

DEPARTMENT OF HISTORIC PRESERVATION
HISP 325-01 VERNACULAR ARCHITECTURE IN AMERICA
Spring Semester 2009

Mr. Stanton
MWF 10:00-10:50 am
Combs Hall Rm 348

“**Vernacular**, adj. 1. native, or originating in the place of its occurrence or use, as language or words. . . native or peculiar to popular taste, as a style of architecture.” *The American College Dictionary*

COURSE DESCRIPTION

Vernacular Architecture in America is a seminar that explores the theoretical basis and methodological conventions used when studying the built environment as a product of vernacular design processes. Commonplace buildings are investigated as complex historical resources that can be read for information about intentions, attitudes, and needs of past generations. Ultimately any architecture can be studied as vernacular and it is an approach, rather than a delineation of subject matter, that distinguishes vernacular architectural research.

The study of vernacular architecture is an interstitial scholarly pursuit. The recognition of its potential has drawn researchers from many diverse fields. Each researcher has brought his or her own background to vernacular architecture, coloring through assumptions and methodologies how the research is conducted and what conclusions are reached. One of the principal aims of this course is to develop or heighten the skills of critical close reading of texts, whether they are books or buildings.

This is not an easy course, but the breadth of the subject matter and the freshness of the approaches that researchers bring to their work can be exhilarating. The seminar is a combination of discussion, field trips, in-class exercises. You should expect to come away from this course with an enhanced ability to evaluate architecture for evidence of function and use, your ability to read critically will be enhanced and you will have an understanding of what separates the study of vernacular architecture from standard academic architectural research.

CLASS REQUIREMENTS

TEXTS

The following books are required and will be available in the UMW Bookstore:

Carter, Thomas and Elizabeth Collins Cromley. *Invitation to Vernacular Architecture*. Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 2005.

Upton, Dell, and John Michael Vlach, eds. *Common places: Readings in American Vernacular Architecture*. Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1986. Hereafter [CP]

Reserve Reading. All other reading will be provided.

EXPECTATIONS

Each student is expected to come to class prepared to discuss the readings assigned for that day both in terms of the subject and the theoretical framework used by the author. Your participation in class is part of the evaluation criteria. Your preparation should include reading the critical reviews that are posted on the course web page. You will need to be able to access the class web page to prepare for classes, find expanded explanations of assignments, and obtain some required reading.

TESTS

There will be a midterm examination covering theories of analysis as well as the structural and stylistic features of American vernacular buildings on Monday, February 23rd and a comprehensive final examination, Friday, May 1st.

OUT-OF-CLASS ASSIGNMENTS

No Collaborative Work is Allowed on Any Written Assignments!!

1. Examine and describe the addition to the store at the northwest corner of Caroline and George Streets. Be sure to describe the physical evidence of reuse. The assignment is due Monday, February 16th.
2. Describe in no more than two pages, a hypothetical hypothesis for a vernacular study of a material, structural type, or landscape feature. The assignment is due Wednesday, April 22nd.
3. Write a two-page essay that critically examines one of the assigned readings. Selections may be made from the readings beginning with January 28th through April 17th. The essay is due to me **as an email attachment on the day of the class prior** to the day your chosen reading is to be discussed in class. Only one person can select a particular reading. The reviews will be posted on our class web page and are part of the assigned readings for that class.

MY OFFICE HOURS:

Tuesday 11am-12:45

Thursday 11am-12:45

I am happy to make an appointment to see you at some specific time that suits your needs--ask me in class, or write me an email message at <gstanton@umw.edu>

OFFICE

Combs 128

Phone: 654-1313

GRADING

FINAL GRADE

Please note: **No passing grade** can be achieved in this course without completion of **all** tests, final examination and out-of-class graded assignments. Your final grade will be based on the following scores--Class preparation and participation 15%, Test I, 25%; Out-of-Class Assignment #1 10%, Out-of-Class Assignment #2 10%; Critical Review 15%; Final Examination 25%. The Out-of-Class Assignments will be marked down by a letter grade (10 points) if handed in later than the beginning of class on the date due.

SCHEDULE OF CLASS MEETINGS, TOPICS AND ASSIGNMENTS

1. Monday 12 January 2009
Course Introduction: What is the difference between HISP 305 and HISP 325
Required Readings: Camille Wells, "Reading Critically"
2. Wednesday 14 January 2009
In Conclusion: categories and critiques of vernacular architecture
Required Readings: Upton, Dell, and John Michael Vlach, "Introduction." *CP*, xiii-xxiv.
Carter, Thomas and Elizabeth Cromley. *Invitation to Vernacular Architecture*, xiii-xv.
3. Friday 16 January 2009
Examining a building
Readings: Carter, Thomas and Elizabeth Cromley. *IVA*, 19-43.
Edward Chappell, "Architectural Recording and the Open-Air Museum." *PVA-II*, 24-36.
4. Monday 19 January 2009
Martin Luther King Day --- no class
5. Wednesday 21 January 2009
Reading Sequence
Readings: Edward A. Chappell, "Looking at Buildings," *Fresh Advices* (November, 1984), i-vi.

6. Friday 23 January 2009
Looking for Change in a Building
7. Monday 26 January 2009
Using Techniques of Construction and Materials to Plot Cultural Process
Readings: Fred B. Kniffen and Henry Glassie, "Building in Wood in the Eastern United States: A Time-Place Perspective." *CP*, 159-181.
8. Wednesday 28 January 2009
Building in Wood
Readings: Warren Roberts, "The Tools Used in Building Log Houses." *CP*, 182-203.
9. Friday 30 January 2009
Fieldtrip #1: Meet at the corner of Princess Anne and George Street.
10. Monday 2 February 2009
Doing History with Architecture
Readings: Fraser D. Neiman, "Domestic Architecture at the Clifts Plantation: The Social Context of Early Virginia Building." *CP*, 292-314.
11. Wednesday 4 February 2009
Doing Architecture with History
Readings: Gary Stanton, "How Fire Changed Fredericksburg." *PVA VI*, pp. 122-134..
12. Friday 6 February 2009
The Classification of Buildings by Typology
Readings: Fred B. Kniffen, "Folk Housing: Key to Diffusion." *CP*, 3-26
13. Monday 9 February 2009
Structures and materials: Stone and Brick
Readings: Norman Morrison Isham and Albert F. Brown, "Early Rhode Island Houses." *CP*, 149-158.
Pamela H. Simpson, "Cheap, Quick, and Easy: The Early History of Rock-faced Concrete Block Building." *PVA-III*, 108-118.
14. Wednesday 11 February 2009\
Buildings as Domestic Space
Readings: Dell Upton, "Vernacular Domestic Architecture in 18th-Century Virginia." *CP*, 315-335.
15. Friday 13 February 2009
Domestic Space Form and Function
Mark R. Wenger, "The Dining Room in Early Virginia." *PVA-III*, 149-159.
16. Monday 16 February 2009
Changing Function in Domestic Space
Readings: Mark R. Wenger, "The Central Passage in Virginia: Evolution of an 18th-Century Living Space." *PVA-II*, 137-149.
Assignment #1 due

17. Wednesday 18 February 2009
Buildings as Public Settings
Readings: Carl Lounsbury, "The Structure of Justice: The Courthouses of Colonial Virginia." *PVA-III*, 214-226.
18. Friday 20 February 2009
Buildings as Public Settings
Readings: Kingston W. Heath, "False-Front Architecture on Montana's Urban Frontier." *PVA-III*, 199-213.
19. Monday 23 February 2009 **MIDTERM EXAMINATION**
20. Wednesday 25 February 2009
Vernacular Religious settings
Readings: Dell Upton, "Anglican Parish Churches in 18th-Century Virginia." *PVA-II*, 90-101.
21. Friday 27 February 2009
Field Trip #2 The Berry Plain Slave Quarter
 *******Spring Break February 28—March 9*******
22. Monday 9 March 2009
The Vernacular Landscape
Edward T. Price, "The Central Courthouse Square in the American County Seat." *CP*, 124-145.
23. Wednesday 11 March 2009
History and the Vernacular Landscape
Readings: James Borchert, "Alley Landscapes of Washington." *CP*, 281-291.
24. Friday 13 March 2009
African-American Ethnicity in House and Home
Readings: John M. Vlach, "The Shotgun House: An African Architectural Legacy." *CP*, 58-78.
Alice Gray Read, "Making a House a Home in a Philadelphia Neighborhood." *PVA-II*, 192-199.
25. Monday 16 March 2009
Housing Slaves in the Urban Environment
Readings: John M. Vlach, "'Without Recourse to Owners': The architecture of Urban Slavery in the Antebellum South." *PVA IV*, pp. 150-160.
26. Wednesday 18 March 2009
Buildings as Manifestations of German Ethnicity I
Readings: Edward A. Chappell, "Acculturation in the Shenandoah Valley: Rhenish Houses of the Massanutten Settlement." *CP*, 27-57.
27. Friday 20 March 2009
Buildings as Manifestations of German Ethnicity II
Readings: William Tischler and Christopher S. Witmer, "The Housebarns of East-Central Wisconsin." *PVA-II*, 102-110.

28. Monday 23 March 2009
 European Building Types in America
 Theodore H. Prudon, "The Dutch Barn in America: Survival of a Medieval Structural." *CP*, 204-216.
29. Wednesday 25 March 2009
 Tenants and the Working Class vernacular
 Readings: Paul Groth, "'Marketplace' Vernacular Design: The Case of Downtown Rooming House." *PVA-II*, 179-191.
30. Friday 27 March 2009
 The vernacular study of 'Life in the Fast Lane'
 Readings: Paul Hirshorn and Steven Izenour, "Learning from Hamburgers: Architecture of 'White Tower' Lunch Counters," *Architecture Plus* (June 1973), 46-55.
31. Monday 30 March 2009
 The Vernacular study of Leisure Time
 Readings: Chester Leibs, "Miniature Golf Courses." in *Main Street to Miracle Mile: American Roadside Architecture*, 137-151.
32. Wednesday 1 April 2009
 Mass Culture and Vernacular
 Readings: Allan D. Wallis, "House Trailers: Innovation and Accommodation in Vernacular Housing." *PVA-III*, 28-43.
33. Friday 3 April 2009
 Modernizing the Vernacular
 Readings: Elizabeth Collins Cromley, "Modernizing--or 'you never see a screen door on affluent homes,'" *Journal of American Culture* 5 (1982), 71-79.
34. Monday 7 April 2009
 Big Box Vernacular
 Readings: Richard Longstreth, "The Mixed Blessings of Success: The Hecht Company and Branch Store Development after World War II." *PVA VI*, pp. 244-262.
35. Wednesday 9 April 2009
 Composing Survey Strategies
 Readings: Richard Longstreth, "Compositional types in American Commercial Architecture." *PVA, Volume II*, 12-23.
36. Friday 11 April 2009
 Assigning Meaning to Classification in Vernacular Design
 Readings: Thomas Hubka, "Just Folks Designing: Vernacular Designers and the Generation of Form." *CP*, 426-432
37. Monday 13 April 2009
 Architects and the Vernacular Threshold

Readings: Janet Ore, "Jud Yoho, 'the Bungalow Craftsman,' and the development of Seattle Suburbs." *PVA VI*, pp. 231-243.

38. Wednesday 15 April 2009

Changing Meanings in Public Lands

Readings: Martha McNamara, "From Common Land to Public Space: The Frog Pong and Mall at Newburyport, Massachusetts, 1765-1825." *PVA VI*, pp. 77-91.

39. Friday 17 April 2009

Auto Architecture

Readings: Leslie G. Goat, "Housing the Horseless Carriage: America's Early Private Garages." *PVA-III*, 62-72.

40. Monday 20 April 2009

Culturally-Oriented and Symbolic Approaches to Vernacular Architecture

Required Reading: Barbara Rubin, "Aesthetic Ideology and Urban Design." *Common Places*, 482-508.

41. Wednesday 22 April 2009

Talk about what you did

Project #2 is due

42. Friday 24 April 2009

Course Review: So What?

Friday 1 May 2009

8:30am- 11:00 am Final Examination