

**CourseNo:** ARCHA4510\_001\_2012\_3  
**Meeting Location:** FAYERWEATHER 301  
**Meeting Time:** MR 02:00P-06:00P

**Instructor Information:**

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## INTRODUCTION

Studio I is the central focus of the first semester of the Historic Preservation Program. The goal of this Studio is to give the student the skills to read and document buildings - their history, their design, and their context - by using a wide array of tools, from using your eyes and your other senses to using drawing, photography, writing and research. This studio course will give you the foundation necessary to understand and document buildings, to place them in their cultural continuum, and to make a case for their preservation. In order to help you understand buildings not only as single objects but also as part of a larger context, we focus each year on a particular area of the city. This year we have chosen the West 50s area of Manhattan; it has many interesting buildings, little research has been done on the history of the neighborhood and there are few designated landmarks. We will also be using Woodlawn Cemetery in the Bronx as a laboratory for field documentation and formal analysis.

Buildings are a complex repository of knowledge, transmitted and modified by all those who participate in making them, using them, and transforming them. Each one of the "lenses" we use to read a building tends to reveal and emphasize certain aspects: drawing - for example - tends to be a good tool for the understanding of a building's design, photography can give us insights into relationships of color, texture and context, and research gives us a rich understanding of the building's historical determinants. All these "realities" are important as we try to document buildings so that we may understand what they can contribute to our life today.

### The Studio

As the name of this class makes clear, this is a studio. In this studio, each student has her/his own desk and each works independently at that desk. Students will be supplied with computers equipped with many important programs. You may also wish to work on your own laptop. Although you will be working independently on each project, there will be a great deal of give and take between you and your studio neighbors. Indeed, this is a critical part of the studio. You will find that you will learn more from discussion and critique with your colleagues than from your professors. Thus, it is imperative that you actually work in the studio. You should not do your studio work at home by yourself.

In the studio format, students meet with one or more faculty members during each studio period to discuss and critique the students' work. The TAs will issue a schedule each week so you will know approximately when a professor will be at your desk and which professor(s) will be meeting with you. You need to be prepared for this meeting, with your work easily accessible, not hidden away on your computer. Print out photographs, drawings, etc., and have your notes handy.

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### Supporting Workshops

The Digital Visualization workshop is offered in the first half of the semester to familiarize students who elect to take it with the conventions of traditional architectural representation (plan, section, elevation, etc.) and to also introduce students to current computer programs and their possibilities

(drawing, layout and photo tools, CAD, GIS, etc.). (For students who are interested in refining their understanding of programs such as GIS, other short courses are available as well.) As a general observation, the purpose of the Historic Preservation Program is NOT to teach CAD or any other such tool as an end in itself, but rather to introduce available tools and their possibilities so that students may use them as appropriate in their investigations. The Digital Visualization workshop's schedule is designed to enhance the studio's progression as well as to open up possibilities for further research.

## **The Assignments**

In the course of this semester you will complete five assignments, each intended to familiarize you with one aspect of a building's documentation, analysis, interpretation and, ultimately, evaluation. As each exercise introduces you to a new skill, we will ask you to continue to use, and refine, the skills learned in the previous exercises: thus the first assignment "looking" is folded into the second assignment "looking + photographing," which is in turn folded into the third assignment "Looking + Photographing + Field Documentation" - etc.

We have divided the semester into five problems of varying lengths. Four of these problems will focus on this year's study area in Manhattan in the West 50s, and our field documentation assignment will take place at Woodlawn Cemetery in the Bronx.

### **Project 1: Using Your Senses**

Assigned: September 6

Walking tour: SUNDAY September 9

Due: September 10

A quick problem where you will learn as much as you can from an assigned building only by using your senses. No research is permitted. You will give a three-minute oral presentation supported by a single PowerPoint slide and will submit a brief written description of the building's main facade.

### **Project 2: Photography**

Assigned: September 10

Lecture: September 10 in studio (5:00 p.m.)

Due: September 13

You will prepare a two-minute photographic essay, limited to three images, to be presented to the class.

### **Project 3: Field Documentation and Formal Analysis**

Assigned: September 17

Lecture I (Françoise Bollack & Ward Dennis): September 17 at Woodlawn Cemetery (2:30)

Field tour: September 17 at Woodlawn Cemetery

Lecture II (Françoise Bollack): September 24 in studio

Archive Tour: October 1 in Avery Archives

Due: October 15

This exercise will introduce you to field documentation, formal analysis and the basics of archival research. The purpose of this exercise is to understand how to do field documentation and how a building's design contributes to its significance. All fieldwork will take place at Woodlawn Cemetery in the Bronx.

You will be introduced to archival research using the incomparable resources of Avery Library and Columbia's online resources.

For the final product, you will prepare measured drawings of a mausoleum at Woodlawn Cemetery, including plans, elevations, sections and details. Your five-minute PowerPoint presentation will also include your research findings and, in graphic form, a formal analysis of your mausoleum using these same measured drawings.

#### **Project 4: Research**

Assigned: October 18

Archive Tour 1: October 18 in Avery Classics

Lecture (Ward Dennis): October 18 in studio

Archive tour 2: October 22 at Municipal Archives/Department of Finance

Due: November 12

You will be assigned two buildings about which you will undertake basic historical research, which you will summarize in a five-minute PowerPoint presentation and in a written paper focusing on one of your two buildings.

#### **Project 5: Why Save This Building?**

Assigned: November 15

Lecture (Ward Dennis): November 15

Final presentation: December 13

Final paper due: December 17

Each student will select a more difficult building on which to undertake the full range of site observation, photography, research, documentation and analysis in order to determine the building's significance and make an argument for its preservation. The final product will be a written paper (due on December 20) and a ten-minute oral presentation in front of the program's faculty and invited guests (on December 17).

As you may have noticed, you will be asked to present your findings in a variety of formats.

Presentation skills are extremely important for preservationists, since we frequently need to make the case for a building at a public hearing or before officials. We also hope that you will present papers at professional conferences. Take these presentations seriously. You may be nervous the first time, but the more often you present before an audience the more relaxed you will become.

Submitting your work: All written assignments should be double spaced and properly sourced and footnoted. You may use whichever footnote/reference style you are familiar with, so long as you are consistent (if you need guidance, please refer to the Chicago Manual of Style.) Photographs should be properly credited and captioned. Presentations will be on the flat-screen monitor in Studio or via projector. You should be aware of the medium as it will impact your layout and image size - what works on a smaller flat screen with high resolution may be less effective on a larger, lower-resolution projection (and what works on paper may be completely different). Photos should be of an adequate size to make your point clearly; thumbnails are not acceptable.

You will be asked to submit archival copies of all assignments - presentations and papers - both digitally and printed (presentations should be printed at 11x17).

## Grading

You will be graded on the quality of your work, on the effort that you put into your work, on your participation in studio discussions, and on the improvement that you have made in the course of the semester.

## Reading List

The following is a list of general works that you might find helpful for this course. All students should own the books marked with a (\*); the remainder of the books are optional to own. Most of the books on this list can be found in Avery Library, and are held out on reserve on the Studio I shelf.

\*Harris, Cyril (ed.). Illustrated Dictionary of Historic Architecture. New York: Dover Publications, 1983.

\*Postal, Matthew (ed.). Guide to New York City Landmarks, 4th edition. New York: John Wiley & Sons, Inc., 2009.

\*Willensky, Elliot and Norval White. AIA Guide to New York City, 4th edition. New York: Three Rivers Press, 2000.

Burns, John A. Recording Historic Structures, 2d edition. New York: John Wiley & Sons, Inc., 2003.

Ching, Frank. Architectural Graphics. New York: Van Nostrand Reinhold. 1996.

Ching, Frank. Building Construction Illustrated. New York: Van Nostrand Reinhold. 1991.

Hale, Jonathan. The Old Way of Seeing. New York: Houghton Mifflin, 1994. (AA 2540 H13)

McDonald, Jr., Travis C. Understanding Old Buildings: The Process of Architectural Investigation. Washington, DC: National Park Service. Preservation Brief #35, September, 1994.

National Register of Historic Places staff. Bulletin #15: How to Apply the National Register Criteria for Evaluation. Washington, DC: National Park Service. September, 1990 - 2002.  
<http://www.nps.gov/history/nr/publications/bulletins/nrb15/> [The National Park Service publishes a series of bulletin on how to prepare National Register nominations and how to apply the criteria of

evaluation to particular building types. The full list of bulletins is available here:  
<http://www.nps.gov/history/nr/publications/>]

Porphyrios, Demetri (ed.). "Classicism is not a Style." *Architectural Design*, May 6, 1982. (AA 650 6569)

Ramsey, Charles and Harold Sleeper. *Architectural Graphic Standards for Architects, Engineers, Decorators, Builders and Draftsmen*, 2nd edition. New York: John Wiley & Sons, Inc., 1936. [Avery has various editions, up through the present day; the older editions are more useful for this assignment.]

Scott, John S. *A Dictionary of Building*, 2d edition. Baltimore: Penguin Books Inc., 1974.

Summerson, John. *The Classical Language of Architecture*. Cambridge: MIT Press, 1966. (Avery #AA 2560 Su64311)

Summerson, John. *Heavenly Mansions and Other Essays on Architecture*. New York: Norton, 1963. (AA2560 Su641)

Tzonis, Alexander and Liane Lefaivre. *Classical Architecture: The Poetics of Order*. Cambridge: MIT Press, 1986. (AA260 T99)

Unwin, Simon. *Analysing Architecture*. Routledge, 1997. (Avery AA 2500 Un9 and Ware NA 2750.U58 1997)

[This is the first edition and, in our opinion, it is better than the second.]

Unwin, Simon. *Twenty Buildings Architects Should Understand*. Routledge, 2010. (AA650 Un95)

Venturi, Robert. *Complexity and Contradiction in Architecture*. New York: Museum of Modern Art, 1966. (Avery AA2760 V56 and Ware NA 2760.V46)

 [Studio Syllabus.pdf](#)



syllabus