

**Urban Studies UURB 2502**  
*historic preservation in the city: time, space, + design*



SPRING 2015  
MW || 1:50-3:30pm  
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**Purpose of the course**

This course introduces students to the theory and practice of preservation in the United States and internationally, with a focus on cities. Historic preservation is one of the most important innovations to shape the urban landscape in a generation. It constitutes a powerful tool for citizens, planners, architects, designers, and policy makers. The preservation of buildings in urban environments involves a vital mix of motives, underwritten by a trillion dollar global industry in redevelopment, adaptive reuse, and tourism. At the same time, preservation involves fundamental questions of culture, memory, and the public good that arise around historic places. Why do we preserve buildings? How do we determine what elements are significant and what elements are disposable? Who should sit at the table where such decisions are made?

**Course objectives**

Historic preservation is inherently interdisciplinary: it is part heritage campaign, part urban design program, part revitalization effort, and part curatorial project. In this seminar, students will become familiar with these aspects of preservation both in theory and in practice. Through readings, case studies, and on-the-ground laboratories, students will examine the range of possibilities that preservation offers to urban planning, design, place making, and community building. We will study the preservation movement from the early nineteenth century to the present, with close attention to the biases that structure how we talk about preservation, the worth of buildings, and the meanings of the historic built environment. By the end of the seminar, students will acquire basic understanding of the theories, methods, frameworks, and applications of historic preservation within the urban condition. Students will also gain a thorough understanding of the strengths, weaknesses, achievements and future challenges of urban preservation in a global age.

## Assignments

The course is organized around a common roster of readings and assignments designed to forward knowledge on a collaborative basis. The success of the course depends on everyone's active involvement. Students will be responsible for both individual and group work, and for the timely completion of assignments.

**Readings:** Readings for the course include books and articles. The books are available for purchase at a designated bookstore, or you may obtain them on line. They will also be on limited time reserve in the library. The articles are available through electronic reserve; you will need a password to download the articles from week to week. In the class schedule, ® indicates a 'reserve' reading available via Canvas. The following books are mandatory for the course:

- Norman Tyler, *Historic Preservation, 2nd Edition*
- Max Page and Randall Mason, eds., *Giving Preservation a History*

**Participation:** Students should attend class prepared to share insights and observations, and to engage one another on a civil basis. As this is an active class, students should make every effort to read the material, visit the sites, and contribute to group assignments. (20% of the final grade).

**First Exam:** The first take home exam consists of short-answer identification and essays. The short ID's are worth 20 points and the essays 80 points, for a total of 100 points per exam. The essay exam will test your ability to apply your knowledge gained in the course. Simply marshalling facts is not enough. You will be required to explain, contextualize, and interpret complex material. You will need to integrate insights gained from all of the readings and lectures and discussions into your essays. (100 POINTS, 20% of total grade)

**Second Exam:** The second take home exam has the same format as the first: short-answer identification and essays. The material for the second exam will be heavily weighted toward the second half of the course. Again, strong knowledge of the readings will be key to good performance. Bear in mind that all readings, site visits, and discussions are fair game to appear on the exams! (100 POINTS, 20% of total grade)

**Term Project:** Students will work in small groups to prepare interpretations of an existing historic resource. The feature that your group examines should be a tangible artifact such as a building, district, streetscape, watercourse, utility, construction material, or interrelated set of components. The challenge of the final project is to devise a scheme for the responsible, informed public interpretation of the historic resource. Proposals should balance the following elements: creative and aesthetic goals; community needs; existing preservation ordinances, land use laws, and funding concerns. Proposals should also detail ways in which neighborhoods, community groups, or organizations can participate in the development of the project. Each proposal should take the form of two large posters for presentation in class. The posters will incorporate texts, maps, architectural drawings, and photographs. (40% of final grade).

## **Policies**

**Attendance:** Students will receive a demotion of one-half of a letter grade for each unexcused absence. The only legitimate excuses for absence are: an extended illness requiring hospitalization or visit to a physician; a family emergency, e.g. serious illness; observance of a religious holiday. More than four unexcused absences will result in a failing course grade.

**Academic Honesty:** Students should read and follow the University Code of Conduct concerning academic honesty: [www.newschool.edu/WorkArea/DownloadAsset.aspx?id=81698](http://www.newschool.edu/WorkArea/DownloadAsset.aspx?id=81698). Plagiarism is the unacknowledged use of someone else's work as one's own in all forms of academic endeavor (such as essays, theses, examinations, research data, creative projects, etc), intentional or unintentional. Plagiarized material may be derived from a variety of sources, such as books, journals, internet postings, student or faculty papers. This includes the purchase or "outsourcing" of written assignments for a course.

**Disabilities:** In keeping with the University's policy of providing equal access for students with disabilities, any student requesting accommodations must first meet with Student Disability Services. Student Disability Services is located at 79 Fifth Avenue - 5th Floor. The phone number is 212.229.5626. The URL is: [www.newschool.edu/studentaffairs/disability/](http://www.newschool.edu/studentaffairs/disability/). The office is available to answer any questions or concerns.

**Evaluation:** We assume that students at The New School are capable of excellent work; however, we will grade each of you on performance rather than potential. Grades will be assigned along a standard academic scale:

A (90 - 100%). The relatively rare grades of A and A- are reserved for work of the highest caliber, where the student demonstrates work of depth, focus, insight, and originality.

B (80 - 89%). Signifies that the student has performed well on a given assignment or in the course, submitting above average work and contributing on a weekly basis.

C (70 - 79%). Indicates that the student has fulfilled requirements to an acceptable level. Receiving a C on an assignment suggests that it is good, but not exceptional. As a course grade, it might indicate average work, or performance that is good in some areas and poor in others.

D (60 - 69%). Marks performance that falls below acceptable levels. For an assignment, this suggests that the student has not met the minimum expectations. For the course, the D results from overall poor performance, whether on assignments, participation, or attendance.

F (0 - 59%). Indicates failure to meet the minimum expectations of an assignment or the course. Most often, students receive an F for failing to turn in all assignments or for excessive absences, rather than for the quality of work alone.

**Late Work:** Late work in this course will be penalized by the reduction of an assignment grade by one-half letter grade per day. Exceptions to this policy are very rare, and can be made only in dire emergencies (see attendance policy above).

## Class schedule

### PART ONE: HISTORIC PRESERVATION IN TIME

WEEK ONE, 01.26 + 01.28: INTRODUCTION AND ORIENTATION

WEEK TWO, 02.02 + 02.04: HISTORY, MEMORY, AND THE BUILT ENVIRONMENT

- Readings:
- Max Page and Randall Mason, eds., Introduction, chapter 5, *Giving Preservation a History*.
  - Norman Tyler, chapters 1-2, *Historic Preservation*.

WEEK THREE, 02.09 + 02.11: HERITAGE, ITS CONTENTS, AND ITS DISCONTENTS

- Readings:
- Max Page and Randall Mason, eds., chapters 1, 9, *Giving Preservation a History*.
  - Barbara Kirshenblatt-Gimblett, "A Second Life as Heritage: Ellis Island" in *Destination Cultures*. ®
  - Dirk Spennemann, "On the Cultural Heritage of Robots" in *International Journal of Heritage Studies*. ®

### PART TWO: HISTORY, PLACE, AND MEANING

WEEK FOUR, 02.18: THE STRUGGLE TO DEFINE HISTORY IN PLACE

**Presidents Day--No classes on Monday, Feb 16th**

- Reading:
- Dolores Hayden, "Urban Landscape History," in *Understanding Ordinary Landscapes*. ®
  - Lawrence Oaks, "The National Register--A Roadmap to Preserving a Sense of Place," *CRM* 25, 1 (2002). ®

WEEK FIVE, 02.23 + 02.25: HISTORICITY: TRACING THE VISUAL, MATERIAL, + AESTHETIC

- Readings:
- Max Page and Randall Mason, eds., chapters 6-7, *Giving Preservation a History*.
  - Jorge Otero-Paillos, "The Ethics of Dust," installation at the 2009 Venice Biennale. ®

## PART THREE: PRESERVATION AND THE PUBLIC REALM

WEEK SIX, 03.02 + 03.04: PRESERVATION AS A CIVIC PRACTICE

- Readings:
- Max Page and Randall Mason, chapter 10, *Giving Preservation a History*.
  - Cathy Stanton, "Feasting on Lowell," in *The Lowell Experiment*. ®

**First exam distributed on Monday, March 2nd, due Monday, March 9th**

WEEK SEVEN, 03.09 + 03.11: PRESERVATION IN A MIXED ECONOMY

- Readings:
- Preservation Green Lab Report on Small Buildings (2013). ®
  - Pratt Center Report on Fulton Street Mall Redevelopment (2006). ®

## PART FOUR: PRESERVATION AS DESIGN

WEEK EIGHT, 03.16 + 03.18: BUILDINGS AS ARTIFACTS OF DESIGN AND TIME

- Reading:
- Stuart Brand, *How Buildings Learn*. VIDEO
  - Joseph Heathcott and Pamela Ambrose, "Industrial Urbanism as an Archival Artifact," in *Art Documentation Bulletin*.

WEEK NINE, 03.23 + 03.25: **Spring Break- No classes on 03.23 + 03.25**

WEEK TEN, 03.30 + 04.01: PRESERVATION AND THE URBAN DESIGN TOOLKIT

- Reading:
- Norman Tyler, chapters 7-9, *Historic Preservation*.
  - Portland Bureau of Planning and Sustainability, *Infill Design Project*. ®

## PART FIVE: CONSTRUCTING PRESERVATION KNOWLEDGE

WEEK ELEVEN, 04.06 + 04.08: FROM THREE DIMENSIONS TO TWO AND BACK AGAIN

- Reading:
- Norman Tyler, chapters 3-4, 10, *Historic Preservation*.
  - Karl Raitz, "Field Observation, Archives, and Explanation," *The Geographical Review* 91, 1-2 (2001). ®
  - Travis McDonald, "Understanding Old Buildings: The Process of Architectural Investigation," *Preservation Brief* 35. ®

WEEK TWELVE, 04.13 + 04.15: TAXONOMIES, INVENTORIES, AND PORTFOLIOS

- Reading:
- Norman Tyler, 5-6, *Historic Preservation*.
  - NPS, *How to Apply the National Register Criteria for Evaluation*. ®
  - Catherine LaVoie, "The HABS/HAER and the National Register--A Symbiotic Relationship," *CRM* 25, 1 (2002). ®

**Second exam distributed on Monday, April 13th, due Monday, April 20th**

<b>PART SIX: PRESERVATION ON THE GLOBAL STAGE</b>
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WEEK THIRTEEN, 04.20 + 04.22: THE INSTRUMENTS OF WORLD HERITAGE

- Reading:
- Jukka Jokilehto, "International Charters on Urban Conservation," *City & Time* (2007).
  - UNESCO, "Recommendations on the Historic Urban Landscape." ®

WEEK FOURTEEN, 04.27 + 04.29: WORLD HERITAGE AS CULTURAL CONSTRUCT

- Reading:
- Wendy Beck, "Narratives of World Heritage in Travel Guidebooks," *International Journal of Heritage Studies* 12, 6 (2006). ®
  - William Bissell, "Casting a Long Shadow: Colonial Categories, Cultural Identities, and Cosmopolitan Spaces in Globalizing Africa," *African Identities* 5, 2 (2007). ®

<b>PART SEVEN: PRESERVATION AS A CRITICAL URBAN PRACTICE</b>
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WEEK FIFTEEN, 05.04 + 05.06: PRESENTATIONS AND CRITIQUES

WEEK SIXTEEN, 05.11 + 05.13: PRESENTATIONS AND CRITIQUES

WEEK SEVENTEEN, MONDAY 05.18: FINAL PROJECTS DUE