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Vernacular Architecture Forum Syllabus Exchange

*A collaborative project of the Vernacular Architecture Forum*

[**www.vafweb.org/resources/syllabi.html**](http://www.vafweb.org/resources/syllabi.html)

**instructor:** Christine Henry

**course title:** Vernacular Architecture in America

**institution:** University of Mary Washington

**date offered:** Spring, 2018

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UNIVERSITY OF MARY WASHINGTON DEPARTMENT OF HISTORIC PRESERVATION

**HISP 325: Vernacular Architecture in America Spring 2018**

Section 01 11:00am-12:15pm T-Th Combs #25

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| Instructor: | Christine Henry, PhD | office hours: | M: 2pm—3pm |
| Office: | Combs 134 |  | T and Th: 10am—11:00am |
| Phone: | 540-654-1313 (voice mail) |  | F: 10am—12pm noon |
| e-mail: | [chenry5@umw.edu](mailto:chenry5@umw.edu) |  | and by appointment |

# Course Description

This course is a seminar that explores the theoretical and methodological approaches used when studying the built environment as a product of vernacular design processes.

Commonplace buildings are investigated as complex historical resources that can be read for information about intentions, attitudes, and needs of past generations. Ultimately any architecture can be studied as vernacular and it is an approach, rather than a delineation of subject matter, that distinguishes vernacular architectural research.

Through readings, lectures, field documentation, research, and in-depth discussion, this course explores the interdisciplinary investigation of buildings.

# Course Objectives

* Enhance ability to evaluate architecture for evidence of function and use.
* Develop ability to read critically.
* Foster an understanding of the differences and similarities between the study of vernacular architecture and standard academic architectural research.

# Required Texts

1. Carter, Thomas and Elizabeth Collins Cromley. I*nvitation to Vernacular Architecture*. Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 2005.
2. Glassie, Henry. *Vernacular Architecture.* Indiana University Press, 2000.
3. Other readings and online resources will be made available through Canvas organized by week in modules section

# Instructor Policies

**Honor Code:** All graded work is bound by the provisions of the Honor Code and must be pledged, signed, and dated. You can find out more about the Honor Code [here](http://students.umw.edu/fredericksburghonorcouncil/).

**Written Assignments:** Assignments are due by the beginning of class unless otherwise specified and are to be submitted via Canvas. ***Late submissions will be marked down ten points per day.*** Spelling, grammar, and punctuation errors will reduce the overall grade on assignments, so students are strongly encouraged to proofread carefully and not rely solely on computer spelling/grammar checkers! Students are also encouraged to take advantage of the [Writing Center](http://academics.umw.edu/writing-fredericksburg/location-and-hours/)’s assistance prior to submitting assignments. Exams are to be taken on the date and time scheduled; make up exams are only scheduled on a case-by case basis.

**Preparation & Participation:** Keeping up with readings and assignments, participating in class, and interacting with classmates/teammates in a respectful manner will enrich the learning experience for everyone. Participation will count toward a substantial portion of final grades in all courses, as noted in the grade distribution on the course-specific page.

**Attendance & Behavior:** Attendance is vital both for learning and for lively class discussion. Attendance for all in-class exercises and presentations is required; these cannot be made up at a later date. Students are expected to display civil and respectful behavior during class. Cell phones must be silenced in class sessions, and laptops may only be used if used in a non- disrupting manner (no instant messaging, games, or sound). Violators will be referred to the Office of Judicial Affairs.

# Grading Scale:

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| --- | --- | --- |
| Letter Grade | GPA | Percentile |
| **A** | 4 | 93-100% |
| **A-** | 3.7 | 90-92% |
| **B+** | 3.3 | 87-89% |
| **B** | 3 | 83-86% |
| **B-** | 2.7 | 80-82% |
| **C+** | 2.3 | 77-79% |
| **C** | 2 | 73-76% |
| **C-** | 1.7 | 70-72% |
| **D+** | 1.3 | 67-69% |
| **D** | 1 | 60-66% |
| **F** | 0 | <60% |

A mid-semester report of unsatisfactory (U) will be reported if a student has a C- or below in the course at the time reports are submitted.

# Office of Disability Resources:

The [Office of Disability Resources](http://academics.umw.edu/disability/) has been designated by the University as the primary office to guide, counsel, and assist students with disabilities. If you receive services through that office and require accommodations for this class, please make an appointment with me as soon as possible to discuss your approved accommodation needs and bring your accommodation letter with you to the appointment. I will hold any information you share with me in strictest confidence unless you give me permission to do otherwise. If you have not made contact with the Office of Disability Resources and have accommodation needs, (note taking assistance, extended time for tests, etc.), please contact them at (540) 654-1266.

# Course Assignments

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| Assignment 1: | Each student will research historic photos, plans, and documentation available for several sites in Alexandria for use in the VAF conference guidebook and online map | **Due February 8** |
| Assignment 2: | In pairs, students will lead the class in discussion of the readings each week throughout the semester. As part of this assignment you will turn in your questions as well as a self-assessment of your  discussion leading experience | TBA—students will sign up for a specific date |
| Assignment 3: | Students will be assigned 4 sites in Alexandria, Virginia that are to be highlighted in the May 2018 VAF conference. Students will do both original research and editing of the to be published VAF guidebook to create entries for the  online guide to the conference. | **Due Thursday, April 12** |

**Course Requirements**

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| Mid-Term Exam | Thursday, March 1 | 20% |
| Assignment 1 | Due February 8 | 15% |
| Assignment 2 | Due date varies | 15% |
| Assignment 3 | Due April 12 | 30% |
| Final Exam | Thursday, May 3 | 20% |
| Total |  | 100% |

**Course Schedule**

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| **Week 1: what is vernacular?** | January 16 | Course Introduction, Review of Syllabus, Student Interest  Survey |
| January 18 | Reading: Carter and Cromley, intro and Chapter 1  Wells, “Reading Critically” |
| **Week 2: methods** | January 23 | Reading: Glassie p. 17-21; Jackson p.85-87 also google vernacular architecture and be prepared to discuss what you  find |
| January 25 | Reading: Carter and Cromley, Chapter 2 and Glassie p. 21-36 |
| **Week 3: analysis** | January 30 | Reading: Carter and Cromley, Chapter 3 |
| February 1 | Reading: Glassie p. 36-51 and Rubin, “Aesthetic Ideology and Urban Design” |
| **Week 4: architectural form** | February 6 | Reading: Chappell, “Looking at Buildings” and Upton,  “Vernacular Domestic Architecture in Eighteenth-Century  Virginia” |
| February 8 | Reading: Hubka, “Just Folks Designing: Vernacular Designers  and the Generation of Form”  **Due: Assignment #1** |
| **Week 5: building process** | February 13 | Reading: Groth, “Making New Connections in Vernacular  Architecture” and Glassie, p. 51-70 |
| February 15 | Reading: Kimball, “African-Virginians and the Vernacular Building Tradition in Richmond City, 1790-1860 “ |
| **Week 6: history in architecture** | February 20 | Reading: Glassie, p. 70-79 and p 96-112 |
| February 22 | Reading: Stanton, “"Alarmed by the Cry of Fire": How Fire Changed Fredericksburg, Virginia” |
| **Week 7: popularity and spatial distribution** | February 27 | Reading: Kniffen, “Folk Housing: Key to Diffusion” and Carter  and Cromley, Chapter 4 |
| March 1 | Reading: Longstreth, “The Mixed Blessing of Success: The Hecht Company and Department Store Branch Development afterworld War II”  **Mid-Term Exam Due** |
| **Week 8:** | March 6 | SPRING BREAK |
| March 8 | SPRING BREAK |
| **Week 9: houses of worship** | March 13 | Reading: Gottfried and Jennings, “Building Type: Church” and  Shaw, “Building an Urban Identity: The Clustered Spires of  Frederick, Maryland” |
| March 15 | Reading: Zelinsky, “The Uniqueness of the American Religious  Landscape” |

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| **Week 10: multifamily housing** | March 20 | Reading: Gottfried and Jennings, “Building Type: Multifamily” and Hubka and Kenny, “Examining the American Dream:  Housing Standards and the Emergence of a National Housing Culture, 1900-1930” |
| March 22 | Reading: Barron, “Adequately Re-Housing Low Income Families: A Study of Class and Race in the Architecture of Public Housing, Marietta, Georgia, 1938-1941” |
| **Week 11: neighborhoods** | March 27 | Reading: Hubka, *Houses Without Names* p. 1-30 and  Gray Read, “Making a House a Home in a Philadelphia  Neighborhood” |
| March 29 | Reading: Marshall, “A Good Gridiron: The Vernacular Design of  a Western Cow Town.” |
| **Week 12: Gender Identity** | April 3 | Reading: Kwolek-Folland, “Gender as a Category of Analysis in  Vernacular Architecture Studies” |
| April 5 | Reading: Holdsworth, “’I’m a Lumberjack and I’m OK’: The Built  Environment and Varied Masculinities in the Industrial Age” |
| **Week 13: Ethnic Identity** | April 10 | Reading: Borchert, “Alley Landscapes of Washington” and  Vlach, “The Shotgun House: An African Architectural Legacy” |
| April 12 | Reading: Van Slyck, “Mañana, Mañana: Racial Stereotypes and  the Anglo Rediscovery of the Southwest’s Vernacular Architecture 1890-1920” and Wilson, “Place over Time: Restoration and Revivalism in Santa Fe”  **Due Assignment #3** |
| **Week 14: 20th Century Commercial**  **architecture** | April 17 | Reading: Venturi, Brown, and Izenour selections from *Learning*  *from Las Vegas* |
| April 19 | Reading: Liebs “Space: From Main Street to Miracle Mile” |
| **Week 15: change in vernacular studies** | April 24 | Reading: McDonald, “The Fundamental Practice of Fieldwork at Colonial Williamsburg” |
| April 26 | Reading: Heath, “Assessing Regional Identity Amidst Change:  The Role of Vernacular Studies” |
| **Final Exam** | Section 02 | Due Thursday, May 3 12noon-2:30pm |