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<th><strong>instructor:</strong></th>
<th>Anna Andrzejewski and Arnold Alanen</th>
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<td><strong>course title:</strong></td>
<td>Topics in Architectural History: American Vernacular Architecture &amp; Landscapes</td>
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<td><strong>institution:</strong></td>
<td>University of Wisconsin</td>
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<td><strong>date:</strong></td>
<td>Fall, 2001</td>
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Topics in Architectural History: American Vernacular Architecture & Landscapes

Art History 449 & Landscape Architecture 375 (Fall 2001)
Tuesdays and Thursdays, 1:00-2:15 (Elvehjem L150)

Course website: [http://www.wisc.edu/arth/ah408](http://www.wisc.edu/arth/ah408) (please visit for updated schedule and/or information)

Professor Anna Andrzejewski
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Office Hours: Tuesday & Thursday, 2:30-3:30 (and by appointment)

Course Description:

This course will examine an array of American vernacular buildings and landscapes from the colonial period to the present and consider what they can tell us about the past (and potentially the present). By vernacular, we refer to ordinary or "everyday" spaces and places that people encounter daily (houses, workspaces, institutional buildings) but rarely think about critically. Because these environments often were (and are) ordinary (that is, not high-style, not designed by architects, landscape architects, professional designers, etc.), traditional art historical frameworks that focus on stylistic categories or maker's biographies prove rather ineffective in interpreting them. Thus, this course will look at recent work by scholars from the fields of anthropology, history, American studies, cultural geography, landscape architecture and history, folklore, and material culture to construct frameworks that help us understand the significance that vernacular environments have had for their makers and users.

Course Objectives:

There are several interrelated objectives for the course–some descriptive and some interpretive. It will be obvious to many students from the first day of class that vernacular buildings and landscapes often deviate significantly from high-style or architect-designed examples in their style, materials, typology, and/or method of construction. This doesn’t mean these spaces are necessarily inferior to more famous designed examples–just different! Furthermore, understanding these buildings as
historical and cultural evidence necessitates that we think of them in ways beyond their style and/or maker’s biography. Thus a major goal of this course will be to acquire a working vocabulary that can help describe vernacular buildings and landscapes in meaningful ways. Learning appropriate terminology will help students recognize and understand vernacular environments in a way that does not judge them relative to "high style" architecture or landscapes and allows us to seem them as complex forms of historical evidence.

A second major objective of the course involves gaining an understanding of different approaches and methodologies (from the disciplines listed above and potentially others) that help us make meaning out of ordinary buildings and landscapes that we encounter daily. Through a series of essays written by scholars working in the fields of American vernacular architecture and landscape history, we will discuss & evaluate the usefulness of various approaches to understanding the American built environment in all of its diversity.

While a semester-long course in American vernacular architecture and landscapes can not be comprehensive (and this course doesn’t pretend to be), a third goal of the course is that students will gain a foundational understanding of the history of vernacular buildings and landscapes in the United States as they evolved through time. As no books are published on the subject, this knowledge will be gleaned through class discussions (based on selected readings) that will occur throughout the semester.

Course Requirements:

Success in the course is contingent upon the student's attending classes (and the field trip), participating in class discussions and activities, keeping up with reading and/or writing assignments, and preparing for examinations. Students who come to all class periods, actively participate in class activities and discussions, and regularly engage with the material (that is, prepare at least FIVE hours outside of class per week CONSISTENTLY through the semester) will earn the highest grades in the course.

Field Trip. Students are required to attend an all-day field trip (as specified in the timetable) as part of the course. This field trip (to southwestern Wisconsin) is scheduled for FRIDAY, OCTOBER 26TH. Students may be charged a fee (approximately $15) to offset costs of transportation. Plans for lunch will be announced later in the semester; because of the demands of the schedule, students may be asked to bring their lunch to eat on the bus. Students should check their calendar at the beginning of the semester to make sure they can attend the field trip; if they cannot, they should plan to drop the class or discuss alternatives with one (or both) of the Instructors.

Examinations. There will be two examinations: a mid-term (November 1st) and a final (December 18). Exams will likely consist of a mix of identification and essay questions (some of which will likely involve slides) that engage with themes or issues
discussed in class or in the assigned readings. These exams may (or may not) take up the whole class period. Some class time will be devoted to discussion of exam format.

**Reading assignments.** There are two kinds of readings for the course: first, readings in the main textbooks, and second, readings in the READER. The textbook for the course is:


It is available for purchase at the campus bookstore, and is intended to be used primarily as a reference source. A copy has also been placed on reserve at KOHLER ART LIBRARY.

The majority of readings have been compiled into a READER, which is available for purchase from BOB’S COPY SHOP, located in University Square (across from the Elvehjem). Readings in the READER are REQUIRED, and you are expected to purchase a copy of the reader, keep up with the readings (assigned for each class period), and come to class prepared to discuss the material ON THE DAY they are listed on the CALENDAR. The reading load for this course is heavy, largely because we have a great deal to cover in a very short amount of time. Because of the heavy reading load, writing assignments are shorter than they would be otherwise—but that means you are expected to read assigned texts by the due date. Also, you should be aware that the readings & the lectures rarely overlap; because we have so much to cover, in many cases the readings will diverge significantly from what is discussed in class in order to expose you to more material. In other words, if you miss class, you should get the notes from someone else because the readings do not duplicate lecture material (and vice-versa). Additional texts for further reading have also been placed on reserve at libraries across campus; please consult reserve list in the back of your course READER.

**Papers.** There will be three (3) papers assigned for the course. One of the papers, due **NOVEMBER 8**, is essentially a "response" paper based on your impressions of the class field trip to southwestern Wisconsin. This paper, which should be AT MINIMUM 3 pages long, should be more than simply an itinerary of sites visited and/or an evaluation of the sites encountered. In it, you are expected to discuss what you saw on the field trip and how what you have learned in class helped you understand (or at least think about) the buildings and landscapes we visit. The goal of the field trip is to show you how much you have learned (in the first part of the course)—and your paper (which should be written in formal prose (meaning complete sentences and paragraphs and TYPED)) should reflect this. Of course, as a central thesis of this course is that buildings are useful for raising questions more than answering them, you can (and probably should) discuss in your essay what you would like to know more about after visiting the vernacular architecture and landscapes of southwestern Wisconsin.
The other two papers require you to focus on a particular "vernacular" building or landscape of your choice (which you will choose in conjunction with one of the Instructors). The first of these two papers (due **OCTOBER 11**) is what art historians might call a *formal* analysis of the building (or landscape)—in short, an elaborate written description (no shorter than three and no longer than five pages) based on very, very close study of the building or environment. In a nutshell, you’ll be examining your space in terms of different ways of looking/categorizing discussed in the first part of the class (by building material, style, form, etc.). Guidelines discussing the basics of conducting and writing a formal analysis are found in the course **READER**—and we will also discuss the "nuts & bolts" of such analysis during the second week of class. Because we will not have finished our catalogue of all vernacular building types by the time the paper is due, you may be required to do some research outside of class to help you describe parts of your building or landscape (depending upon your choice).

The second of these two papers that address a particular building is more interpretive in nature. In this paper, you will discuss your building or landscape (the object of the earlier paper) in the contexts of an idea or interpretive theme discussed in the course. You might choose to discuss your building in terms of the ethnicity of its builders (and what you can glean about them through the building), or you might wish to discuss your landscape in the context of power relations. Requirements for this paper (which should be no shorter than 6 and no longer than 8 pages in length) are open because the nature of the project will depend both upon the student’s interests and the building in question. This paper, especially since it is really an outgrowth of the first paper, is a **TERM PAPER**; it is not something that is supposed to be written the night before. You will be expected to read and research outside the boundaries of the material covered in class, and some of this may include working in archives. A progress report is due just before Thanksgiving; this progress report is intended to help you prepare for the paper and get you thinking about the project well in advance of the paper’s due date. This progress report will consist of two parts: a proposal (indicating your plans for the paper, essentially an abstract of what you plan to discuss) and a preliminary bibliography that lists sources that will be important for your research. Because it is not something that will be assigned a "letter grade" per se, your progress report will count as part of your **CLASS PARTICIPATION** grade (5% total). Students are STRONGLY encouraged to speak with one or both of the Professors about their project before handing in the progress report to make sure they are on the right track.

**Class Participation.** As the CALENDAR below indicates, considerable portions of this class (mainly on Thursdays, but parts of Tuesdays as well) are devoted to **CLASS DISCUSSION**. This course is intended as an advanced undergraduate- or beginning graduate-level course, and the class format is geared around a mix of lecture and discussion that is appropriate for a 400-level course. All students are intended to participate in class discussions on a regular basis. To that end, a hefty percentage of your grade will be based on class participation. TO THOSE WHO FEAR SPEAKING UP IN CLASS: we feel your pain—but part of a liberal arts education involves learning to
engage in meaningful intellectual dialogue. If the cat has persistently got your tongue, you may wish to meet with one or both of us OUTSIDE of class to talk one-on-one about the material or write "response papers" to improve your participation grade (though nothing can make up for complete lack of verbal participation). You may consult with the Instructors periodically to gauge how you are doing in terms of your participation grade. If the class is consistently reticent to engage in discussion, the Instructors will ask that students submit response papers EACH WEEK to be graded as part of class participation.

Students’ grades in class participation will be determined on a mix of factors, including (but certainly not limited to) regular attendance in class. Several REQUIRED activities will form part of your participation grade. These include: leading class discussion (once during the course of term) for the Thursday discussions; participating in group activities held throughout the class; attending the field trip; and handing in the PROGRESS REPORT relating to your third (term) paper, as discussed above. In addition, regular participation in class discussions, which includes asking questions of the professors or your peers and responding to queries by the professors or your classmates, will figure into this grade. Should the Instructors need to assign response papers, these will count toward the class participation grade as well.

Distribution of Grading:

First exam (midterm) 20%
Second exam (final) 20%
Field Trip Analysis 10%
Paper 1 (formal analysis) 15%
Paper 2 (interpretation) 20%
Class Participation 15%

100%

**Graduate Students.** The Instructors will meet with graduate students during the first two weeks of the semester to discuss additional requirements necessary for earning graduate credit in the course. At the very least, these requirements will include a longer paper & a brief (10-15 minute) class presentation.

**Grading Scale:** The grade scale will follow University standards, but might vary given exam results: 94-100, A; 89-93, AB; 84-88, B; 79-83, BC; 74-78, C; 65-73, D, 64 and below, F.

**Attendance/Make-up Policy:**

Each student is expected to attend all class sessions. Failure to attend class regularly
will result in a failing grade. If you cannot attend class on an exam day OR on a day when a paper is due, you must contact Professor Andrzejewski by phone (e-mail does not count) BEFORE the class period you will miss and HAVE HER APPROVAL. Failure to comply with this policy will result in a grade of "0" for the exam or paper in question. NO EXCEPTIONS!!!!!! Make-ups will only be given with extenuating circumstances (death in the immediate family, hospitalization, etc). If a make-up is necessary for the mid-term or final exam, it will consist of one essay question only (without slides—a key disadvantage, as you will have no visual clues to help you answer the question). It will be considerably harder than the regular exam, and will demand you write a tight, well-formulated and comprehensive essay in a short (one-hour) time frame. Given the challenging nature of these types of questions, the Instructors strongly encourage you make every effort necessary to be at the exams on the scheduled dates.

Communications Policy:

We welcome questions and are eager to discuss any thoughts you have related to material covered in class. Please visit either one of us during our office hours, or make an appointment to see us. To make an appointment, please feel free to contact us, but recognize that e-mail is often not the best way to reach us. If you have something important to discuss, you should CALL rather than use e-mail. Important issues include anything relating to the following: missing more than one class period in a row, missing an exam, handing in a paper late, requesting a reconsideration of a grade, or ANY QUESTION RELATING TO GRADES OR YOUR PERFORMANCE IN THE COURSE. Professor Andrzejewski’s policy is to only discuss issues involving grades in person or on the phone (not EMAIL). This includes requests to reconsider FINAL grades. Please understand—sending an e-mail stating that you are handing in a paper late or missing an exam DOES NOT constitute an excuse or imply acceptance on the Professors’ part. To get permission, you need to call or speak with one of us in person.

CALENDAR

(* all assignments/topics are subject to change at Instructors’ discretion *)

All readings (indicated by bullets below) not in Lanier & Herman (textbook) are in the READER unless otherwise noted

UNIT 1: PRELEMINARIES TO STUDYING VERNACULAR SPACES

WEEK 1: COURSE INTRODUCTION & PRELIMINARY DEFINITIONS

9/4 (Tu) Course Introduction; Getting Acquainted

9/6 (Th) DEFINING VERNACULAR (CATEGORY OR SCHOLARLY PURSUIT)

**WEEK 2: VERNACULAR ENVIRONMENTS 101**

9/11 (Tu) Lecture (Andrzejewski): Anatomy of Vernacular Buildings

- REVIEW diagrams in READER & familiarize with vocabulary

9/13 (Th) Discussion: Basics in Field Documentation of Historic Buildings

- REVIEW the "Guide to Formal Analysis of Buildings & Landscapes"

**WEEK 3: BUILDING MATERIALS & TECHNOLOGIES**

9/18 (Tu) Lecture (Andrzejewski): Building in Wood, Earth, & Stone


9/20 (Th) Discussion: Using Building Technologies/Materials to Plot Cultural Process


**WEEK 4 MATTERS OF "STYLE" IN VERNACULAR BUILDINGS**

9/25 (Tu): Lecture (Andrzejewski): The Parade of Styles & its Limitations


9/27 (Th): Discussion: Alternative Modes for Understanding "Style" in Vernacular Spaces
UNIT 2: READING TYPES & FORMS OF VERNACULAR BUILDINGS & LANDSCAPES

WEEK 5 DOMESTIC ENVIRONMENTS I

10/2 (Tu) Lecture (Andrzejewski): Vernacular House Forms through the Civil War

Lanier & Herman, Everyday Architecture of the Mid-Atlantic, 10-45, 51-60.

10/4 (Th)&#


WEEK 6 DOMESTIC ENVIRONMENTS II

10/9 (Th) Lecture (Andrzejewski): Vernacular Housing AFTER the Civil War

- Lanier & Herman, Everyday Architecture of the Mid-Atlantic, 45-59

10/11 (Th) Discussion: Houses & Popular Culture


*FIRST PAPER DUE*

WEEK 7 AGRICULTURAL BUILDINGS & LANDSCAPES

10/16 (Tu) Lecture (Andrzejewski & Alanen): The Farm Landscape

- Lanier and Herman, Everyday Architecture of the Mid-Atlantic, 177-225.
10/18 (Th) Discussion & Activity: Documentary records for the Farm Landscape

READING MATERIALS TBA

WEEK 8 COMMERCIAL, INDUSTRIAL & INSTITUTIONAL FORMS

- 10/23 (Tu) Lecture (Andrzejewski): Varieties of Vernacular Forms

10/25 (Th): Lecture (Alanen): Buildings & Landscapes


10/26 (FRIDAY): MANDATORY FIELD TRIP–ALL DAY

WEEK 9 PUTTING IT ALL TOGETHER

10/30 (Tu) Lecture (Alanen): Urban Landscapes, Landscape Ensembles, & the Landscape of the Highway

- Charles G. Zug III, "Folk Art and Outsider Art: A Folklorist’s Perspective," in *The
UNIT 3: LEARNING FROM THE VERNACULAR: ISSUES & TRENDS

WEEK 10 THE "OLD" WORLD COMES TO THE "NEW"

11/6 (Tu) Lecture: The "Invention" of America (Andrzejewski)

*Begin reading for 11/8 (hefty reading load)

11/8 (Th) Discussion: Making Vernacular Spaces Throughout the "New" World

- Patricia Samford, "'Strong is the Bond of Kinship': West African-Style Ancestor Shrines & Subfloor Pits on African-American Quarters," Historical Archaeology, Identity Formation & the Interpretation of Ethnicity, ed. Maria Franklin & Garrett Fesler (1999), 71-91.

FIELD TRIP RESPONSE PAPER DUE

WEEK 11 ETHNICITY, RACE, & ACCULTURATION IN VERNACULAR SPACES

11/13 (Tu) Lecture: Wisconsin Folk Architecture (Guest Lecture by Bill Tishler)


11/15 (Th) Discussion: Strengths & Limitations of Reading Ethnicity through Buildings


**BE PREPARED TO DISCUSS IDEAS FOR 2ND PAPER IN CLASS TODAY!**

**WEEK 12 READING GENDER IN VERNACULAR ENVIRONMENTS**

11/20 (Tu) Discussion: Gender as a Category of Analysis


11/22 (Th) THANKSGIVING HOLIDAY–NO CLASS

**WEEK 13 DOMESTIC SPACES & THE PRESENTATION OF SELF**

11/27 (Tu) Lecture (Andrzejewski): Architecture & Identity in Central PA

11/29 (Th) Discussion: Performing Identity in 18C Buildings & Landscapes


**PROGRESS REPORT FOR FINAL PAPER DUE**

**WEEK 14 READING POWER & IDEOLOGY THROUGH VERNACULAR ENVIRONMENTS**

12/4 (Tu) Lecture (Andrzejewski & Alanen): Industrial Buildings & Landscapes of the Early 20C

12/6 (Th) Discussion: Landscapes of Domination & Resistance

- Dell Upton, "White and Black Landscapes in Eighteenth-Century Virginia," in


WEEK 15 CLOSING THOUGHTS

12/11 (Tu) The Vernacular Today (Andrzejewski & Alanen): "New Urbanism" in Middleton Hills

   READINGS TBA

FINAL PAPER DUE

12/13 (Th) REVIEW

FINAL EXAM: Tuesday, December 18th, 2:45 — 4:45 (L150)

Have a great HOLIDAY BREAK!