**HISTORY 8630 (17727)**

**THE AMERICAN BUILT ENVIRONMENT**

**PROFESSOR JEFFREY TRASK**

**SPRING 2016**

**Mondays 4:30-7:15 PM**

**25 PARK PLACE, Rm. 2040**



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**Course Description**

This course will examine the historical development of the American built environment, from rural settlements and regional vernacular architectural styles to landscapes of industrial agriculture in the countryside, and from colonial ports to nineteenth-century industrial cities and the sprawling metropolitan regions of today. We will explore the ways that Americans have shaped their environments and their reasons for doing so by looking at the influence of changing ideas about race, class and gender, while also developing the skills to identify buildings and landscapes in both time and space. How have ideas about American democracy and individual rights influenced our everyday surroundings? What about our ideas about sacred spaces that need preservation or special consideration that concern preservationists, public historians and historians of the environment and urban landscapes?

Students will develop the practical skills of place-based historical research by studying change over time in the Atlanta region. We will also think about the city and suburb as artifacts of material culture, looking at both archival and physical evidence to construct spatial biographies. As a practical exercise in historical research, which will be a valuable addition to any professional or academic portfolio, students will study individual sites in the local environment and develop a walking tour to explain their relationship to the larger history of Atlanta.

**Required Readings**

John Stilgoe, *Common Landscape of America, 1580-1845* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1982). ISBN 9780300030464

Alison Isenberg, *Downtown America: A History of the Place and the People Who Made It* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2004). ISBN: 9780226385082

Recommended Reference Guides:

Dell Upton, *Architecture in the United States* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1998).

Steven Conn and Max Page, *Building the Nation: Americans Write About the Architecture, the Cities, and their Landscape* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2003).

Vincent Scully, *American Architecture and Urbanism* (NY: Frederick Praeger, 1969).

Leland Roth, *American Architecture: A History* (Westview, 2001).

Leland Roth, *Understanding Architecture: It Elements, History and Meaning* (Westview, 1993).

*All required books have been ordered through the University bookstore. Additional readings will be made available through Desire2Learn.*

**Objectives**

- To learn the skills of spatial analysis, critically examining physical aspects in the built environment to understand the past.

- To learn how to distinguish formal and vernacular architectural and aesthetic styles by period and region, and to understand their historical development.

- To introduce students to landscape as a category of historical analysis, and to understand the development of the built environment as historical process.

- To consider ways in which our physical surroundings reflect changing ideas about politics and society.

- To learn practical skills of place-based research in archives and through careful analysis of secondary sources.

- To learn how to make effective comparative analyses across different historical contexts and to think critically about arguments made using historical examples.

**Course Requirements**

1. Participation: (25%) This course consists of a combination of lectures and class discussion; the success of it depends upon on your enthusiastic, informed, and consistent participation in class discussion, grounded in careful examination of course readings. Please bring your readings and notes to every class meeting.

Students are expected to complete all readings before the designated class, and to come prepared to discuss major arguments and central themes. Students should be prepared for impromptu in-class writing assignments based on weekly readings.

Attendance is mandatory – students will be allowed only two absences (for legitimate religious and medical/family emergencies) before formal grade reduction. You must discuss any impending absences with the professor as early as possible.

Finally, courteous and respectful classroom etiquette is mandatory. **All cell-phones and wireless connections MUST be turned off.** Computers may be used only for note-taking.

2. Weekly reading analysis: (20%) Students will write a brief two-page analysis of weekly readings that examine central themes and arguments. I will post reading questions by mid-week for the following week’s readings to guide your reading, and prompt your written analyses. Reading analyses will be due at the beginning of class.

3. Analytical Review of Walking Tour: (15%) Attend a walking tour in Atlanta, and write a three-page analysis of the tour’s central arguments, combining overview of the broader narrative and specific examples from the built environment used as examples to illustrate history. **Due – Feb. 15**

4. Walking Tour: (40%) Students will develop a walking tour of an assigned neighborhood in Atlanta, or the region. Students will need to conduct sufficient secondary research to develop an interpretive narrative and build an argumentative arc into their tour. *This should not simply be a collection of individual site histories*. Rather, your tour should use the local landscape as historical examples that illustrate a specific historic narrative. Preliminary bibliographies and outlines will be due at stages in the process of completing this assignment. The form of your tour may take any number of finished products: a physical, mobile walking tour; a podcast or illustrated online tour; a museum exhibit, or other public-history form.

**Due Dates:**

**Preliminary Proposal and Route – Feb. 29**

**Site Analysis – Mar. 21**

**Primary Research Memo – Mar. 28**

**Bibliography – Apr. 4**

**Tour Outline – Apr. 11**

**Final Tour – Apr. 25**

Georgia State University Policy on Academic Honesty:

“As members of the academic community, students are expected to recognize and uphold standards of intellectual and academic integrity. The university assumes as a basic and minimum standard of conduct in academic matters that students be honest and that they submit for credit only the products of their own efforts. Both the ideals of scholarship and the need for fairness require that all dishonest work be rejected as a basis for academic credit. They also require that students refrain from any and all forms of dishonorable or unethical conduct related to their academic work.”

Students who wish to request accommodation for a disability may do so by registering with the Office of Disability Services. Students may only be accommodated upon issuance by the Office of Disability Services of a signed Accommodation Plan and are responsible for providing a copy of that plan to instructors of all classes in which accommodations are sought.

**UNIT I - Introduction to the American Landscape**

Week 1 (Jan. 11) - Spatial History and the Power of Place

John Stilgoe, “Landscape” in *Common Landscape.*

William Cronon, “The Trouble with the Wilderness; or, Getting Back to the Wrong Nature,” in Uncommon Ground, ed. Cronon (NY: Norton, 1995), 69-90.

James Shortridge, T*he Middle West: Its Meaning and Culture* (Lawrence, KA: University of Kansas Press, 1989), chapters 2 & 7.

*Please submit a weekly reading response to Desire2Learn by 9:00 AM Tuesday Jan. 19.*

**Martin Luther Kind Day (Jan. 18) – No Class**

Week 2 (Jan. 25) – Colonial Landscapes – between Wilderness and Civilization

Jill Lepore, *The Name of War: King Philip’s War and the Origins of American Identity* (NY: Vintage Books, 1998), Chapter 3.

Richard Bushman, *The Refinement of America: Persons, Houses, Cities* (NY: Vintage Books, 1993), Chapters 1 and 4.

Stillgoe, “Planting” in *Common Landscape.*

Week 3 (Feb. 1) – The Grid – Organizing the West and the American City

Drew McCoy, *The Elusive Republic: Political Economy and Jeffersonian America* (Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 1980), Chapter 1.

Stilgoe, “National Design” in *Common Landscape.*

Hildegard Binder Johnson, “Towards a National Landscape” in *The Making of the American Landscape* edited by Michael Conzen (NY: Routledge, 1990), 127-145.

Week 4 (Feb. 8) – The American Farm – Regional Distinctions in Vernacular Architecture

Stilgoe, “Agriculture” in *Common Landscape.*

John Michael Vlach, “The Shotgun House: An African Architectural Legacy” in *Common Places: Readings in American Vernacular Architecture* edited by Dell Upton.

Vlatch, *Back of the Big House*, Ch. 1.

John Brinkerhoff Jackson, “The Nineteenth-Century Rural Landscape: The Courthouse, the Small College, the Mineral Spring, and the Country Store,” in *Landscapes in Sight: Looking at America* ed., Helen Lefkowitz Horowitz (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1997): 139-149; **OR** Jackson, “The Westward Moving House,” 81-107.

**UNIT II - Cities**

Week 5 (Feb. 15) – The Walking City – from Colonial Port to Commercial Hub

Elizabeth Blackmar, “Rewalking the ‘Walking City’: Housing and Property Relations in New York City, 1780-1840” in *Material Life in America, 1600-1860* edited by Robert Blair St. George (Boston: Northeastern University Press, 1988), 371-382.

Dell Upton, “The City as Material Culture” in *The Art and Mystery of Historical Archeology: Essays in Honor of James Deetz* edited by Anne Yentsch and Mary Beaudry (1992).

Dell Upton, “Another City,” excerpt, TBA.

**DUE – Walking Tour Analysis**

Week 6 (Feb. 22) – Industrial Cities and Landscapes of Production

Betsy Bradley, *The Works*, excerpt, TBA.

David Nye, *American Technological Sublime* (Cambridge, MA: M.I.T. Press, 1994), Chapter 5.

Stilgoe, “Artifice” in *Common Landscape.*

Recommended: Upton, *Architecture in the United States*, Chapter 4: “Technology.”

Week 7 (Feb. 29) – The New South City

Don Doyle, *New Men, New Cities, New South: Atlanta, Nashville, Charleston, Mobile, 1860-1910* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1990), Chapter 6.

Thomas Hanchett, “Habiliments of Progress,” *Sorting Out the New South City: Race, Class and Urban Development in Charlotte, NC, 1875-1975* (Chapel Hill, University of North Carolina Press, 1998), 47-68.

Cliff Kuhn, *Contesting the New South Order: The 1914-1915 Strike at Atlanta’s Fulton Mills* (Chapel Hill: University of North Caroline Press, 2001), Chapter 2.

**DUE – Tour Proposal and Route**

Week 8 (Mar. 7) – City Planning and the Reform of “Main Street”

Isenberg, Chapter 1-3

Daniel Rodgers, *Atlantic Crossings: Social Politics in a Progressive Age* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1998), Chapter 5.

**SPRING BREAK – MARCH 14-20**

Week 9 (Mar. 21) – Urban Renewal and the Promise of Modernist Cities

All readings for this week come from a Special Section of the *Journal of Urban History* (May 2013): Thinking through Urban Renewal (*Please access readings via JSTOR*):

Samuel Zipp, “Thinking through Urban Renewal” (359-365).

Samuel Zipp, “The Roots and Routes of Urban Renewal” (366-391).

Jamin Creed Rowan, “Sidewalk Narratives, Tenement Narratives: Seeing Urban Renewal through the Settlement Movement” (392-410).

Michael Carriere, “Chicago, the South Side Planning Board, and the Search for (Further) Oder: Toward an Intellectual Lineage of Urban Renewal in Postwar America” (411-432).

Jennifer Hock, “Bulldozers, Busing, and Boycotts: Urban Renewal and the Integrationist Project” (433-453).

**DUE – Site Analysis**

**UNIT III – Landscapes of Inequality**

Week 10 (Mar. 28) – Race and the American City: Jim Crow and the “Inner City”

Isenberg, Chapters 5 & 6

Kevin Kruse, *White Flight*, ch 4

**DUE – Primary Research Memo**

Week 11 (Apr. 4) – Class and Space – Comparative Suburbs

Lisbeth Cohen, *A Consumer’s Republic: The Politics of Mass Consumption in Postwar America* (New York: Knopf, 2003), chapter 5.

John Findlay, "Sun City: New Town for Old Folks," in *Magic Lands: Western Cityscapes and American Culture after 1940* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1992).

Joel Garreau, *Edge City: Life on the New Frontier* (New York: Random House, 1991), Intro chapter 1.

**DUE - Bibliography**

Week 12 (Apr. 11) – Gender and Sexuality in the American City

Elizabeth Fraterrigo, “The Answer to Suburbia: Playboy’s Urban Lifestyle” *Journal of Urban History* (July 2008): 747-774.

Dolores Hayden, “What would a Non-Sexist City Be like? Speculations on Housing, Urban Design and Human Work” *Signs* (Spring 1980), 170-187.

John De Milleo, “Gay Politics, Gay Community” in *Making Trouble: essays on gay history, politics and the university* (NY: Routledge, 1992), 57-73.

**DUE – Tour Outline**

Week 13 (Apr. 18) - Post-Industrial Cities and Post-Agricultural Countrysides

Ruth Wilson Gilmore, *Golden Gulag: Prisons, Surplus, Crisis and Opposition in Globalizing California* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2007), chapter 4 (128-180).

Tami Friedman, "A Trail of Ghost Towns across our Land," in *Beyond the Ruins: The Meanings of Deindustrialization* edited by Jefferson Cowie and Joseph Heathcott (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2003), 19-43.

Eric Schlosser, *Fast Food Nation* (NY: Harper, 2001), Ch 6.

Week 14 (Apr. 25) – Late Capitalist Cities in Bankruptcy & Gentrification

Christopher Mele, “Urban Malaise, Community Abandonment, and Underground Subcultures of Decay,” *Selling the Lower East Side: Culture, Real Estate, and Resistance in New York City* (Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press, 2000), 180-219.

Sharon Zukin, “Whose Culture? Whose City?” in *The Culture of Cities* (Malden, MA: Blackwell, 1995), 1-48.

Amin Ghazani, *There Goes the Gayborhood?* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2014), Introduction.

**DUE – Walking Tour**