AMERICAN ARCHITECTURAL HISTORY

Mid-Atlantic Regional Center for the Humanities, Rutgers University – Camden

Spring Semester 2025, Mondays February 10-April 7 and April 21 from7-9 PM. Note: There will be no class on Monday, April 14. Field trip will take place on either Saturday, March 8 or Saturday, March 15.

Instructor:

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Our built environment, including landscapes, buildings, and other features, is shaped by ecological, cultural, technological, political, and economic forces, to name just a few.

In this course we will explore how these different forces have impacted the built environment in the Mid-Atlantic region of the United States from the Native American period to around 50 years ago. We’ll also examine relevant examples of the built environment from other parts of the world to place the development of our local architecture in context.

Within each period, we will discuss examples of urban and rural landscapes, a wide variety of building types, and significant engineering and industrial structures. The goal will be to understand the diversity of the built environment and the people who lived there during each period, so we can appreciate why it looked the way it did, what has been lost, and what has survived to the present day.

Each week, you will be required to complete assignments that will help you develop a critical eye for the built environment that you experience every day. You will also develop a final project narrative that focuses on a site of your choice and will include a description of the site; changes over time; and impacts of the significant forces that have shaped your site.

At the end of this course, you should be able to:

* Understand the relevance of the built environment in your day-to-day life for the purposes of interpretation, research, and advocacy in the field of historic preservation
* Identify key moments, styles and trends in the history of the American built environment, with a focus on the Mid-Atlantic region
* Analyze the built environment for clues about the date of construction and changes over time
* Articulate why components of our built environment look the way they do

Students in this course will have the opportunity to join an in-person field trip in Camden, NJ, for a tour and conversation with Dolly Marshall, Historic Preservation Specialist for the City of Camden. Ms. Marshall has won multiple awards for her advocacy and preservation work and was recently recognized as an [Emerging Leader by the National Trust for Historic Preservation](https://nam02.safelinks.protection.outlook.com/?url=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.courierpostonline.com%2Fstory%2Fnews%2Flocal%2F2024%2F11%2F12%2Fdolly-marshall-of-camden-earns-national-accolade-for-preservation-work%2F76050355007%2F&data=05%7C02%7Cis623%40camden.rutgers.edu%7Cfb2cb0179cb7414270d408dd31bf7f14%7Cb92d2b234d35447093ff69aca6632ffe%7C1%7C0%7C638721420731104802%7CUnknown%7CTWFpbGZsb3d8eyJFbXB0eU1hcGkiOnRydWUsIlYiOiIwLjAuMDAwMCIsIlAiOiJXaW4zMiIsIkFOIjoiTWFpbCIsIldUIjoyfQ%3D%3D%7C0%7C%7C%7C&sdata=vyNqgiP8O8%2BwHkmq%2FafyhI714oLKXvgrbyTEJe%2B29KQ%3D&reserved=0). There may also be potential opportunities for students to engage with Ms. Marshall at the [Mount Peace Cemetery Association](https://nam02.safelinks.protection.outlook.com/?url=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.mtpeacecemeteryassociation.org%2F&data=05%7C02%7Cis623%40camden.rutgers.edu%7Cfb2cb0179cb7414270d408dd31bf7f14%7Cb92d2b234d35447093ff69aca6632ffe%7C1%7C0%7C638721420731124915%7CUnknown%7CTWFpbGZsb3d8eyJFbXB0eU1hcGkiOnRydWUsIlYiOiIwLjAuMDAwMCIsIlAiOiJXaW4zMiIsIkFOIjoiTWFpbCIsIldUIjoyfQ%3D%3D%7C0%7C%7C%7C&sdata=U36H2dY1mEWoau4Izkn4bW0FUN5zBi0w9JDcMBGJpDM%3D&reserved=0) in Lawnside, NJ, which is currently celebrating its 125th anniversary. We are excited to offer this collaboration between Rutgers and the City of Camden.

This course is intended for audiences of all educational and professional backgrounds who have an interest in historic preservation. We welcome both professionals in the field of historic preservation and related fields, as well as those who volunteer with historic organizations and buildings, own their own historic homes, or who have a general interest in the topic.

This course is one of the required courses for the certificate in historic preservation.

**Course Format**

This course will be conducted online via a blend of asynchronous lectures, at-home assignments, synchronous online instruction and discussion, in-person field trips, and a final assignment. The synchronous discussion will take place during posted class times. Students will be required to sign in to both Zoom and Miro’s whiteboard app in order to participate. **The synchronous session will build on that week’s assignment, so you must complete them before the start of class.**

You are encouraged to participate in the synchronous sessions with your webcam turned on and with yourself visible to the other students. If, for any reason, you are not comfortable appearing on webcam, you are not required to do so.

When you join the Zoom you will enter a waiting room, which I will be monitoring and admitting

only enrolled students. The waiting room feature will us avoid being "Zoom-bombed." Please

make every attempt to join the Zoom meeting a few minutes early to avoid being in the waiting

room for longer than necessary. If you arrive late, please be patient with me while I work to admit

everyone into the session.

**Attendance Policy**

This course if Pass/Fail. In order to receive a passing grade and credit for the Certificate in Historic Preservation, you will need to attend class and complete the final assignment. If you know you are going to miss class, please let me know in advance.

Participants risk losing the opportunity to earn CEUs if they miss more than one session of a five-week class. Instructors reserve the right to assign make-up assignments.

**Assignments**

**Weekly:** All asynchronous lectures and readings are required and will be made available electronically on Canvas under the week’s Module.

Post at least 2 questions you have related to the week’s lecture and readings on the discussion board. The questions you post will lead our class discussion.

Post photograph and sticky note caption to the Miro board timeline.

**Your discussion questions and photographs must be posted the Sunday before class by 11:59 PM.**

**Final:** Choose a historic site that you have visited before and that has sufficient research available to complete your chosen final project option. Final project should be 5 pages in length, not including bibliography and illustrations.

* Option 1: National Register “Narrative Description” Section – For your selected site, begin with a summary paragraph that briefly describes the general characteristics of the property, such as its location, type, style, method of construction, setting, size, and significant features. Indicate whether the property has historic integrity. Describe the historic and current physical appearance and condition of the property. Describe contributing and noncontributing resources if applicable. Include a bibliography (use single, consistent format, i.e. MLA or APA).
* Option 2: Historic Structure Report “Historical Background and Context” Section – For your selected site, provide a brief history of the building and its context, its designers and builders, and persons associated with its history and development. Include how the building was shaped by: environment, culture, technology, politics/law/economics, materials, function, and style. Include a bibliography (use single, consistent format, i.e. MLA or APA).
* Option 3: Cultural Landscape Report “Site History” Section – For your selected site, provide a brief site history that describes the landscape during significant periods of development up to the present, and identifies the historic context and period(s) of significance for the site. Include how the landscape was shaped by: environment, culture, technology, politics/law/economics, materials, function, and style. Include a bibliography (use single, consistent format, i.e. MLA or APA).

**Your final assignment must be submitted by April XXX at 11:59 PM.**

**Preliminary Course Schedule**

Module 1 – introductions, overview of course, architectural history approach

* Assignment 1.1: Watch lecture for Module 2 “Native American Country & European Contact”
* Assignment 1.2: Take a photograph of a landscape, upload the photograph to the Miro timeline with a sticky note indicating name of site, location, best guess of date(s) of construction
* Assignment 1.3: Read “Storied Landscapes” in *Science News*

Module 2 – Native American Country & European Contact

* Assignment 2.1: Watch lecture for Module 3 “Colonial Culture”
* Assignment 2.2: Take a photograph of a landscape feature (view, circulation, water, small-scale, vegetation), upload the photograph to the Miro timeline with a sticky note indicating name of site, location, best guess of date(s) of construction
* Assignment 2.3: Read [article on Colonial Culture]

Module 3 – Colonial Culture

* Assignment 3.1: Watch lecture for Module 4 “Revolution to Early Republic”
* Assignment 3.2: Take a photograph of a building exterior (overall view), upload the photograph to the Miro timeline with a sticky note indicating name of site, location, best guess of date(s) of construction
* Assignment 3.3: Read [article on Revolution to Early Republic]
* Assignment 3.4: Choose final project and send me an email with your chosen option and selected site

Module 4 – Revolution to Early Republic

* Assignment 4.1: Watch lecture for Module 5 “Antebellum Era”
* Assignment 4.2: Take a photograph of a building exterior (overall view), upload the photograph to the Miro timeline with a sticky note indicating name of site, location, best guess of date(s) of construction
* Assignment 4.3: Read [article on Antebellum Era]

Module 5 – Antebellum Era

* Assignment 5.1: Watch lecture for Module 6 “Gilded Age”
* Assignment 5.2: Take a photograph of a building exterior character defining feature (Roof, Window, Door/Entry, Wall Material, Chimney), upload the photograph to the Miro timeline with a sticky note indicating name of site, location, best guess of date(s) of construction
* Assignment 5.3: Read [article on Gilded Age]
* Assignment 5.4: Submit detailed outline of your final project and preliminary bibliography

Module 6 – Gilded Age

* Assignment 6.1: Watch lecture for Module 7 “Progressive Era & Between Wars”
* Assignment 6.2: Take a photograph of a building exterior character defining feature (Roof, Window, Door/Entry, Wall Material, Chimney), upload the photograph to the Miro timeline with a sticky note indicating name of site, location, best guess of date(s) of construction
* Assignment 6.3: Read [article on Progressive Era & Between Wars]

Module 7 – Progressive Era & Between the Wars

* Assignment 7.1: Watch lecture for Module 8 “Rise of Modernism to 1974”
* Assignment 7.2: Take a photograph of an interior building character-defining feature (Stair, Decorative feature, Systems), upload the photograph to the Miro timeline with a sticky note indicating name of site, location, best guess of date(s) of construction
* Assignment 7.3: Read [article on Rise of Modernism to 1974]

Module 8 – Rise of Modernism to 1974

* Assignment 8.1: Read [article on field trip]
* Assignment 8.2: Submit rough draft of final project for feedback

Module 9 – Field Trip

Module 10 – Student Presentations/Field Trip

Module 10: Submit final project