

# A6709 INTERIORS OF THE RECENT PAST :: SYLLABUS

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Office Hours: By Appointment

## COURSE DESCRIPTION

This course will examine interiors of the 20th century in various categories including; commercial, residential, furniture and finishes, domestic, and finally the practice of preserving interiors. The design of interiors leading up to the 20th century was largely dictated by architects, however a breakthrough in commercial production of materials after the industrial revolution allowed for a new professional category; interior designers and decorators in both commercial and residential contexts. We will discuss this new wave of professional design and the commercialization of interiors through the emergence of home stores, magazines for the everyday housewife, and other manufactured goods. The course will conclude on the practice of preserving interiors through the listing of spaces on local, state, and national register; researching interiors; and restoring interiors using appropriate methods and vendors.

## GRADING

20% - Class participation (attendance; discussion; etc.)

50% - Weekly Assignments

30% - Final Project

## ATTENDANCE

Students should plan to attend all classes, however if a student is sick or unable to attend a class please notify the instructor in advance of the absence.

## WEEKLY ASSIGNMENT

Weekly assignments will consist of an exercise that reinforces each week's topic. Completed assignments will be uploaded to Courseworks through Dropbox.

## FINAL PROJECT

The final project will consist of the selection of a 20<sup>th</sup> century New York City Interior Landmark from a list that will be provided to students in class. Students will be required to visit the site, take photos of the existing interior space (if possible), read the original designation report, and prepare a 5-7 minute presentation to show in class. Analyze the space and circumstances surrounding designation. Why is this site an interior landmark? What portions of the space does the designation cover? Has it gone through significant changes over time? Students will also submit a final paper (2-3 pages) summarizing their findings and recommendations. Send presentation prior to class via Courseworks so that it is loaded and ready when class starts.

## RECOMMENDED TEXTS

Ireland, Jeannie. *History of Interior Design*. New York: Fairchild Books, Inc., 2009.

Hinchman, Mark. *History of Furniture: A Global View*. New York: Fairchild Books, Inc. 2009.

Pile, John F. *History of Interiors*. Hoboken : J. Wiley & Sons, c2005.

Smith, C. Ray. *Interior Design in 20<sup>th</sup> Century America: A History*. New York: Harper and Row Publishers, 1987.

Supplemental materials and additional references are posted on Courseworks.

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## WEEKLY SCHEDULE

**Assignment #1:** Send a photo of an interior that appeals to you in some way. Be prepared to describe and discuss the components of the design that you find most interesting. If applicable and available, provide the name of the designer and date of the room.

**Reading:** Chapter 11 - Pile, John F. *History of Interiors*. Hoboken : J. Wiley & Sons, c2005. (Posted on Courseworks)

### WEEK 1

**Monday, September 8th**

**Topic: Creating a Context for 20<sup>th</sup> Century Interiors: A brief history of interior design**

#### **In Class:**

Review of Assignment #1

Lecture – The Industrial Revolution, the availability of new materials, and influential styles and architects.

**Assignment #2:** Send a photograph of a 20<sup>th</sup> century commercial interior that you have personally visited (in New York or otherwise). Be prepared to describe and discuss the components of the design that you find most interesting. If applicable and available, provide the name of the designer and date of the room.

### WEEK 2

**Monday, September 15<sup>th</sup>**

**Topic: Commercial Interiors**

#### **In Class:**

Review of Assignment #2

Lecture – Principle styles, trends, architects, and designers of commercial interiors including: Frank Lloyd Wright, Walter Gropius, Mies Van der Rohe, Alvar Aalto, Alexander Girard, SOM, Eero Saarinen, Louis Kahn, Philip Johnson, Russel Wright

**Readings:** Review resources posted on Courseworks

**Assignment #3:** Send a photograph of a 20<sup>th</sup> century piece of furniture. Be prepared to describe and discuss the components of the piece that you find most interesting. If applicable and available, provide the name of the designer and date of the room.

### WEEK 3

**Monday, September 22<sup>nd</sup>**

**Topic: Furniture and Finishes**

#### **In Class:**

Review of Assignment #3

Lecture – Textiles, wallpaper, other finishes, and furniture of the 20<sup>th</sup> century.

**Assignment #4:** Send a photograph of a 20<sup>th</sup> century residential interior. Be prepared to describe and discuss the components of the design that you find most interesting. If applicable and available, provide the name of the designer and date of the room.

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## WEEK 4

**Monday, September 29<sup>th</sup>**

**Topic: Residential Interiors and Decorators**

### **In Class:**

Review of Assignment #4

Lecture - Early interior decorators of the 20th Century including: Elsie De Wolfe, Rose Cumming, Nancy McClelland, Elsie Cobb Wilson, Francis Elkins, Syrie Maugham and Dorothy Draper

**Readings for next week:** Available on Courseworks - Walker, Nancy. *Shaping Our Mother's World*. Jackson: University Press of Mississippi, c2000. (Pages 93-100) and Walker, Nancy. *Women's magazines, 1940-1960: gender roles and the popular press*. Boston : Bedford/St. Martin's, 1998. (Pages 145-146; 182-188)

**Assignment #5:** Send an image of a newspaper or magazine ad from the 1930s-1960s advertising furniture, fabrics, tableware, or home appliances. Be prepared to describe and discuss the components of the advertisement that you find most interesting. If applicable and available, provide the name of the designer and date of the room.

## WEEK 5

**Monday, October 6<sup>th</sup>**

**Topic: The Everyday Housewife**

### **In Class:**

Review of Assignment #5

Lecture – Commercialization of interiors through marketing of new products in magazines, books written for the everyday housewife by professional decorators/designers, and the opening of “good design” stores.

**Readings for next week:** Read the NPS Preservation Briefs posted to Courseworks

**FINAL PRESENTATION/PAPER DUE NEXT WEEK!**

## WEEK 6

**Wednesday, October 8th**

**Topic: Preserving Historic Interiors/Final Presentations**

### **In Class:**

Lecture – Preserving Interiors including policy, practice, and case studies  
Final Presentations