and countries with unique architectural traditions, stay in hotels, and visit museums. Architecture has the ability to create a sense of place. In this course we will learn how architecture affects our lives—how it shapes our experiences, how it pleases us or leaves us numb, how it reinforces values and ideas we deem important.

One of the key questions of American Architecture is what makes it “American.” We are a continent of diverse cultures and traditions. Our architecture is very much the result of encounters between those cultures and traditions. In this course, we will focus upon American architecture from 1500 to the present so that we can draw out regional and ethnic diversity as well as technological and material innovations.

This course will introduce students to the study of American architecture through an examination of selected examples from its history; these examples will provide a chronological and thematic framework that will help students understand any work of architecture in the built environment. We will ask questions from both a historical and contemporary perspective. The class will include at least one site visit to a local building or complex, and guest lectures from practitioners in the field. Classes will combine lecture and discussion so that students can learn the fundamentals of American architectural history, analyze buildings, and develop informed opinions on critical issues.

Core Curriculum Essential Learning Outcomes for this course: Diversity and Cultural Awareness (DCA)

This course meets the Essential Learning Outcome of Diversity and Cultural Awareness as defined under the Core Curriculum requirements. As such, the course will assist students in developing a set of cognitive, affective, and behavioral skills and characteristics that will help them to engage in effective and appropriate interactions involving diverse cultural and social groups in various contexts.

Specifically:

1. The commonality and diversity among people and cultures across the globe.
2. Identifying and analyzing one's own cultural norms and values in relation to those of other cultures and diverse social groups.

These two criteria will be addressed through class activities detailed below. In this course, we will examine how American architecture has drawn from cultures and traditions around the globe.

NOTE: This is a [3-credit course, as defined by federal regulation](#). Each week, you should expect to complete 9 hours of work for class; this schedule will continue for 15 weeks, for a total of 90 hours of course-related work. (In an in-person class, this regulation usually means 3 hours of work in class and 6 hours outside of class *per week*.)

Course Objectives: Upon completion of this course, students should be able to:

- Identify and discuss key architects and their designs in their historical and cultural contexts.
- Identify major architectural styles and master the specific vocabulary of terms related to those styles.
- Define and deploy central terms and concepts in American architecture (e.g. sustainable design, Colonial Revival, American Renaissance, Arts and Crafts, etc.).
- Read and comprehend architectural drawings.
- Place course subject matter in broader built environment or social contexts.
- Evaluate research sources for authority, accuracy, and appropriateness.
- Engage and explicate primary sources including essays by or interviews with architects and non-textual sources such as maps and atlases.

Class Compartment: Since class lectures are professional presentations at the university level, you should not eat, drink, converse, check email, surf the web, text, or receive phone calls during class lectures and discussion. Students are not permitted to tape the lectures without the permission of the instructor. Students in need of accommodations approved by Student Services must see me on the first day of class so that your individual needs can be accommodated.

Requirements:

Text: The class textbook is: Vincent Scully, *American Architecture and Urbanism*. Trinity University Press. ISBN# 9781595341518. You will also be assigned a number of

short readings written by architects, historians, or critics. These readings will be available on the class wiki page (see below). An additional “text” for this class will be Lowell itself and architecture in the surrounding area. Attendance at site visits contributes to your final grade.

Grading: Your grade will be based upon the following contributions: ten 2-page papers (40%); participation and discussion (15%), map assignment (15%); final project (30%).

Papers:

For this course you will write a series of TEN response papers. These papers are spread out over the course of the semester. (Thirteen are assigned: you need to pick ten.) These papers should be typed, double-spaced, and a minimum of two pages in length (standard 1” margins!). You will be given guidelines and a prompt for each paper on the class wiki. These papers are worth 40% of your final grade. Papers are due on the Monday following the posted topic. For example, the Week 1 paper is due Monday of Week 2, September 10. **No late papers or emailed papers will be accepted.** That is, you cannot give me ten papers on the last day of class!

Please note: each week terms are listed with each topic. The best papers will incorporate those terms so I have evidence of what you understand and how you can apply them to the question at hand.

Map Reading and Analysis Assignment: The class wiki will provide guidelines. This assignment counts for 15% of your final grade.

Final Project:

For the final project each of you will write about a different building on campus [with the exception of the Pulichino Tong Business School]. The project is worth 35% of your final grade. The format of this project can vary: it can be a traditional paper, but it could also be a model, a video essay, a narrated drone video, a class pecha kucha presentation, a “magazine.” For more details on the final project, please visit the wiki page. Your building choice **MUST BE** approved ahead of time. Your topic and two annotated sources are due November 7.

Attendance and Class Participation: Attendance will be taken regularly; if you have more than two unexcused absences your final grade may be lowered proportionally. If you arrive more than fifteen minutes late you will be considered absent for that class. If you miss a class, **IT IS YOUR RESPONSIBILITY TO MAKE UP THE WORK** by using the textbook, getting notes from a classmate, and/or speaking with me during office hours. There will be ample opportunity for class discussion; your meaningful participation is highly encouraged and can benefit your final grade. Attendance and participation are worth 15% of your final grade.

Class wiki:

<https://americanarchitecture.wiki.uml.edu>

The wiki page will include all images, terms, and other material related to the course assignments.

Please Note: There should be no reason to plagiarize on any of these assignments; but any student who does plagiarize will receive an “F” for the course. Please see attached statement on plagiarism.

On Reserve at O’Leary Library:

Whiffen, M. *A Fieldguide to American Architecture*. Call number: NA705.W47

Please also consult in the permanent Reference collection:

Blumenson, NA705.B55 1981

McAlester, NA7205.M35 1984

Students may also wish to consult C.M. Harris, *An Illustrated Dictionary of Historic Architecture*, call number NA 31.H56, 1983.

Schedule of lectures and events (N.B. Subject to change without prior notice)

Week of:

Sept. 5 Introduction. Looking at Architecture. Your campus.
 Case Study: Thomas Jefferson and the University of Virginia campus.
 Terms: Elevation or façade, Plan, Section.
 Response Paper #1: try to determine the chronology and/or any principles of organization on our campus. DUE on SEPTEMBER 10

Sept. 10 **Encounters with Native Traditions**
 Scully, p. 12-24
 Keyworks: Moundbuilders at Poverty Point and Cahokia,, Anasazi, Hopi, Sioux, Algonquin
 Terms: adobe, kiva, tipi, wigwam.
 Response Paper #2: Who was Vincent Scully? See wiki for clips.

Sept. 17 **Encounters with European Traditions**
 Scully, p. 24-46.
 Keyworks: City of Havana (Cuba), St. Estevan, New Amsterdam and the Dyckman House, City plan of Savannah, Colonial Williamsburg and the Governor’s Palace, Parson Capen, Old Ship Meeting House.
 Terms: gambrel, hip, gable roofs; wattle and daub; half-timbered; clapboard, saltbox.

Response Paper #3: how do the settlements of the Native Americans compare to the first settlements of the colonists? Similarities? Differences?

Sept. 24 **Encounters with European Traditions cont.**

Scully, p. 48-75.

Guest Speaker: Adam Baacke, Director of Campus Planning: Coburn Hall

Keywords: Redwood Library, Old North, Mt. Vernon, Monticello, Washington

DC.

Terms: Doric, Ionic, Corinthian, Pediment, Palladio, Palladian window

Response Paper #4: How does Baacke hope to maintain Coburn's historic character with needed modern amenities?

Oct. 1 **Monday Site Visit: Meet at Franco American School**

Wednesday: The Creation of an "American" Classicism

Scully, same as above.

Samuel McIntire in Salem; Bulfinch and the Massachusetts State House; Parris' Quincy Market, the career of B.H. Latrobe; TU Walter and the US Capitol.

Response Paper #5: Read the essay on Bulfinch by James O'Gorman. Although his buildings seem understated now, why was Bulfinch considered so important?

Oct. 8 **Holiday: Monday: Columbus Day**

(Thursday is Monday Schedule)

Response Paper #5 due on Wednesday October 10

Immigration, the City and the Suburb

Scully, p. 66-67; 77-88; 92-93.

The Shakers, Canterbury, NH; Lowell, Gothic Revival; Second Empire, A.J. Downing, Renwick (The Smithsonian; St. Patrick's); Central Park and Boston's Emerald Necklace; balloon frame, band saw.

Response Paper #6: How does the Franco American School mansion reflect Lowell's part in the growth of cities and suburbs?

Oct. 15 **The Gilded Age: "Acquiring Culture"**

Scully, p. 94-105; 112-118; 136-138; 142-144.

Victorian; Frank Furness; H.H. Richardson, The Gilded Age; American Renaissance; and R.M. Hunt's The Breakers. Classical Tradition II: McKim, Mead and White. Chicago's World's Fair, Pennsylvania Station, NYC.

Oct. 17: Map Assignment Due Wednesday

Response Paper #7: Read RG Wilson, “The American Renaissance, Introduction”: How does the cultural context of the late 19th century help explain the style and opulence of the buildings?

Oct. 22 **Encounters with Technology**
Scully, p. 104-112; 126-29; 144-148

Response Paper #8: Read: Sullivan, *Kindergarten Chats*, “The Tall Office Building” and
Terms: William LeBaron Jenney, steel frame, curtain wall construction

OPTIONAL FIELDTRIP: Frank Lloyd Wright’s Zimmerman House in Manchester, NH

Saturday, October 27

Bonus Response paper: What details at the Zimmerman House help “break the box” of closed space? Would you like to live there?

Oct. 29 **The Outrageous Genius of Frank Lloyd Wright**
Scully, p. 118-126; 156-160;

Terms: Prairie House, The Arts and Crafts Movement.
Response Paper #9: read Wright, “In the Nature of Materials”: according to Wright, what should determine the appearance of a residence? Does he agree or disagree with Sullivan on materials and form?

Nov. 5 **Encounters with European Modernism**
Scully, p. 150-155.

The 1920s: Art Deco; The International Style
Terms: Streamline, Raymond Hood, Bauhaus
No response paper this week because of upcoming holiday.

Nov. 12 **Veteran’s Day Monday: University Closed**

European Modernism continued: Through the 1950s
Scully, p. 172-178; 184-188; 195-198

Late Wright and Mies Van der Rohe, Eero Saarinen
Terms: cantilever, catenary arch, mid-century modern, Richard Neutra, Philip Johnson.

Response paper #10: Should people in glass houses throw stones?

Nov. 19 **Guest Speaker: Peter Brigham, AIA, Facilities Management**
“*ADA Compliance and the Design of Buildings on Campus*”

Thanksgiving Break

Response Paper #11: What are the primary concerns of this campus with ADA compliance and what are the solutions outlined by Brigham?

Nov. 26

Brutalism and Kahn

Scully, p. 212-225.

Kimball Museum, Salk Institute, Exeter Library. Boston City Hall and the preservation debate.

*****Site visit: Wednesday: Our Brutalist buildings: McGauvran and O'Leary Library**

With Matt Hyatt, AIA, design principal for renovation of McGauvran***

Response Paper #12: In what ways did Matt's team hope to transform McGauvran from imposing hulk to svelte student center? What did they keep from its Brutalist core?

Dec 3 **Post-Modernism: the Historical and Cultural Grab Bag**

Scully, p. 229-245.

Robert Venturi, Charles Moore, I.M. Pei, Michael Graves, Philip Johnson

Response paper #13: Read selection from Venturi, *Learning from Las Vegas*: what should architects and urban planners learn from Las Vegas?

Encounters with the Environment

No Scully readings; watch Macallen clips on wiki.

Sustainable Design; Woods Hole Research Center; Piano's Academy of Natural Sciences, CA; Rammed Earth; Macallen Building South Boston.

Dec. 10

American Architecture, the Starchitect, and Globalism

No Scully readings.

Frank Gehry, Rem Koolhaas, Diller and Scofidio.

December 12: Final project presentations!!!!