

Syllabus

“Fighting the Good Fight?”

Preservation Advocacy--Past, Present, and Future.

Professor Anthony C. Wood

Session B 2014

Description

“Fighting the Good Fight--Preservation Advocacy Past, Present, and Future.” The preservation of many of our most important individual landmarks and historic districts has depended on successful advocacy campaigns. Whether seeking landmark protection, trying to derail an ill-considered proposal to alter a protected resource, or advancing pro-preservation public policy, preservationists need to have sharply honed advocacy skills and instincts in order to succeed.

Making the case for preservation, developing and energizing a constituency, mastering the policy decision-making processes, creating political will, using media, and designing and implementing effective strategies, are among the essential components of a successful advocacy effort explored in this course. Drawing from preservation’s history, the key principles of advocacy will be discerned, their application analyzed, and their strengths and weaknesses assessed.

Whether the 1940s confrontation with Robert Moses over the future of Manhattan’s Battery, the multi-year effort in the late 1950s and early 1960s to protect Brooklyn Heights, the 1980s campaign for City and Suburban Homes or this decades battle over Edward Durrell Stone’s 2 Columbus Circle, preservation’s past and present offer us a wealth of advocacy examples from which to extract and analyze both the fundamentals and finer points of preservation advocacy. Preservation advocacy case studies provide a rich vein of intellectual capital to mine for insights and lessons that can benefit preservation advocacy efforts in all settings.

Advocacy principles and techniques applicable in a wide range of settings will be extracted and analyzed. In power point and written form, students will prepare, present to the class for evaluation, and refine for submission a detailed case study of a particular advocacy effort. Through lectures and class discussions, the elements, pros and cons, and applications of advocacy approaches, techniques, and strategies will be evaluated. Guest speakers will bring their experiences from the front lines.

In light of technological, societal, and political changes, the future shape of preservation advocacy efforts will also be explored. Are traditional preservation advocacy techniques still effective? Do changes in media offer new opportunities for preservation advocacy? Is the “battle” metaphor for preservation advocacy outdated and harmful to contemporary preservation efforts? The course concludes with a discussion of preservation advocacy in the future.

Assignments

Each student will do a case study. Students can pick either a preservation or non-preservation advocacy (e.g. environmental, health, etc.) effort. In addition to developing a free-standing, footnoted chronology of events and a list of key players (individuals, organizations, governmental entities, others), a narrative describing the historic resource and issues involved, identifying the decision makers and decision-making processes involved, presenting the chain of events, analyzing the advocacy effort involved and extracting lessons from the situation, will be developed. A power point of the case study as a work in progress will be presented to the class for critique and discussion. If a non-preservation subject is chosen, the case study should also extract lessons from the situation that could be applicable to preservation, will be developed.

Grades will be based on class participation, case study presentation in class, and written case-study paper

Following the presentations and responding to the discussion of their work, students will continue to develop, research, and refine their case studies. A final written case-study document is due no later than May 2, 2014.

Course Schedule

Wednesday, March 12, 6-8 p.m.

Session #1: Lecture: Overview, Introduction and discussion of case study assignment.

Wednesday, March 26, 6-8 p.m.

Session #2: Lecture: Essentials of Preservation advocacy

Reading:

Wood, Anthony C. *Preserving New York: Winning the Right to Protect a City's Landmarks*. New York: Routledge, 2008. Chapters: 3-9.

Wednesday, April 2, 6-8 p.m.

Session #3: The future of advocacy: technology/organizations/ class discussion

Reading:

Gladwell, Malcolm, "Small Change: Why the revolution will not be tweeted." *The New Yorker*, October 4, 2010.

http://www.newyorker.com/reporting/2010/10/04/101004fa_fact_gladwell?printable=true¤tPage=all

PreservationVision website: description, ideas, and final report

<http://www.preservationvision-nyc.org>

Clay Shirkey, "Here Comes Everybody: The Power of Organizing Without Organizations," special focus on chapter 6

Wednesday, April 9, 6-9 p.m. **Note: longer class session**

Session #4: Case study presentations, critique, and class discussion

Reading:

Gilbert, Anne Ashby. *The Fight for City and Suburban Homes: A Model for successful Community Action*. New York: Coalition to Save City & Suburban Homes, Inc. 1998.

Wood, Anthony C. "When the Process Works: A True Story." New York Affairs 7, no. 2 (1982): 97-102.

Wednesday, April 16, 6-9 p.m. **Note: longer class session**

Session #5: Case study presentations, critique and class discussion

Wednesday, April 23 6-8 p.m.

Session #6: Panel and class discussion:

The future of preservation advocacy. Is the battle metaphor outdated? Is it counterproductive? Old strategies, new technologies?

Guests: Franny Eberhart, President, Friends of the Upper East Side Historic Districts, Simeon Bankoff, Ex. Dir, Historic Districts Council, Kate Wood, past Ex. Dir, Landmarks West!

Reading:

Wood, Anthony C. *Preserving New York: Winning the Right to Protect a City's Landmarks*. New York: Routledge, 2008. Epilogue

Final paper due: Wednesday, May 2, 2014 .