

University of Mary Washington – Department of Historic Preservation
MATERIAL CULTURE (formerly known as AMERICAN FORMS AND VALUES) - HISP 320
Fall 2019, TR 9:30-10:45, Room 237, Combs Hall

Instructor: Dr. Cristina Turdean
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Tel: 540-654-1310
Office hours: Mon. 2:00 - 4:00, Wed. 10:00 - 1:00, and by appointment
Location: 129 Combs Hall

Course

Description: This course examines the connections between material objects (the “forms”) and ideas, practices, and beliefs (the “values”) that shaped them, for what they can tell us about our past. Course readings focus on a variety of products of human work - from buildings and parks to packaged food and appliances - and introduce students to major themes and methods relevant to the field of material culture, which is instrumental to the work of historic preservationists and museum professionals. Class discussions, screenings, and activities as well as research projects will help students understand the meaning and interpretation of objects as well as how, by raising a unique set of questions, the study of artifacts complements and sometimes challenges documentary records in illuminating the world of earlier generations of Americans.

Learning

Outcomes: Successful completion of this course will prepare the students to

1. identify various theoretical and methodological approaches to the study of material culture and the ways in which historians and other social scientists have applied those ideas to their work
2. use objects as sources in historical research
3. identify and analyze primary and secondary sources to support object-based research

The speaking-intensive component of this course will prepare the students to

4. understand and explain the conventions and expectations of oral communication as practiced by historic preservationists and museum professionals
5. apply theories and strategies for crafting messages (verbal, nonverbal, and visual) for particular audiences and purposes
6. craft oral messages after a conscious process in which various options are reviewed and be able to explain and support their choices
7. meta-communicate about their own communication patterns

Texts: All assigned readings (articles in academic journals and book chapters) are available in electronic format on Canvas.

Canvas: All class materials (syllabus, readings, assignments, etc.) and announcements will be posted on Canvas.

Course Assignments:

Class participation (20%): This class meets as a seminar group to discuss the assigned readings. We will critically evaluate the content, argument, and main themes of each assigned text and formulate conclusions that will be further applied in other class discussions and assignments. Because a sizable percent of the final grade is based on your class participation, you must come to class with all the readings done and prepared to engage in the discussion in a meaningful way. The grade will reflect the quality and frequency of your participation. You can check with me periodically about your partial grade and ask for my help to improve your performance.

Class discussions leading (20%): Once during the semester you will serve as co-leader of class discussions. By 6pm of the day before the class, you and your partner will email your classmates and me a set of 7-8 questions meant to start the class conversation. To facilitate the discussions, you will (1) ask your prepared questions as well as follow-up ones; (2) cover the article's major points and connect it to other readings and general material-culture themes; (3) manage the debate by keeping the discussion focused and allowing everyone to speak.

Class Discussions Portfolio (10%): Four times during the semester, at the end of the class on dates that will not be announced, you will be asked to reflect in writing upon the class discussion of that day by briefly answering two questions on your own comments as well as those of your classmates. Your answers will build your Discussions Portfolio, whose grade will reflect your classroom listening, critical thinking, and responding skills.

Semester Research Project (50%): This assignment requires you to conduct research on an artifact of your choice and:

- (1) write a paper proposal (not graded)
 - (2) write a 1,200-1,500 word essay (Paper # 1 "The Object") that analyzes the artifact and formulates a research question (15%)
 - (3) write a 1,500-1,800 word essay (Paper # 2 "Contextual Essay") that summarizes the results of your research; the paper must use at least two primary and two secondary sources (20%)
 - (4) make a class presentation (8-10 minutes) on the results of your research (20%)
- Separate handouts detail these assignments.

Grading: According to the UMW grading scale, academic performance in this course is graded as follows: A for "unusual excellence"; A-, B+, B, B- for "work distinctly above average"; C+, C, C- for "work of average quality." The final grade has the following components:

1. Class participation	20%
2. Class discussion leading	20%
3. Class discussion portfolio	10%
4. Paper #1 "The Object"	15%
5. Paper #2 "Contextual Essay"	20%
6. Class presentation	15%

Grading scale:	A	4.00	93-100%
	A-	3.70	90-92%
	B+	3.30	87-89%
	B	3.00	83-86%
	B-	2.70	80-82%
	C+	2.30	77-79%
	C	2.00	73-76%
	C-	1.70	70-72%
	D+	1.30	67-69%
	D	1.00	60-66%
	F	0.00	<60%

If a student has a C- or below in the course by the middle of the semester, a report of unsatisfactory (U) will be submitted.

**Academic
Honesty:**

All work in this course is covered by the UMW Code. This refers to the promise you made to your fellow students and the UMW community not to lie, cheat, or steal. Check the following websites to find out more about (1) the UMW Honor Code, Honor Council, policy on academic integrity, and disciplinary sanctions against offenders <https://students.umw.edu/fredericksburghonorcouncil/> and (2) information about plagiarism and how do avoid it <http://students.umw.edu/fredericksburghonorcouncil/citation-resources/> Violations of the UMW Code in this course will be reported to the UMW Honor Council. Please see me if you have questions about proper citation and attribution of sources.

**Office of
Disabilities:**

If you have a disability and need special accommodations in this class, please contact the Office of Disabilities Resources (540- 654-1266) or online at <https://academics.umw.edu/disability/how-to-register/> and bring the official letter to me, preferably by the end of the first week of the semester, so I can take the appropriate steps to meet your needs for the entire length of the semester.

**Title IX
Statement:**

University of Mary Washington faculty are committed to supporting students and upholding the University's *Policy on Sexual and Gender Based Harassment and Other Forms of Interpersonal Violence*. Under Title IX and this Policy, discrimination based upon sex or gender is prohibited. If you experience an incident of sex or gender-based discrimination, we encourage you to report it. **While you may talk to me, understand that as a "Responsible Employee" of the University, I MUST report to UMW's Title IX Coordinator what you share.** If you wish to speak to someone confidentially, please contact the below confidential resources. They can connect you with support services and help you explore your options. You may also seek assistance from UMW's Title IX Coordinator. Please visit <http://diversity.umw.edu/title-ix/> to view UMW's *Policy on Sexual and Gender Based Harassment and Other Forms of Interpersonal Violence* and to find further information on support and resources.

Resources

Stefanie Lucas-Waverly
Title IX Coordinator
Office of Title IX
Fairfax House
540-654-5656
slucaswa@umw.edu

Confidential Resources

On-Campus
Talley Center for Counselling
Lee Hall 106

Student Health Center
Lee Hall 112

Off-Campus
Empowerhouse
540-373-9373

RCASA
540-371-1666

**Attendance,
Absences, and
Tardiness:**

Attendance is required in this class and will be checked at the beginning of each session. I will not excuse absences for medical reasons that are not supported by doctor notes. You are allowed to miss one class during the semester, ideally not during the first part when lectures are scheduled or assignments are introduced. Beyond that, each unexcused absence will cost you 1% of the final grade. Late turn in of assignments is penalized according to each set of assignment guidelines.

Classroom

Etiquette:

Please turn off your cell phone at the beginning of the class. Your effort to arrive to class on time will be highly appreciated. If you need to leave early, please notify me at the beginning of the class.

Weekly Schedule:

Tue., 08/27 Intro and syllabus

Thurs., 08/29 What is material culture? Class exercise.

Thinking About Objects. Theory and Methodology

Tue., 09/03 Turkle, Sherry, ed. *Evocative Objects: Things We Think With*, 3-12 (Introduction), 12-22 ("My Cello"), 102-110 ("The Radio"). Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2007.

Clouse, Abby. "Narratives of Value and the Antiques Roadshow: "A Game of Recognitions." *The Journal of Popular Culture* 41, No. 1 (2008): 3-20.

Thurs., 09/05 Riello, Giorgio. "Things that Shape History: Material Culture and Historical Narratives." In *History and Material Culture: A Student's Guide to Approaching Alternative Sources*, edited by Karen Harvey, 24-26. London: Routledge, 2009.

Tue., 09/10 Dannehl, Karin. "Object Biographies. From Production to Consumption." In *History and Material Culture: A Student's Guide to Approaching Alternative Sources*, edited by Karen Harvey, 123-138. London: Routledge, 2009.

Thurs., 09/12 Prown, Jules David. "Mind in Matter: An Introduction to Material Culture Theory and Method." *Winterthur Portfolio* 17, No. 1 (Spring, 1982): 1-19.

Miller, Leslie Shannon. "The Many Figures of Eve: Styles of Womanhood Embodied in a Late-Nineteenth-Century Corset." In *American Artifacts: Essays in Material Culture*, edited by Jules Prown, 129-147 (browse the rest). East Lansing, MI: Michigan State University Press, 2000.

Tue., 09/17 Skill Building: Using library resources. Guest speaker: Jack Bales, UMW Reference and Humanities Librarian

Thurs., 09/19 Skill Building: (1) Critical thinking, how to read a scholarly article, how to determine the thesis of an article (2) How to lead class discussions, how to handle speaking anxiety. Guest speaker: UMW Speaking Center Tutor.

The Domestic Space

Tue., 09/24 Heathcott, Joseph. "Reading the Accidental Archive: Architecture, Ephemera, and Landscape as Evidence of an Urban Public Culture." *Winterthur Portfolio* 41, No. 4 (Winter 2007): 239-268.

Thurs., 09/26 Ames, Kenneth L. "Meaning in Artifacts: Hall Furnishings in Victorian America." In *Material Culture Studies in America* edited by Thomas J. Schlereth, 206-221. Nashville, TN: The American Association for State and Local History, 1986.

Tue., 10/01 Lyon-Jenness, Cheryl. "Bergamot Balm and Verbenas: The Public and Private Meaning of Ornamental Plants in the Mid-Nineteenth-Century Midwest." *Agricultural History* 73, No. 2 (Spring 1999): 201-221.

- Thurs., 10/03 Skill Building: Compiling bibliographies and essay writing
- The Public Space**
- Tue., 10/08 Schlereth, Thomas J. "The Material Universe of American World Exhibitions." In *Cultural History and Material Culture. Everyday Life, Landscapes, Museums*, 265-299. Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 1992.
- Thurs., 10/10 Savage, Kirk. "The Self-Made Monument: George Washington and the Fight to Erect a National Memorial." *Winterthur Portfolio* 22, No. 4 (Winter, 1987): 225-242.
Paper proposal is due in class (hard copy)
- Tue., 10/15 Fall Break
- Thurs.10/17 Jakle, John A. and Keith A. Sculle. *Remembering Roadside America: Preserving the Recent Past as Landscape and Place*, 29-60 (Chapter 2 "Observing Roadside America"). Nashville: University of Tennessee Press, 2011.
- Issues and Interpretation: Race, Ethnicity and Gender**
- Tue., 10/22 Chung, Sue Fawn and Priscilla Wagers. *Chinese American Death Rituals*, 107-145 (Chapter 4 "Venerate These Bones: Chinese American Funerary and Burial Practices as Seen in Carlin, Elko County, Nevada." Lanham, MD: AltaMira Press, 2005.
- Thurs., 10/24 Osgerby, Bill. "The Bachelor Pad as Cultural Icon. Masculinity, Consumption and Interior Design in American Men's Magazines, 1930-65." *Journal of Design History* 18 No. 1 (Spring 2005): 99-113.
- Tue., 10/29 Rubertone, Patricia. "Monuments and Sexual Politics in New England Indian Country," 232-251 (Chapter 14) in *The Archaeology of Colonialism: Intimate Encounters and Sexual Effects*. New York: Cambridge University Press, 2012.
- Consumerism**
- Thurs., 10/31 Class screening and discussions: *Tupperware. Building An Empire Bowl by Bowl*
Paper #1 is due in class (hard copy)
- Tue., 11/05 Penner, Barbara. "A Vision of Love and Luxury" The Commercialization of Nineteenth-Century American Weddings." *Winterthur Portfolio* 39, No. 1 (Spring 2004): 1-20.
- Thurs., 11/07 Porter Benson, Susan. "Palace of Consumption and Machine for Selling: The American Department Store, 1880-1940." *Radical History Review* No. 21 (Fall 1979): 199-221.
- Technology and Work**
- Tue., 11/12 Lichtman, Sarah A. "Do-It-Yourself Security: Safety, Gender, and the Home Fallout Shelter in Cold War America." *Journal of Design History* 19, No. 1 (Spring 2006): 39-55.
- Thurs., 11/14 Shrum, Rebecca K. "Selling Mr. Coffee Design, Gender, and the Branding of a Kitchen Appliance." *Winterthur Portfolio* 46, No. 4 (Winter 2012): 271-298.
- The Body as Material Culture**
- Tue., 11/19 Klem, Amelia. "A Life of Her Own Choosing: Anna Gibbons' Fifty Years as a Tattooed Lady." *The Wisconsin Magazine of History*, Vol. 89, No. 3 (Spring, 2006): 28-39.
Skill Building: Class presentations. Guest Speaker: UMW Speaking Center Tutor
- Thurs., 11/21 Class presentation (I)
Paper # 2 is due in class on your final presentation day (hard copy)
- Tue., 11/26 Class presentation (II)
Paper # 2 is due in class on your final presentation day (hard copy)
- Thurs., 11/28 Thanksgiving Break
- Tue., 12/03 Class presentation (III)
Paper # 2 is due in class on your final presentation day (hard copy)
- Thurs., 12/05 Class presentation (IV)
Paper # 2 is due in class on your final presentation day (hard copy)