CourseNo: ARCHA6852_001_2013_3

Meeting Location: AVERY HALL 300

Meeting Time: R 04:00P-06:00P

Instructor Information: Jessica Lee Williams

Interpretation is a form of intervention on a historic structure. This course is designed to introduce students to the theory and practice of interpretation, a process of communicating the meanings of a cultural resource to an audience. Through readings, class discussions, and case studies, students will explore such topics as philosophies of interpretation, methods of interpretation, and current issues and challenges in interpretation. The course draws upon literature from historic preservation, museum studies, public history, and related disciplines. As interpretation is based on sound scholarship, this course stresses the importance of linking research and analysis to the site in question and examines methods of presenting the results of this scholarship to the public in informative, provocative, and engaging ways.

In the past, many interpreted sites functioned as museum-like experiences that opened their doors to visitors. While this model remains, contemporary technologies have expanded the possibilities for interpreters of historic structures, making it possible to interpret sites that do not allow public access or offer virtual experiences for audiences that may never visit the site. This course challenges students to propose an interpretation project for a historic site that is not currently open to the public. Each student will identify a structure, group of structures, landscape or other historic site and make the case for interpretation. From there, each student will produce an individual interpretation project, which will be informed by scholarly research, class discussions, and reviews.