

American Architecture Syllabus

AMERICAN ARCHITECTURE I

A4341 Fall 2012

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Office Hours: Wednesday 12:45-4:00 (Note: on some days I may be a little late since my morning class will often be meeting in the field and it may take a bit of time to get back to Columbia); or stop by any time or make an appointment.

Objectives of the Class

This class will explore the architecture of the United States from the first buildings erected by Europeans in the early seventeenth century through the architecture of the late 19th century. In class, we will examine the iconic architectural monuments erected during this period, ranging from surviving colonial homes to the works of architects such as Peter Harrison, Charles Bulfinch, Thomas Jefferson, Benjamin Henry Latrobe, John Mills, A. J. Davis, Richard Upjohn, Frank Furness, and Henry Hobson Richardson. We will also explore lesser known and vernacular buildings reflecting both folk traditions and the spread of architectural ideas from centers of innovation into small towns and rural landscapes. We will review the evolving forms and styles of architecture and the ideas behind developments in American design, discussing the impact of the ideas of such designers and theoreticians as Frederick Law Olmsted, Andrew Jackson Downing, and Richard Morris Hunt. Class lectures will be supplemented with visits to the rare books and architectural drawings collections at Avery and by two walking tour in New York City.

Requirements

1. Research Paper.

Topic Due: October 11 (at the latest)

Paper Due: November 15

Each student will prepare a 12-15 page paper on a topic relating to some aspect of American architecture during the period covered by this class. You can choose any topic that interests you, so long as I have approved it. You can focus on a building or group of buildings, on a building material, on the development of a building type or style, on the work of a particular architect, on architecture in a particular locale, on the restoration of a particular building, etc. What you must do, is analyze your topic within the larger framework of the architecture of America. Your paper will not simply be a description of the topic chosen, but must place this material within a larger context. This is an academic paper and will include:

-a full bibliography of all sources consulted (published and archival)

-full end notes or footnotes (notes with author's name and page number, placed within the body of

the text are not acceptable)

-appropriate illustrations with the source of each noted

If you are not sure how to create notes and a bibliography check a style guide such as *A Manual of Style* (often referred to as the "Chicago Manual" since it is published by the University of Chicago) which is available online.

2. House Museum Presentations - Tuesday, October 23 at 5:30. Students will be assigned in small groups to visit a house museum in the metropolitan area and give a five-minute presentation on the house and the level of interpretation of architecture at the house.

3. Final Exam. The exam is optional; however, the highest grade that you can receive without taking the exam is a pass.

4. Readings. The basic text for the class will be Leland Roth, *American Architecture: A History*. I have ordered copies of this book from Book Culture on West 112th Street between Broadway and Amsterdam Avenue.

Additional readings will be assigned for each class and they have been compiled in a reader that can be purchased at Village Copier on Broadway. Most readings are also available online through Avery Library. I have tried to limit the readings so that each of you has time to complete all of the assigned pages. I will also add suggested readings or notable books and articles on specific topics.

5. Attendance. Your attendance is expected at each class and the TA will be taking attendance.

American Architecture I Class Schedule (subject to change)

Class I: September 6. Introduction;

Spanish, French, and Dutch Colonial Architecture

Class II: September 13. Early Architecture of the English Colonies

Class III: September 20. The Triumph of Georgian Classicism

Class IV: September 27. Neo-Classical Architecture I: The Federal Style

Class V: October 4. Neo-Classicism II: Rational Design and the Greek Revival

Class VI: October 11. Architectural Pattern Books and Hand Books (Meet in Avery Library seminar room - go downstairs, turn left and walk into Art History books stacks - follow the purple floor to Avery Archives). Class will be split into two groups - beginning at 10:30 and 11:45. Paper topic due.

Class VII: October 18. American Utopias?: Prisons, Religious Communities, and Mill Towns

Class VIII: Tuesday, October 23 at 5:30. House Museum Presentations. 114 Avery

Class IX: October 25: Downing, Davis and the Romantic Picturesque vs New Technologies and New Forms in American Architecture

Class X: November 1. Central Park Tour (Meet at the General Sherman statue on Fifth Avenue north of 59th Street at 11:30).

Class XI: November 8. Eclecticism After the Civil War.

Class XII: November 15. New Roads: Hunt, Furness, Richardson and the American Aesthetic. Paper due.

Special Class: November 28 (Wednesday), 3:00/4:00. The Architectural Drawing. Avery Library Specials Collections (meet in the Avery seminar room). View drawings from Avery's rich collections relating to our period (Upjohn, Davis, etc.) and discuss developments in architectural representations.

Class XIII: November 29: Final class

Class XIV: December 1 (Saturday). New York City as a Case Study: Greenwich Village Tour (Meet at the northeast corner of Sixth Avenue and West 10th Street) at 11:30

Final: date to be announced



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