URBDP 587
PRESERVATION AND THE VERNACULAR ENVIRONMENT
Winter 2009

Instructor: Manish Chalana, Assistant Professor, Dept. of Urban Design and Planning
Meeting time: M W: 5:30-6:50 pm
Meeting place: Gould 440
Credits: 3
Format: Interdisciplinary Graduate seminar
Course Website: http://courses.washington.edu/ordinary/
Instructor office hours: M, W: 2-3 pm, or by appointment
Instructor contact info: 448 C Gould, chalana@u.washington.edu, 206-616-6051
Course audience:

- Students in Track II of the Preservation Planning and Design Certificate Program.
- Graduate Students (architecture, landscape, planning, and policy) with an interest in vernacular architecture studies.
- Upper-level undergraduates with special permission from the instructor.

Course Description

The majority of the built environment around us is "vernacular", i.e. shaped by people who are not trained design professionals *per se*. These environments can be as complex, interesting, and informative about our cultures and our pasts as their elite cousins. Yet, design and preservation pedagogy and practice has traditionally focused only on high-style buildings and landscapes designed by trained professionals that are often associated with master designers, and notable individuals, or mainstream events in American history. Recent scholarship and practice have led to a greater attention placed on the value of such environments for the vitality and vibrancy of places. As a result, design and planning professionals are being asked to evaluate their merits by way of adaptive use, contextual design, design and planning policies and guidelines involving community participation. Understanding these environments is an important first step in being able to make any decisions concerning them.

This seminar will set a framework that will allow students to explore the theoretical, methodological, and practical implications of the vernacular environment and their significance in the changing context of places. The subject will be approached through a combination of readings, discussion, and research, all drawing from the fields of vernacular architecture studies, historic preservation, landscape architecture, cultural geography, urban planning and (to a lesser degree) cultural anthropology. The class focuses largely on scholarship and practice in the United States, but there will be some discussion on the vernacular environment in the international context. Students are encouraged to focus their own research papers on any aspect

of such places worldwide. They are also encouraged to go beyond the formal analysis to include issues of race, gender, ethnicity, class, and sexuality in the study of such environments.

Course Requirements and Grade

The course is oriented towards reading, discussion, and independent research. Typically some classes will be instructor-led seminar style discussion to provide necessary background information on the topics. In other classes, however, students will facilitate discussion of weekly readings. The course assignments include:

Seminar participation (20%): Students must actively participate in all classes. A successful session requires that each participant be thoughtful and engaged, critical yet respectful.

To get full credit for seminar participation review all readings, summarize any one article weekly, and post it on the online seminar boards at least 12 hrs before the class meeting time. In the course of the quarter you will post a minimum of ten article summaries using guidelines posted on the course webpage.

Seminar facilitation (10%): During the course of the quarter you will facilitate one seminar in teams of 2-3. After closely reading the materials, the group will post a short list of discussion catalysts on the seminar discussion board. The facilitators will also prepare a 20 minute visual presentation covering the main themes of the readings. During the seminar, the role of facilitators involves a number of objectives

- ensuring that **discussion probes into the major critical issues** raised by the reading in relation to the knowledge and experience of the group
- ensuring that discussion **does not wander repeatedly** into unproductive territory while still allowing for spontaneous exploration
- ensuring that **dialogue remains respectful** while still allowing for critical disagreement
- ensuring that **all voices are heard**

Case Study -- Pike/Pine Conservation Overlay District (30%; 20% report & 10% presentation)

Prepare a 1000-word report on any one block of the Pike/Pine Conservation Overlay District (map on the course webpage), and a visual presentation (preferably an 8-min video with commentary) accompanying it. In the report discuss the following: 1) planning & urban context of the Village, 2) architecture and design elements of the block; 3) historic character; 4) transformations since WWII. Argue why the block is (or was) a good example of vernacular environment and what value it might have for the neighborhood and the city. A visit to the site for photo documentation, field notes/sketches, and archives for historic materials (incl. old maps, and photos) will be needed for successfully completing the project. You may conduct field and archival work in teams of two, but still submit individual reports on your blocks.

Research Paper (40%; 30% final paper & 10% for research proposal)

You are expected to write **an original essay of** roughly 3000-3500 words, not including the **table of contents**, **list of figures** and **bibliography**. The topic for your research paper must remain true to the course's focus on *vernacular environments and historic preservation* issues. You may choose to work on the Pike Pine Urban Center Village for this assignment as well. In addition to being descriptive, your papers should be theoretical and analytical in nature, and address the following requirements:

1) Present topic and your take on it
2) Compare and contrast your topic with others that emerged out of the readings (aka lit review)
3) Present your methodology of investigation including fieldwork, mapping, archival research, etc.
4) Write clearly and in your own words using a style guide. For this you may want to refer to the most recent editions of the *MLA Handbook for Writers of Research Papers* and/or the *MLA Style Manual and Guide to Scholarly Publishing*.
5) Use a variety of sources including primary source; citing them property (including online sources)

A <u>preliminary research proposal</u> (500 word; abstract including a discussion on the topic, case(s), main argument, methodology and sources) should be approved by the instructor no later than Week 6.

Well developed drafts will be accepted for comments until Week 9.

Deadlines are VITAL. There is a penalty of 10% grade reduction in case of late submission that is within three days of the due date; from day 4-7 you will lose 25% of your grade; submissions after day 7 do not earn any credit. Standard exceptions for major medical situations apply; such situations should be discussed with the instructor.

OTHER POLICIES: This class is of course governed by all of the university's student policies, including those on plagiarism and multiple submissions. It is your responsibility to be familiar with these. More information is available on this website:
http://depts.washington.edu/grading/issue1/honesty.htm

Course Readings

<u>The required readings are available on e-reserve</u>. You can access the e-reserves from the UW libraries home page or the course website after you agree to abide by the copyright rules. The readings are organized by topics.

The following books have also been placed on reserve in the AUP Library, as many of the class readings come from them.

Carter, Thomas, ed. **Images of an American Land: Vernacular Architecture in the Western United States** (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1997).

Cromley, Elizabeth and Carter L. Hudgins, eds. **Gender, Class and Shelter: Perspectives in Vernacular Architecture** (Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 1995) Volume V.

Dubrow, Gail and Neile Graham, eds. **Preservation of the Vernacular Environment I and II** (Seattle: University of Washington). Volumes I and II of the Working Papers.

Glassie, Henry. **Folk Housing in Middle Virginia** (Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 1975).

Groth, Paul and Todd Bressi, eds. **Understanding Ordinary Landscapes** (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1997).

Hayden, Dolores. **The Power of Place: Urban Landscapes as Public History** (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1996).

Lowenthal, David. **The Past is a Foreign Country** (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985).

Lynch, Kevin. **What Time is this Place***?* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1972).

Oliver, Paul. **Built to Meet Needs: Cultural Issues in Vernacular Architecture** (Oxford: Architectural Press, 2006).

Stilgoe, John R. **Common Landscape of America, 1580-1845** (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1982).

Upton**,** Dell. **America's Architectural Roots: Ethnic Groups That Built America** (New York: John Wiley, 1995).

Upton, Dell and John Michael Vlach, eds. **Common Places: Readings in American Vernacular Architecture** (Athens: University of Georgia Press,1986).

Vlach**,** John Michael. **Back of the Big House: The Architecture of Plantation Slavery** (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1993).

U.S. Department of the Interior, **National Register Bulletin No. 30: Guidelines for Evaluating and Documenting Rural Historic Landscapes** (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, n.d.).

U.S. Department of the Interior, **National Register Bulletin No. 38: Guidelines for Evaluating and Documenting Traditional Cultural Properties** (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1992).

Upton, Dell, ed. **America's Architectural Roots: The Ethnic Groups that Built America.** (Washington, D.C.: The Preservation Press, 1986).