

Art History O152: American Architecture
Temple University, Department of Art History
Fall Semester 2005

Main Campus
Anderson Hall, room 8
Tuesday, Thursday 2:40-4:00 PM

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Office hours: Monday, 12:00-3:00 PM

- * E-mail is generally the best method of contact during non-office hours.
- * Please allow 48-hours for an e-mail response.

GENERAL COURSE INFORMATION

Topic and Scope of the Course: This course will examine American architecture from the late 18th century to the present, not as an insular phenomenon, but as part of a transnational history of architectural developments. While the course focuses on buildings and architectural projects constructed within the national boundaries of the United States between 1776 and the present, this focus necessarily also involves a wider historical and geographical scope, including the North Atlantic region as a cultural sphere; the architecture of colonizing powers, especially England; international codes of classical and modernist architecture emanating from Europe; and the architecture of regions eventually conquered by the United States, especially in the southwest.

The architecture of the United States has resulted from a complex process of transnational exchange. On the one hand, efforts to import architectural paradigms from Europe and elsewhere frequently also transformed those paradigms in unexpected ways. The processes of translation and transplantation into the American context were rarely simple or transparent. On the other hand, even the most ardent efforts to produce a purely American architecture always ironically depended on the very same foreign systems and ideals they sought to reject. Thus, the fluctuating boundaries of American architecture have continually been redrawn in a cultural dialog with developments elsewhere. This course will focus on key moments of transformation and crisis in this dialog, including the following: the transatlantic era of revolution at the end of the 18th century; the industrialization of American architecture in relation to Victorian Britain; American uses and rejections of the French Beaux Arts Academy around 1900; American reinventions of Spanish colonial and 'southwest' architecture in the 1920s; the American legacy of the German Bauhaus between 1935 and 1970; and postmodern and contemporary architecture under the patronage of international capitalism.

The course will investigate, not only the ways in which American society has shaped its buildings, but also how its buildings shaped (or were expected to shape) American society. As an art form which is not only vast in scale but also vastly expensive to produce, architecture has always been directed by an elite minority while having visual and physical impacts on the vast majority. It is an art form, not only of visual impressions but also of bodily disciplines, literally enclosing and organizing the spaces of those who inhabit it. Through field trips, this course will also explore this embodied dimension of architecture as a social and aesthetic medium.

Syllabus, American Architecture, p. 2

Purpose of the Course: This course is introductory and assumes no background in architecture or architectural history. It seeks to provide students with an introduction to three basic foundations for studying American architecture: 1) a set of conceptual and visual tools for analyzing buildings and architectural images in general; 2) a critical overview of issues and problems faced by architects in the last three centuries; and 3) a historical sense of the major periods and developments in American history that directly impacted its architecture. Through textbook readings, lectures and field trips in the city of Philadelphia, students should be able to look at the buildings all around them in a new, historical light and begin to recognize the major movements and building types within American architecture. Students should also become more aware of the material and visual qualities of architecture general, while also learning how to translate observation and knowledge into persuasive verbal analysis. In addition, students will be expected to begin to develop research skills through an original investigation into a particular aspect of American architecture.

Class Format: This course will be a lecture course, with opportunities for questions, discussion and independent research. The lectures and readings are intended to provide a broad, historical overview of American architecture in its international context. This historical background will then be supplemented by explorations of the city of Philadelphia, with its 325-year history of building activity. In addition to the required field trips, at least one other optional field trip will be planned, based on availability and class interest.

Required Texts: Leland Roth, *American Architecture, A History*, (Cambridge: Westview Press, 2001); Mark Gelernter, *American Architecture in Its Social and Cultural Context*, (Hanover: University Press of New England, 2001); John Summerson, *The Classical Language of Architecture*, (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1991); Kenneth Frampton, *Modern Architecture, A Critical History* (London: Thames & Hudson, 1992). All books are available at the Temple University Bookstore.

COURSE SCHEDULE

August 30: Course overview

September 1: Early European Settlements:

Roth Chapter 2, pp. 39-67; Gelernter, pp. 55-64

PART I: COLONIAL ERA AND EARLY REPUBLIC

September 6, 8: English Colonial Elites and the Georgian Style

Roth pp. 69-101; Gelernter pp. 35-42, 65-92; Summerson, 7-20

September 13, 15: Revolutionary Classicism: Political Metaphors

Roth pp. 107-147; Gelernter pp. 97-129; Summerson, pp. 20-26, 34-40

September 20, 22: The Greek Revival: Archaeology and Gentility

Roth pp. 151-170; Gelernter pp. 131-139

September 27: Romanticism: the Gothic and the Picturesque

Roth pp. 170-188, 198-204, 211-224; Gelernter pp. 139-152, 167-176

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September 29: Self-Led Field Trip [NO CLASS!]

Assignment to be explained in previous week.

PART II: VICTORIAN AGE AND EARLY MODERNISM

October 4, 6: The 19th Century Industrialization of Architecture

Roth pp. 188-198, 248-251; Gelernter pp. 153-157; Frampton, Part I, pp. 29-39

Saturday October 9th: Mandatory field trip to Eastern State Penitentiary

Exact time to be announced, class will meet at ESP, 22nd St. and Fairmount Ave.

October 11, 13: Richardsonian Romanesque and Chicago School

Roth pp. 251-260, 265-287; Gelernter pp. 176-189; Frampton, Chapter 2, pp. 51-56

October 18, 20: Prairie School and Early Modernist Experiments

Roth pp. 299-317, 265-287; Gelernter pp. 207-229; Frampton, Chapter 3, pp. 57-63

October 25: Mid-Term Exam!

PART III: METROPOLITANISM AND MODERNIST STYLES

October 27: The Beaux Arts and the City Beautiful Movement

Roth pp. 287-299, 317-330; Gelernter pp. 190-207

November 1, 3: The 1920's - Architectural Spectacle and Stylistic Polemics

Roth pp. 339-381, 317-330; Gelernter pp. 230-245, Frampton Chapter 14, pp. 123-129

November 8, 10: European Modernism and the International Style

Roth pp. 381-405; Gelernter pp. 245-259; Frampton Chapters 17 & 18, pp. 149-166

November 15, 17: Modernism as Academic American Architecture

Roth pp. 411-433; Gelernter pp. 261-270; Frampton Chapter 26, pp. 231-237

November 22: Brutalism and the New Monumentality

Roth pp. 434-468; Gelernter pp. 273-281; Frampton Chapter 25, pp. 224-230

November 24: Thanksgiving [NO CLASS!]

PART IV: CONTEMPORARY AND POSTMODERN ARCHITECTURE

November 29, December 1: Postmodernism and Critical Reactions after 1960

Roth pp. 468-513; Gelernter pp. 279-306; Frampton Part III pp. 280-311

December 6: Contemporary Architecture - Contextualizing the Present

Roth pp. 514-542; Gelernter pp. 306-318; Frampton Part III pp. 311-313

FINAL EXAM! Thursday, December 15, 2:00-4:00 PM!!

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

General Requirements:

The course requires attention to lectures; close readings of the assigned pages; the visual observation of actual buildings; and the development of an original research project. Students are responsible not only for the material in the text but also the additional information and themes covered in the lectures. Evaluations will be based on exam performance, attendance, and a research project, consisting of an initial proposal and a final 10-page paper. In addition, there will be two mandatory field trips (one self-led). Course performance will be evaluated primarily on a combination of examinations and written assignments, with some weight given to attendance.

Relative weight of course requirements:

- 1) Research Paper Proposal (10%)
- 2) Self-Led Field Trip Assignment (10%)
- 3) Mid-Term Exam, (20%)
- 4) Research Paper (25%)
- 3) Final Exam: Thursday, December 15, 2:00 - 4:00 PM (25%)
- 5) Class Participation (10%)

Policy on late assignments and class participation:

Late assignments, such as papers, must be submitted electronically through the Blackboard site for the course. Unless there is a written excuse (either for medical or other personal emergency), late assignments will be docked half a grade during the first week of lateness and a full grade for the second week of lateness. Late assignments will not be accepted after two weeks.

Missed examinations can only be made up if there is a valid written excuse for emergency reasons.

The class participation grade is almost entirely based on class attendance, with extra credit accruing for active discussion. Two or fewer unexcused absences will not affect the class participation grade. However, each subsequent absence will deduct 25% of the class participation grade. So, for example, after 6 unexcused absences, the class participation grade might be 0. Absence from the mandatory field trip on October 9th will result in a 0 class participation grade.

Please note: As a rule, incomplete grades are not given in this course. If you cannot be present for the exams, you should not register for the course.

Exceptional Accommodations:

Any student who has a documented need for accommodation based on the impact of a disability should discuss the matter privately with me within the first two weeks of classes. The student should also contact Disability Resources and Services at (215) 204-1280.

ADDITIONAL NOTES:

This syllabus is subject to change, in the event of unforeseen circumstances, or in the case that changes will significantly enhance the quality of the course.