

## **RACE, SPACE, + ARCHITECTURE**

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Arch 6160  
Fall 2011  
T/Th 12:05 – 1:25 pm  
Arch East 309

Professor Benjamin Flowers  
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Hinman 358a  
Office hours: R 11 am-Noon

### **COURSE OVERVIEW**

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This course examines the intersections of space and architecture with race. That is to say, students are encouraged to explore the ways in which notions of race inform the production of space and architecture, and the fashion in which that act of production can and does reinscribe relations of power, hierarchies of race, and positions of privilege. At the same time, the course explores how and why unions and divisions founded upon racial ideologies have in the past and continue today to profoundly shape our built landscape (both city and suburb). As we move through the urban landscape, how do our perceptions of space change when the everyday is complicated via historical knowledge? Do we regard the Capitol of the United States differently upon learning that its construction depended on slave labor? Do we think any differently about walking through Five Points in Atlanta after learning that in 1906 it served as a gathering place for white mobs that attacked and killed black residents? Is the geography of our everyday lives more or less integrated than that of our parents? How has architecture, as a discipline and practice, challenged or elided these divisions? How do these divisions—whether obvious and violent, technocratic and aloof, or excused as the work of an invisible hand—shape and inform architecture's role as a conveyor of social power? How have architects—as a social group, as a labor market, and as arbiters of distinction—embraced or resisted integration in the 20<sup>th</sup> century?

### **CLASS PARTICIPATION AND ATTENDANCE**

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This course is organized as a seminar, with the expectation that students will exercise critical reading, thinking, and writing skills; furthermore, class discussion will be the foundation for the learning experience, not an addendum to it. Unexcused absences from class will lower your final grade.

### **ASSIGNMENTS**

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There are three major assignments for the course, each worth 25% of your final grade. The three are linked thematically at a minimum and possibly related to one another in more profound tectonic or site-related sense. Attendance and participation is worth 25%.

#### **For all assignments:**

Students will work in fixed teams of 2 or 3

### **READINGS:**

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1. Bayor, Ron. *Race and the Making of Atlanta* (University of North Carolina Press, 2000)
2. Barton, Craig, ed. *Sites of Memory: Perspectives on Architecture and Race* (Princeton Architectural Press, 2001)

3. Davis, Mike. *Magical Urbanism: Latinos Reinvent the U.S. City* (Verso, 2001)
4. Edelman, Murray. "Space and the Social Order," *Journal of Architectural Education* (1978)
5. Ellison, Ralph. *Invisible Man* (Vintage, 1947)
6. Flowers, Benjamin. "Race, Space, and Architecture in Oakland Cemetery," *Scapes* 6 (Fall 2007)
7. Grandison, Ian. "Negotiated Space: The Black College Campus as a Cultural Record of Postbellum America," *American Quarterly* 51:3 (1999)
8. Herod, Andrew and Luis Aguiar, "Cleaners and the Dirty Work of Neoliberalism," *Antipode* 38:3 (2006)
9. Keating, Larry. "Atlanta Politics and the Governing Elite," in *Atlanta: Race, Class, and Urban Expansion* (Temple University Press, 2001).
10. McCann, Eugene J. "Race, Protest, and Public Space: Contextualizing Lefebvre in the U.S. City," *Antipode* (vol. 31 No. 2, 1999: 163-84)
11. Melville, Herman. "Benito Cereno" (1855)
12. Mosley, Walter. *Devil in a Blue Dress* (W.W. Norton, 1990)
13. Nandrea, Lorri. "'Graffiti Taught Me Everything I Know About Space': Urban Fronts and Borders" *Antipode* 31:1 (1999)
14. Pulido, Laura. "Rethinking Environmental Racism: White Privilege and Urban Development in Southern California" *Annals of the Association of American Geographers* 90(1): 12-40, 2000.
15. Roediger, David. *The Wages of Whiteness: Race and the Making of the American Working Class* (Verso, 1991)
16. Vale, Lawrence. *Architecture, Power, and National Identity* (Yale University Press, 1992)
17. Weyeneth, Robert. "The Architecture of Racial Segregation: The Challenges of Preserving the Problematic Past," *The Public Historian* (vol. 27 No. 4, Fall 2005: 11-44)
18. Wiese, Andrew. "Places of Our Own: Suburban Black Towns Before 1960," *Journal of Urban History* (vol. 19 No. 3, May 1993: 30-54)
19. Wilkins, Craig. *The Aesthetics of Equity: Notes on Race, Space, Architecture, and Music* (University of Minnesota Press, 2007)
20. Wolfe, Tom. *A Man in Full* (Farrar, Strauss, and Giroux, 1998)

## CLASS SCHEDULE

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### Week One

- 08.21 Course Introduction
- 08.23 Roediger, "Introduction," from *The Wages of Whiteness*

### Week Two

- 08.28 Edelman, "Space and the Social Order" work in groups on site of power  
Barton, excerpt from *Sites of Memory*
- 08.30 Ellison, excerpt from *Invisible Man* work in groups on site of power

### Week Three

- 09.04 Weyeneth, "The Architecture of Racial Segregation"
- 09.06 Flowers, "Race, Space, and Architecture in Oakland Cemetery"

### Week Four

- 09.11 Site of power assignment due (group one)
- 09.13 Site of power assignment due (group two)

### Week Five

- 09.18 Davis, *Magical Urbanism*
- 09.20 Davis, *Magical Urbanism*

### Week Six

- 09.25 Herod and Aguiar, "Cleaners and the Dirty Work of Neoliberalism"
- 09.27 Read McCann, "Race, Protest, and Public Space: Contextualizing Lefebvre in the U.S. City"

### Week Seven

- 10.02 First Intervention proposals Due
- 10.04 First Intervention proposals Due

### Week Eight

- 10.09 Keating, "Atlanta Politics and the Governing Elite"
- 10.11 Mosley, *Devil in a Blue Dress*

### Week Nine

- 10.16 No Class; Fall Break
- 10.18 Vale, excerpt from *Architecture, Power, and National Identity*

### Week Ten

- 10.23 Bayor, "City Building and Racial Patterns"
- 10.25 Bayor, "City Building and Racial Patterns"

Week Eleven

- 10.30 Melville, "Benito Cereno"
- 11.01 Melville, "Benito Cereno"

Week Twelve

- 11.06 Wolfe, excerpt from *A Man in Full*
- 11.08 Nandrea, "Graffiti Taught Me Everything I Know About Space": Urban Fronts and Borders

Week Thirteen

- 11.13 Pulido, "Rethinking Environmental Racism: White Privilege and Urban Development in Southern California"
- 11.15 Final Project

Week Fourteen

- 11.20 Final Project
- 11.22 No Class: Thanksgiving Break

Week Fifteen

- 11.27 Air of Injustice
- 11.29 Wiese, "Places of Our Own"

1) Students with disabilities requiring special accommodations must obtain an accommodations letter from the ADAPTS Office [[www.adapts.gatech.edu](http://www.adapts.gatech.edu)] to ensure appropriate arrangements.

2) Georgia Tech aims to cultivate a community based on trust, academic integrity and honor. Students are expected to act according to the highest ethical standards. For policy information on Georgia Tech's Academic Honor Code, please see [[http://www.catalog.gatech.edu/rules\\_regulations/#18](http://www.catalog.gatech.edu/rules_regulations/#18)].

3) All cell phones should be turned off during class and when entering the classroom.

4) In case of emergency (i.e. fire, accident, criminal act), please call the Georgia Tech Police at 894-2500. Please note that Perry Minyard, IT Support Administrator is also a firefighter and an Emergency Medical Technician (EMT) certified in performing CPR.

## RACE, SPACE, + ARCHITECTURE

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### Project 1: Site of Power

I enjoy my life with the compliments of Monopolated Light & Power. Since you never recognize me even when in closest contact with me, and since, no doubt, you'll hardly believe that I exist, it won't matter if you know that I tapped a power line leading into the building and ran it into my hole. Before that I lived in the darkness into which I was chased, but now I see. I've illuminated the blackness of my invisibility—and vice versa.

—Ralph Ellison

Phrases like 'knowing one's place' or 'a woman's place' still imply both spatial and political meanings.

—Dolores Hayden

This project is a meditation on place. It asks you to consider (within the context of Georgia Tech and Atlanta) "what is your place?" How do you know where you place is? How do you know when others are "out of place?"

You may want to look back at some of our readings so far and think about how the authors articulated the relationship between space, race, and power in similar or dissimilar fashions. How do spaces empower and disempower us and those around us in our daily lives? How do institutions depend on a spatial articulation of power to maintain authority? How is neighborhood identity (an almost always "raced" condition) revealed, controlled, manipulated, or even elided across space and through the control of space?

#### **Format:**

1. Photo-document your site of power.
2. Develop a simple site plan and site-section of existing conditions
3. Describe, in writing, the conditions of your site and how it relates to our interest in an analysis of power relations concerned with race.

**Research:** This exercise is designed, ideally, to take place on the campus of Georgia Tech. You may, however, consider the city of Atlanta as a whole if you wish. Regardless of where your site is located, you should plan on researching the site. What part of campus (or city) are you located in? How old is it? What uses has it supported? Who uses it now? What times of day and night is it most active? Least active? How are space and power related there?

**Presentation:** 10 minute in-class presentation. A minimum of 5 slides; no more than 10. Summarize your site, its history, and its present condition.

**Turn in:** Upload your presentation to T-Square in the folder titled "Site of Power"

**Grading:** 200 points total, divided evenly between quality of visual and textual/spoken analysis.

**Due:** Week Four

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### **Project 2: Intervention**

Your assignment for this project is to develop 2-3 proposed interventions for your site of power.

As noted in class, the hope is that your intervention will achieve one or more of the following: expose the relationship between the built environment and power in your site; challenge the hierarchy (or hierarchies) of power at that site; re-order the hierarchy of power or relationship between power and the built environment in your site.

The intervention need not be tectonically complex; in fact, often the best interventions are quite simple. If, however, you wish to devise a more physically complex intervention, that too is welcome.

If you wish to beta-test or prototype elements of your proposals, please do so. Some initial physical engagement with your site of power is desirable at this stage.

**Format:** You will develop a group of 2 or 3 possible interventions to your site of power. These can be documented in the mode you think is best.

**Presentation:** You will have 10 minutes to make your presentation.

**Research:** We will look at a variety of interventions in class over the next two weeks.

**Grading** is as before: visuals are worth 100 points, analysis 100 points.

**Turn in:** Upload your presentation to T-Square in the folder titled "Intervention"

**Due:** Week Seven

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### **Project 3: Installation + Intervention**

#### **Final Project**

This project is the culmination of the reading, discussion, and research we have conducted this semester. The goal is for you to realize the installation of your intervention into a site of power.

We have looked at a wide variety of methods for intervening into the urban landscape, and by now you have proposed several preliminary proposals for your own intervention. Your final project should incorporate the comments and criticism you received from me and your colleagues.

As noted in class, the hope is that your intervention will achieve one or more of the following: expose the relationship between the built environment and power in your site; challenge the hierarchy (or hierarchies) of power at that site; re-order the hierarchy of power or relationship between power and the built environment in your site.

**Presentation:** 10 minute presentation.

**Turn in:** Upload your complete presentation, not just the 10 minute version, to T-Square in the folder titled "Installation + Intervention"

**Grading:** Visual/Structural rigor and coherence: 150 points  
Analytical rigor and complexity: 150 points

**Due:** Weeks Thirteen and Fourteen