instructor: Daves Rossell

course title: Vernacular Architecture

institution: Savannah College of Art and Design

date offered: Winter, 2004

stable URL: www.vafweb.org/resources/syllabi/rossell2.pdf
**ARLH 310: VERNACULAR ARCHITECTURE**

**MISSION STATEMENT OF THE COLLEGE**
The Savannah College of Art and Design exists to prepare talented students for careers in the visual and performing arts, design, building arts, and the history of art and architecture. The College emphasizes learning through individual attention in a positively oriented environment.

Office hours: Pepe Office B; Tuesday, Thursday 11:30-12; 2:30-3:00, by appointment
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Prerequisites: ARTH 110: Survey of Western Arts II

**COURSE DESCRIPTION**
This course examines the history, characteristics, and meaning of vernacular architecture – traditionally defined as the 95% of the built environment not exemplifying academic "high-style" design. Some of the more traditional topics include ethnic traditions in built form, the architecture of traditional American houses, as well as agrarian settings. We will also examine relatively newer topics such as industrial settings and commercial buildings as well as the influence of the automobile on the built environment. Style is not ignored in this class, but it is not treated as an unchanging or privileged ideal, but rather as one flexible tool in the imaginative toolkit of patrons and builders. By the end, we will entertain a vernacular approach to the entire built environment, what could be called the cultural landscape, in which so-called high style and more everyday buildings coexist and are part of a historical and spatial continuum.

**COURSE OBJECTIVES AND PURPOSE**
The course is meant to introduce students to vernacular architecture and the skills needed to analyze individual sites. It will help students to understand how people who are not trained as architects design and build, how cultural differences affect built form, how buildings are used, how buildings coexist in cultural landscapes, and what those buildings and landscapes mean to their builders and users.

**SKILLS TO BE MASTERED**
Students will be able to define and use the basic vocabulary of vernacular architecture studies. Each student is expected to master the skills of visual literacy: how to think critically, to analyze creatively, and to write clearly about the vernacular built environment.
COURSE REQUIREMENTS
1. Attendance at class meetings and field trips
2. Participation in classroom discussion
3. Completion of all reading assignments
4. Examinations
5. Writing Assignment Option A or B

SCAD ATTENDANCE POLICY
There are no excused absences for class meetings or field trips. Missing fifteen minutes of a class constitutes an absence. The accumulation of more than four absences results in the student's failure for the class. *No exceptions possible.*

GRADING OPPORTUNITIES

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<tr>
<th>Through Midterm</th>
<th>After Midterm</th>
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<tr>
<td>1. Paper #1 or Prospectus 15%</td>
<td>4. Paper #2 (15%) and Paper #3 (20%) or Final Essay 35%</td>
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<td>2. Midterm Exam 15%</td>
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<td>3. Participation</td>
<td>5. Final Exam 25%</td>
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<td>6. Participation 10%</td>
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READING ASSIGNMENTS

Required Texts

Thomas Carter, ed., *Images of an American Land: Vernacular Architecture in the Western United States* (University of New Mexico pb). (This book just went out-of-print, but will be on reserve in Jen, and may be available through abebooks.com for purchase.)


Dell Upton and John Michael Vlach, eds., *Common Places: Readings in American Vernacular Architecture* (University of Georgia pb). (NB: As of presstime, this book has just gone out of print and will only be available through the Jen Reserve Desk, or, hopefully, by Xerox purchase through the bookstore.)

Kate L. Turabian, *A Manual for Writers of Term Papers, Theses, and Dissertations* (University of Chicago pb).

X = Readings on reserve in Jen Library.

The texts are available at the SCAD bookstore and should be purchased at the beginning of the quarter. If books run out, or for out-of-print items, see abebooks.com or bookfinder.com on the web. There is at least one additional copy of each required reading on reserve at the Jen Library.

Since the readings address different views of material presented in lecture, or, in some cases, entirely different material altogether, it is essential that they be read in conjunction with the lectures for which they were assigned. The midterm and final will draw on material from the reading.

Recommended Texts

Depending on what type of building you choose to write about, these will help you think about your research topic and how to research it.


**EXAMINATIONS**
Exams will involve slide identifications, terminology, and essays. You will be responsible for being able to identify each work covered in the class. Being able to "identify" means memorizing the following four pieces of information: a) the name of the work; b) name of the cultural group or cultural context responsible for the work; c) location; and d) date. It is possible that you might be shown an "unknown" which would involve works not seen in the class or the readings but about which one should recognize elements or features which allow one to "attribute" the work to a time and place in history.

Slide identifications and essays ask you to go beyond basic identification to address issues of significance, which might include issues such as cultural traits, building type, materials, style, and symbolism, as well as being able explain how the works are examples of particular ideas or trends.

It is expected that you will incorporate information from your readings in your answers, and up to a third of the exams will be directly related to the reading.

**STUDY IMAGES**
Study Images are only completely available using several references including the textbooks, articles on reserve, and the blackboard materials for the class available through aim.scad.edu.

**ANALYTICAL ASSIGNMENTS**
There are three options for analytical assignments for this class. Each includes the opportunity to practice general writing skills, to learn some basic approaches for analyzing vernacular architecture, and perhaps to demonstrate your own artistic talent. The first option is a series of three 3-page essays addressing specific questions listed below. The second option is an 8-10 page research paper that will analyze a vernacular building in Savannah. The third option is a comprehensive video, website, photography, or oral history, accompanied by a 3-page analysis.

In addition to the basic pages of text for the papers, or the alternate media, you must include footnotes or endnotes, a full bibliography of resources used, and relevant illustrations, always including a measured plan.

Projects should be based in Savannah or the nearby vicinity. Numerous sites are of special interest to the Historic Savannah Foundation or the Metropolitan Planning Commission and should be considered before anything else. For those
interested and willing to travel a bit further afield, I would like a select number of students to work on Daufuskie Island, SC, assisting the Daufuskie Island Historical Foundation establish a history museum, and documenting African-American houses.

**Writing Assignment Option Number 1.**

**First Paper:** Analyze the use of space in your own house or another domestic space. Think of yourself as a fieldworker from the future. How do architectural features and the type and arrangement of furnishings influence the human activities that take place in the house (or room if you live in a group dwelling)? Is the space still used as originally intended? If not, what is different? Are there hierarchies of space? Are there different rituals of behavior, perhaps for you versus strangers? What do various pieces of furniture do or mean? Why have you grouped them the way you have? Where does the most activity in your house occur? How is this shown by your creation of space? Your written analysis should be accompanied by a measured plan showing all furnishings. Illustrations that help explain or analyze the space are encouraged. 3 pages (750 words).

This question requires that you use a measured plan, photographs, and historical or personal illustrations to make your points.

**Second Paper:** Read or reread pages 119-124 of Lanier and Herman’s *Everyday Architecture of the Mid-Atlantic* on the various ways of thinking about style. Analyze the use of style in your own house, or another building. What elements, like materials, moldings, setting and plan contribute to the style? Where are those stylistic elements found and where are they not found? Why? What style would a guidebook say the building is? How does it fulfill or not fulfill the textbook definition of a particular style? Why? How has the style been altered or compromised by later additions or remodeling? What style do the changes reflect? Why? 3 pages (750 words)

This question requires that you use a measured plan, general and detailed photographs, and historical or personal illustrations to make your points. I also expect you to do research on your house’s style, and housetype.

**Third Paper:** Pretend that you are organizing a meeting in Savannah of vernacular experts from around the United States and the World. What are two buildings or two groups of buildings in Savannah not ordinarily open to the public (read: NO house museums) that represent excellent and diverse aspects of vernacular design? Why?

This question requires that you identify your buildings by name, date, location, original owner, and specific history related to the building. This question also requires that use measured plans, photographs, and historical or personal
Writing Assignment Option Number 2. The Research Paper. This paper is meant to be a history of a vernacular building or group of buildings including their form, ownership, use, and meaning. All of these aspects will require field work and library and archival research. You should document your vernacular building using fieldwork techniques of measured drawing, photography, and oral interviews, and, as much as possible, also with public records, such as tax records, deeds, wills, building permits, and Sanborn maps. And what can we learn about your building from secondary literature on American architecture and urbanism, building types, or aspects of Savannah history,

In terms of fieldwork, you will need to look very closely at the physical fabric as well; what was the building's original plan, covering, decoration? How many stages of construction can you find? What evidence did you use to arrive at your conclusions? Illustrate with a measured plan, elevations, sections, and structural detail as appropriate. Really analyze the various ornamental and utilitarian features such as chimneys, porches, stairs, cornices, brackets, roof type. Really scrutinize the plan. Make sure to take photographs of the building's interior and exterior. Perhaps write a chronology of construction and alteration for an appendix. To help with this, you will find the chapter “Fieldwork” from Gabrielle M. Lanier and Bernard L. Herman, *Everyday Architecture of the Mid-Atlantic: Looking and Buildings and Landscapes* particularly helpful.

In terms of oral history or perhaps archival research, who were the various people who owned the building? How was the building used at various times? How did the building fit into the development of the city? What was the historic significance of the building? To help with this, you will find the chapter "Written Records" from Barbara J. Howe, et al., *Houses and Homes: Exploring Their History* useful. Your goal is to learn how to use these sources and to see what you can tell about the history of your buildings.

Make sure to consult relevant secondary literature on American history, architecture and urbanism, including work on Savannah, on African-Americans, on women, on technology, on style, and on building types. Architectural dictionaries can be very useful, as can surveys of American architecture and/or American urbanism and neighborhood development. Show me your creativity in research using a mixture of scholarly articles, monographs, encyclopedia entries, and some web material. Make use of interlibrary loan if necessary.

The final aspect is analytical. How was or is the building used? How does that effect the form? What meaning does the building have in the community at large? What traditions are being represented by the building that relate to broad developments of vernacular architecture? Show the reader that you can interpret
as well as simply amass facts. Make educated assertions. Be analytical. What can this building say about its occupants and their place and time? How does it relate to broader themes?

Your research and fieldwork may result in more than just drawings and notes from the archives. Try incorporating film, or poetry or music if that seems to develop an important point. Be open to interviewing residents or other interested parties. What other material evidence bears on the interpretation of the site? How so?

The primary goal of this writing assignment is to help you develop your own critical and historical skills at understanding buildings. Additional reading helps you to move beyond your own personal opinion and beyond that of one or two sources. A successful essay will present an original thesis and support it with a synthesis of insights from secondary materials and personal observation.

The term project consists of two parts:

1. A prospectus of your project. You must submit a prospectus in order to pass the paper requirement.

2. An analytical essay with 8-10 pages of text.

The alternative project

Essays are only one vehicle to analyze and present ideas about the built environment. This class attracts a wide range of students from across the campus, and you have great talents that could benefit our understanding of architectural history. Instead of aiming to produce a final essay for the class, try to show me and your classmates how a media of your choice facilitates serious analytical understanding of the built environment. Examples include video, website, photography, or oral history. Follow the same criteria as for the written essay, but produce your own expression. As for how you structure the final project, that will depend on your media, on your message, and on involved consultation with your instructor. Whatever form your project takes, you must develop a thesis just as you would in a written assignment, and you must truly analyze the building or site, not simply describe it. And remember that no matter what you do, there is still a written component of 3 pages that will be graded.

NOTE: There is a penalty for late work of 2.5 points per day, so plan your work carefully and take into account that there is usually a shortage of materials in the library not long after the quarter begins.
Picking a topic
A historian begins a research project with a question. S/he then develops a thesis that attempts to answer that question and continues to gather data from the particular point of view set out by the thesis. Along the way the thesis is continually checked against new conclusions drawn from the accumulating data. Finally a point is reached when the question seems satisfactorily answered.

Your research on your particular building or site should uncover information that will allow you to provide:

a) an analysis of the cultural, historical, and architectural context from which the building emerged. How was it significant?

b) an analysis of the building, its site, orientation, scale, style, elevations, plan, sequence of internal spaces, details, material and any other relevant issues. How was it significant?

c) a summation of its historical and architectural significance.

But, while you are focusing on a single building, determine from some preliminary reading a significant question to ask that places the building in a broader context. For example,

- How and why has a particular building type changed form over time?
- Why do certain types of architecture take such different forms at diverse times or locations?
- How is building form affected by technology or materials?
- How have the needs of the client or user affected architectural design in a specific project?
- What is the relationship between high-style trends and vernacular practice in a particular builder’s work?

The thrust of your research should then be to find and write up or present in some alternative media a convincing answer to the question uncovering as much information as possible about the building at hand.

Since the assignment is to develop an analytical project, be sure you are asking and answering a question about your particular work or art or architecture.
The prospectus and annotated bibliography
After choosing a topic, begin to build a bibliography of useful sources, and formulate a prospectus. This is not a required assignment to turn in, but it is invaluable for you to test your ideas.

The historian who asks new questions never finds sources that give straight answers. S/he plays detective, piecing together the story from all sorts of angles. Sources might include the work of architecture itself, experienced in person or through drawings and photographs; primary documents, such as contemporary descriptions or contracts; and secondary documents, such as travelers' journals or modern articles or monographs.

Sources need to be evaluated. How careful was the author? What was the author's point of view? How do his or her prejudices and intended audience affect the usefulness of the work for your research project?

The prospectus should include a 2-3 page discussion of your research, including the work of architecture you are studying, the questions you are seeking to answer, and the way that you plan to answer them. This should be an overview of your project, showing where you are going and how you plan to get there. Most important--what is your thesis? Or what do you think it will be?

Following this discussion of your project you should list the sources you will be using, following standard bibliographic form from Turabian or the Chicago Manual of Style and describing in a few sentences how each source pertains to your project. This is the annotated bibliography. At least three of your sources must be articles from scholarly journals (such as those in the Perspectives in Vernacular Architecture series, Traditional Dwellings and Settlements Review, Winterthur Portfolio, Material Culture, the SCA [Society for Commercial Archeology] Journal, etc.). You can locate them through standard references such as the Humanities Index, Architectural Index, and the Avery Index. This assignment must be typed be typed with double spacing on 8 1/2 x 11-inch paper.

Writing the term paper
Any good scholarly essay or book has an introduction, a main body, and a conclusion. The point of view, the concept, the thesis, the focus, or whatever one calls the guiding idea is set out in the introduction. Then the thesis is supported by offering evidence that builds an argument clearly and logically. Finally, a conclusion sums up and restates the thesis.

You should have little trouble organizing an essay once you have made a proposal and annotated bibliography. You will know just which books and articles you need to read and take notes on. You will know what it is that you are
looking for when you read, and you will not facts and theories that both support and contradict your thesis.

While you are reading, begin to construct the outline for your essay. The process will help you see relationships between ideas. It will steer you toward a coherent paper in which

1. The most important facts are given prominence
2. Facts are not gratuitous, but support the thesis
3. Analysis, not description, predominates.

The draft and final essay
The partial draft or detailed outline should indicate your thesis and show how the thesis will be developed. What is the organization of the paper or project? What evidence will be used? The draft should show that you have done your research and have begun to assemble both description and analysis into a coherent essay or project. The draft should also display your writing skills. The draft assignment helps you make orderly progress in the assignment--a project produced at the last moment is not your best effort. It allows you to receive comments from your instructor either on substantive or analytical details, additional sources to use, or writing mechanics.

The final paper must be typed on 8 1/2 x 11-inch paper, have at least 1.25" margins, and be stapled in the upper left-hand corner. You must turn in a second copy. No fancy covers! All ideas, information, and quotations taken from your sources must be footnoted according to the format set forth in Kate Turabian's *A manual for writers* or the *Chicago manual of style*. Footnotes or endnotes are acceptable. Your bibliography should follow a standard format. Your paper must be illustrated as necessary to make your points, and the illustrations should be pertinent to what you are saying. Under no circumstances are illustrations to be cut out of books. All books used for research and xeroxing should be treated with the greatest care. Illustrations, footnotes, and the bibliography do not count in the 8-10 page length assigned for the paper.

Grading
Grading of the analytical assignments will be based on four components: Content (what it says), Research (how well facts and interpretations are uncovered and used), Writing (how it says it), and Form (how well it follows the guidelines, how well it looks). Specific format and content requirements not adhered to will receive additional points off.

Graduate Requirements
Graduate students are required to complete a 12-15 page research paper on a topic approved by the instructor. Graduate students should meet with the instructor to have topics approved by the end of the second week of classes.
Grading Standards

A  90-100  Superior
In writing and project assignments: careful attention to requirements;
In slide comparison tests: correct ID, strong sense of big idea; impressive range
of analytical points; dense use of specific facts; sense of significance
In general: real engagement in class; mastery of both broad concepts and
specific detail; clear fulfillment and comprehension of reading assignments;
leadership in class discussion.

B  80-89  Above Average
In writing and project assignments: less careful attention to requirements;
In slide comparison tests: less correct ID; less strong sense of big idea; less
impressive range of analytical points; less dense use of specific facts; less sense
of significance
In general: less engagement in class; less mastery in both broad concepts and
specific detail; less clear fulfillment or comprehension of reading assignments;
conscientious participation in class discussion but no real leadership.

C  70-79  Average
In writing and project assignments: only fair attention to requirements;
In slide comparison tests: only fair ID, vague or no big idea; some analytical
points and some just plain descriptive points; lack of specificity; no sense of
significance.
In general: attendance but not engagement; general understanding of concepts
and detail; apparent lack of fulfillment of reading assignments; occasional
participation in class discussion.

D  60-69  Below Average
In writing and project assignments: poor attention to requirements.
In slide comparison tests: incorrect ID; no big idea; some vague and
disorganized points, usually not presented analytically; no sense of significance.
In general: spotty attendance; often late or often leaves early; falls asleep; does
not do the reading; only participates rarely. Negative contribution.

F  below 60  Failure
In writing and project assignments: failure to produce anything of even passing
merit.
In slide comparison tests: a vacuum of coherent information.
In general: All of the D aspects, only worse.

CLASS PARTICIPATION
Students are strongly encouraged to be engaged in class. Relevant questions
and observations greatly aid everyone’s learning experience. Students are also
strongly encouraged to take detailed notes as examinations will be based both on lecture material and the readings. Part of the final grade will reflect this participation.

Participation grades begin at 80 (above average) and go up or down depending on attendance, positive or negative spirit, and engagement expressed through quality class discussion or office hour consultation. You will get an 80 in participation, if, by the end of the class, you have perfect attendance. Participation grades will go down 5 points from 80 for each absence. To get higher than 80 students must positively engage the professor and the class in questions or comments in class or be proactive in office hour consultation. You can receive lower than 80 with negative attitudes or actions, such as sleeping.

LATE ASSIGNMENTS
Late assignments are cheerfully accepted, but they will be marked down 2.5 points per day they are late, unless accompanied by a doctor’s note. Assignments not turned in will receive a zero. No exceptions possible.
SCHEDULE OF CLASSES AND READINGS

INTRODUCTION (January 6)

WHAT IS VERNACULAR ARCHITECTURE? (January 8)

Reading: 81 pages  (NB: readings marked with an X are only available at Jen Reserve)


Section----------------------------------------

- Introductory Walking Tour

EUROPEAN AND NATIVE AMERICAN TRADITIONS ON THE EAST COAST (January 13)

Reading: 51 pages


- Lanier and Herman, Everyday Architecture, pp. 10-25.

Suggested Reading:


AFRICAN-EUROPEAN-NATIVE AMERICAN SYNTHESIS IN THE CARIBBEAN BASIN (January 15)

Reading: 29 pages

Section: ----------------------------------------
• Fieldwork, Writing, and Drawing

OPTIONAL ORIENTATION AT THE GEORGIA HISTORICAL SOCIETY (Friday, January 16)

Reading: 19 pages [NB: Reading is required for all students]
• Barbara J. Howe, "Written Records" in Barbara J. Howe, et al., Houses and Homes: Exploring Their History, pp. 39-58.

EUROPEANS AND NATIVE AMERICANS IN THE SOUTHWEST AND THE WEST (January 20)

Reading: 39 pages
• Chris Wilson, "When a Room is the Hall: The Houses of West Las Vegas, New Mexico," in Images of an American Land, pp. 113-128.
• America's Architectural Roots, pp.24-41, 92-99.

THE MIDWEST (January 22)

Reading: 56 pages
• America's Architectural Roots, pp. 80-85, 100-105, 112-135, 142-165.

Paper #1 or Prospectus Due----------------------------------------

Section: ----------------------------------------
• Review
MIDTERM EXAMINATION [covering through 1/22/04] (January 27)

NATIONAL FOLK ARCHITECTURE: THE GEORGIAN HOUSE (January 29)

Reading: 47 pages
• Lanier and Herman, Everyday Architecture, pp. 25-43, 119-138.

Section----------------------------------------
• Isaiah Davenport House tour

TO BE AFRICAN AMERICAN (February 3)

Reading: 10 pages

THE CITY (February 5)

Reading: 44 pages
• Lanier and Herman, Everyday Architecture, pp. 59.

Section ----------------------------------------
• African-American and Urban Savannah tour

VERNACULAR BUILDING WITH WOOD (February 10)

Reading: 56 pages


**Paper #2 and voluntary draft due**---------------------------------------------------------------

**VERNACULAR MASS-WALL SYSTEMS (February 12)**

**Reading: 41 pages**


**Section**-----------------------------------------------------------------

- Review

**DISCUSSION DAY (February 17)**

**POPULAR HOUSING IN THE 19C AND EARLY 20C (February 19)**

**Reading: 71 pages**


**Suggested Reading:**

Section----------------------------------------
• Review

AGRARIAN LANDSCAPES (February 24)

Reading: 48 pages
• Lanier and Herman, "Farm Buildings and Plans," in Everyday Architecture of the Mid-Atlantic, pp. 177-225.

Suggested Readings:
• Blanton Owen, "Dry Creek: Central Nevada's Damele Ranch," in Images of an American Land, pp. 91-112. X

INDUSTRIAL LANDSCAPES (February 26)

Reading: 55 pages
• Lanier and Herman, Everyday Architecture, pp. 242-263.
• Fredric L. Quivik, "The Historic Industrial Landscape of Butte and Anaconda, Montana," in Images of an American Land, pp. 267-90. X

Section----------------------------------------
• Discussion

RELIGION, COMMUNITY AND THE BUILT ENVIRONMENT (March 2)

Reading: 53 pages
• Lanier and Herman, Everyday Architecture, pp. 264-77.

Suggested Reading:

**Paper #3 or Final Essay due**

**AUTOMOBILE ARCHITECTURE (March 4)**

**Reading: 67 pages**


**Section**

- Review

**FINAL EXAMINATION #3 [covering 1/29/04-3/4/04] (March 9)**

**FINAL RETURN AND FILM (March 11)**

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**Field Trip:** There will be many fieldtrips throughout the class.

**Extra Help Session:** Review sessions will be offered prior to examinations at a time acceptable to a majority of interested students.

**Midterm conferences:** Individual conferences to review each student's performance will be offered following midterm week.
Incomplete
A grade of incomplete may be granted to students who have suffered serious personal illness or critical, emergency circumstances during the academic term, resulting in failure to complete all assignments by the end of the quarter. A student who has missed over 20% of the class sessions may not be eligible for an incomplete. Documentation from a physician is required and must be attached to the petition for a temporary grade of incomplete. Please see the college catalog for additional information on incompletes.

Academic and Safety Policies

Academic Honesty
Under all circumstances, students are expected to be honest in their dealings with faculty, administrative staff, and fellow students. In speaking with members of the college community, students must give an accurate representation of the facts at hand. In class assignments, students must submit work that fairly and accurately reflects their level of accomplishment. Any work that is not a product of the student’s own effort is considered dishonest. Students may not submit the same work for more than one class. A student may be suspended or expelled for academic dishonesty. Please refer to the Student Handbook for additional information regarding the policy on academic honesty.

Americans with Disabilities Act
In compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (ADA) and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, SCAD offers integrated educational services to assist students with disabilities to obtain a college education. For more information on services for students with disabilities, please contact the Coordinator of Disability Services at 525-5000.

Classroom Building Safety - Evacuation Information
It is important that each student familiarize himself or herself with the most appropriate route to emergency exits in the classroom building. Emergency exits are indicated on charts posted in classrooms, hallways, or in the stairwells. Should a drill or emergency occur that would require evacuation, the class is to meet in a predetermined location away from the building. Professors will take attendance in an effort to account for all students.

Classroom Building Safety - College Identification Badges
All students must present a valid SCAD photo ID card to the greeter or security person upon entering all college buildings. Additionally, all faculty and staff are to wear visible identification badges whenever on college property. These procedures are intended to help ensure the safety of all students and college personnel at SCAD.

Classroom Building Safety - Material Safety Data Sheets
The College is committed to providing a safe environment for students and staff. This commitment is reflected in the development of Material Safety Data Sheets (MSDS) on file in each building. Chemicals and solvents utilized in the building must have an MSDS on file. Please consult the MSDS log before using any chemicals or solvents. The departmental administrative assistant can advise students of the location of the building log. Students and staff who wish to use chemicals and solvents not currently in the MSDS log, must provide appropriate MSDS information to the departmental administrative assistant and receive approval for use.