

H615 Visualizing the Antebellum South, 1780-1865

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Office Hours: Tues. 6:50-7:20 in classroom, after class, by appointment

This course examines the built environment of the Antebellum South. We consider recent scholarship about settlement patterns, slave housing, rural plantations, and city dwellings. The course begins in the Shenandoah Valley and the Middle States, reminding us that the South is a political, historical, and cultural construct. It encompasses diverse geographies that are closely linked to other areas of the country through trade, culture, and settlement. We move to works on urban housing and development, which center around comparative investigations of Philadelphia, New York, Charleston, and New Orleans. Further reading of texts specifically dedicated to understanding slave housing provides information about construction and location. This reading offers studies beyond the United States, placing the slavery of the American South within the larger context of Trans-Atlantic slavery. A close examination of Charleston, with texts that consider plantation imagery, seeks to sift how depictions of slavery have affected our images of the plantation past. Finally, we apply our understanding of historical landscape patterns to three recent publications about slave neighborhoods, slave markets, and Southern domestic life.

This course encompasses a wide variety of historical texts drawing from history, cultural geography, architectural history, and art history. This seminar will revolve around class discussion and presentation. Students are expected to come to class well-read and prepared. Because this is a graduate seminar, classroom attendance is mandatory. Each student will be responsible for three oral presentations. During the first, each student will present a published review of one of the weekly texts and begin the class discussion about that text. In the second, the student will present an additional history text beyond the assigned reading to expand understanding of Southern historiography. I will offer recommendations. Third, the student will lead a discussion about his or her research in a 10-15 minute prepared presentation. Students will participate in classroom discussions and in weekly blackboard discussions. Each week, I will post a discussion question; participation in the blackboard discussion is mandatory.

There will be a fifteen to twenty page research paper due at the end of the course. Class participation 30%, book review presentation 5%, additional literature presentation 5%, blackboard discussion 10%, research paper 50% (class presentation on research topic 10%, written submission 40%)

Schedule and assignments

January 24 Class Introduction

January 31 Warren Hofstra, *The Planting of New Virginia: Settlement and Landscape in the Shenandoah Valley*

February 6 Gabrielle Lanier, *The Delaware Valley in the Early Republic: Architecture, Landscape, and Regional Identity*

February 13 Bernard Herman, *Town House: Architecture and Material Life in the Early American City, 1780-1830*

February 13 Research Paper Topics with Archives and Bibliography, Working Thesis Due

February 20 Dell Upton, *Another City: Urban Life and Urban Spaces in the New American Republic*

February 27 John Vlach, *Back of the Big House: The Architecture of Plantation Slavery*, Also, the following articles in Clifton Ellis and Rebecca Ginsburg, Eds., *Cabin, Quarter, Plantation* pp.121-176:

Dell Upton, "White and Black Landscapes in Eighteenth Century-Virginia"; Clifton Ellis, "'Building for Our Family, Black and White': The Changing Form of the Slave House in Antebellum Virginia"; Barbara Heath, "Space and Place within Plantation Quarters in Virginia, 1700-1825."

March 6 Read remaining articles in Clifton Ellis and Rebecca Ginsburg, Eds., *Cabin, Quarter, Plantation: Architecture and Landscape of North American Slavery*

March 12-March 18 Spring Break

March 20 Maurie McInnis, *The Politics of Taste in Antebellum Charleston*

March 27 John Vlach, *The Planter's Prospect: Privilege and Slavery in Plantation Paintings*

April 3 Angela D. Mack and Stephen G. Hoffius, Eds., *The Landscape of Slavery: The Plantation in American Art*

April 10 Paper Drafts Due

April 17 Anthony E. Kaye, *Joining Places: Slave Neighborhoods in the Old South*

April 24 Walter Johnson, *Soul by Soul: Life Inside the Antebellum Slave Market*

May 1 Thavolia Glymph, *Out of the House of Bondage: The Transformation of the Plantation Household*

May 8 Research Papers Due

Academic Policies and Resources

ACADEMIC INTEGRITY

Mason is an Honor Code university; please see the University Catalog for a full description of the code and the honor committee process. The principle of academic integrity is taken very

seriously and violations are treated gravely. What does academic integrity mean in this course? Essentially this: when you are responsible for a task, you will perform that task. When you rely on someone else's work in an aspect of the performance of that task, you will give full credit in the proper, accepted form. Another aspect of academic integrity is the free play of ideas. Vigorous discussion and debate are encouraged in this course, with the firm expectation that all aspects of the class will be conducted with civility and respect for differing ideas, perspectives, and traditions. When in doubt (of any kind) please ask for guidance and clarification.

MASON EMAIL ACCOUNTS

Students must use their MasonLIVE email account to receive important University information, including messages related to this class. See <http://masonlive.gmu.edu> for more information.

BLACKBOARD 9.1

We will be using Blackboard 9.1 for our online discussion.

ATTENDANCE

Attendance is mandatory. Obviously I understand that students may have illness or emergencies. In these occasions, please let me know. However, excessive absences will lower your grade.

CELL PHONES AND TEXTING

Cell phones are to be turned off during class; texting is not allowed.

OFFICE OF DISABILITY SERVICES

If you are a student with a disability and you need academic accommodations, please see me and contact the Office of Disability Services (ODS) at 993-2474. I must be notified of the disability at the beginning of the semester. All academic accommodations must be arranged through the ODS. <http://ods.gmu.edu>

OTHER USEFUL CAMPUS RESOURCES:

WRITING CENTER: A114 Robinson Hall; (703) 993-1200; <http://writingcenter.gmu.edu>

UNIVERSITY LIBRARIES "Ask a Librarian"
<http://library.gmu.edu/mudge/IM/IMRef.html>

COUNSELING AND PSYCHOLOGICAL SERVICES (CAPS): (703) 993-2380;
<http://caps.gmu.edu>

UNIVERSITY POLICIES

The University Catalog, <http://catalog.gmu.edu>, is the central resource for university policies affecting student, faculty, and staff conduct in university academic affairs. Other policies are available at <http://universitypolicy.gmu.edu/>. All members of the university community are responsible for knowing and following established policies.