

Colorado State University  
Fall 2021

## HIST 354: AMERICAN ARCHITECTURAL HISTORY



Deaton Sculptured House (a.k.a. Sleeper House), 1963, Genesee, Colorado

Schedule and Location:..... Mondays, Wednesdays, and Fridays, 10–10:50 a.m.  
Location ..... Engineering E 105

Instructor:..... Dr. Adam Thomas ([Adam.Thomas@colostate.edu](mailto:Adam.Thomas@colostate.edu))  
Office: ..... Clark Building B 365  
Student Hours: ..... Tuesdays 12:30–2 p.m.; Wednesdays 11 a.m.–12:30 p.m.; or by appointment  
Method of Contact:..... In person or via Zoom (Meeting ID: 755 055 5964 Passcode: 151009)

This course is foremost a history class that uses the built environment as its primary text. We will investigate architecture as artifact and treat buildings, neighborhoods, and cities as texts recording the cultural, political, and economic circumstances in which they were constructed. Yet like all texts, familiarity with the language is necessary for comprehension. This course seeks to unlock that language. As such, this is not a design class. Instead, we will focus on the development and analysis of American architecture. Through studying the language of architecture, historians can “read” buildings and landscapes, offering a more vibrant and informed interpretation of history than the written record alone can provide.

## LEARNING OUTCOMES

This class presents a broad historical interpretation of the North American built environment, with particular emphasis on housing. Students will examine both high-style and vernacular architecture. At the conclusion of this class, students will be able to:

1. identify major changes in North American architecture, relating such changes to their historic contexts;
2. identify and generally date structures based on materials and design;
3. relate changing building technologies to architecture; and
4. most importantly, interpret the built environment for the various meanings it yields to historians.

## EXPECTATIONS

- Prepare for class by completing the readings and assignments on time.
- Attend all lectures and discussions and participate thoughtfully in weekly Canvas discussions.
- Pay attention during lectures and discussions and take notes, regardless of what is provided in the PowerPoint presentation.
- Do not use electronic devices in class for any other purposes than taking notes and further research.
- Silence all electronic devices when attending class in person and mute your microphones and cameras when attending virtually, unless asking a question or participating in discussion.
- Be respectful of your professor, graduate teaching assistant, and fellow students.
- Avoid getting up during class.
- Meet with the professor or graduate teaching assistant during their student hours if you are struggling with the course materials and assignments or have any other problems; it is your responsibility to seek help when you need it.
- Monitor Canvas for class updates, assignments, and other announcements.

## ACADEMIC HONESTY

Colorado State University, the Department of History, as well as your instructor will not tolerate academic dishonesty. This course adheres to the Academic Integrity Policy of the General Catalog and the Student Conduct Code. See guidelines in CSU's General Catalogue for specifications and likely consequences for failure to comply. From the CSU General Catalog: "Plagiarism includes the copying of language, structure, ideas, or thoughts of another, and representing them as one's own without proper acknowledgement. Examples include a submission of purchased research papers as one's own work; paraphrasing and/or quoting material without properly documenting the source."

I require students to sign the following pledge on all graded work: "On my honor as a student at CSU, I pledge that I have neither given nor received any unauthorized aid on this examination (or assignment)."

## REQUIRED TEXTS

Deetz, James. *In Small Things Forgotten: An Archaeology of Early American Life*. Expanded, revised, and subsequent ed. New York: Anchor Books, 1996.

Glotzer, Paige. *How the Suburbs were Segregated*. New York: Columbia University Press, 2020.

Larson, Erik. *The Devil in the White City: Murder, Magic, and Madness at the Fair That Changed America*. Bismarck, N.D.: Vintage, 2004.

McAlester, Virginia Savage. *A Field Guide to American Houses (Revised): The Definitive Guide to Identifying and Understanding America's Domestic Architecture*. Exp. Rev. edition. Knopf, 2015.

- **I have assigned additional essays and articles for each week. See the schedule below.**

## OPTIONAL TEXTS

Ching, Francis D. K. *A Visual Dictionary of Architecture*. 2nd Edition. Hoboken, NJ: Wiley, 2011.

Poppeliers, John C., and S. Allen Chambers. *What Style Is It? A Guide to American Architecture, Revised Edition*. 2nd Edition. New York: Wiley, 2003.

## COVID-19 Statement

**Important information for students: All students are expected and required to report any COVID-19 symptoms to the university immediately, as well as exposures or positive tests from a non-CSU testing location.**

If you suspect you have symptoms, or if you know you have been exposed to a positive person or have tested positive for COVID, you are required to fill out the COVID Reporter (<https://covid.colostate.edu/reporter/>). If you know or believe you have been exposed, including living with someone known to be COVID positive, or are symptomatic, it is important for the health of yourself and others that you complete the online COVID Reporter. Do not ask your instructor to report for you. If you do not have internet access to fill out the online COVID-19 Reporter, please call (970) 491-4600. You may also report concerns in your academic or living spaces regarding COVID exposures through the COVID Reporter. You will not be penalized in any way for reporting. When you complete the COVID Reporter for any reason, the CSU Public Health office is notified. Once notified, that office will contact you and, depending upon each situation, will conduct contact tracing, initiate any necessary public health requirements and notify you if you need to take any steps.

For the latest information about the University's COVID resources and information, please visit the **CSU COVID-19 site**: <https://covid.colostate.edu/>.

## COURSE ORGANIZATION

I have divided this course into six parts. At the beginning of each part we will explore specific moments in American history and how the culture, society, politics, and economy of those moments influenced specific architectural styles and the larger built environment. After establishing the historical context, we will explore specific styles using images and occasional field trips. You will also have weekly reading assignments associated with the week's context and architectural styles. Generally every other week, on Friday, we will discuss those readings together in class.

## FIELD TRIPS

If permitted and advisable given pandemic guidelines, the class will periodically take field trips into Fort Collins neighborhoods where we will look at architecture. These will occur during class time and will require a CSU signed liability waiver. I will announce the dates of these trips throughout the semester.

## EVALUATION

I have designed the assignments in this course with two goals in mind. First, I want to determine that you are reading, comprehending, and critically assessing the assigned texts and lectures. Second, I want to assess your ability to use those sources to support your own original ideas about the events and literature of the past.

**NOTE:** All written assignments must include (1) a title page with the honor statement, (2) citations in MLA, APA, or Chicago format, and (3) a works cited page.

### **Lecture Attendance and Canvas Discussion Participation**

I expect you to attend in-person lectures as much as possible without compromising your safety or the safety of your classmates and the instructor. Thus, I will take attendance randomly, usually no less than once a week. If you miss an in-person lecture, it is your responsibility to watch the recorded lecture as soon as possible. Note: I cannot guarantee that all lectures will be recorded or available. I will also base attendance grades on your participation on the weekly Canvas discussion boards, so please participate actively and thoughtfully. Please note that the discussion boards will only remain active for two weeks.

### **Canvas Discussions**

Your active and thoughtful participation in the weekly Canvas discussion will constitute a major aspect of your attendance and participation grade. Keep in mind that discussions will remain open for two weeks only.

### **Pop Quizzes**

Prepare for short-answer quizzes at any time. I intend them as a way to assess attendance and as a way to keep you on task with your reading assignments and lectures.

### **Notable Quotables**

As assigned in the syllabus (roughly every two weeks), you will select your favorite line, sentence, or quote from at least two of the assigned readings, *excepting the McAlester text*. (During periods when you only have one reading, i.e. when we are reading an entire book, you should take both of your quotes from that reading.) Comparative quotes from previous readings are always welcome. You will submit the text of the quote with at least three other sentences to convey your thoughts about your selection. The first sentence will summarize the overall argument of the reading from which you pulled the quote. A second sentence will contextualize the quote you selected. The third and most important sentence will explain why you selected the quote. This four-sentence formula is merely a guideline; you may certainly expand on it if necessary. For instance, feel free to write down any questions you may have about the quote specifically or the text generally. On weeks when we will discuss more than one reading, you may select your notable quotable from one of the readings or do a comparison of them. However, this assignment should be no more than one page, double-spaced, twelve-point text.

*Due: On Fridays indicated below, at the start of class. Please submit via Canvas and bring a hard copy so we can use your Notable Quotable for our discussion that day.*

### **Midterm**

You will have one formal examination. In addition to short answers, the exam will consist of images of a building. You will need to identify the architectural style, provide an estimated date of construction, and develop a historic context explaining the style, supported with evidence from the readings and lectures.

### **Short Essay**

You will submit one well-reasoned, well-written, and well-cited essay during the semester. I will provide images of at least two buildings for comparison. You will need to identify their styles, estimate their dates of construction, and establish their historic contexts. As well, you will need to explain how their architectural styles are different and alike. The essays shall be no more than two-pages of twelve-point, double-spaced text (not including the cover and works cited pages). Please reserve margins of at least one inch. *Beware: I am a stickler for proper grammar and strong writing. Please proofread! Avoid passive voice. Check noun-pronoun and noun-verb agreement.*

### **Final or Eligible/Optional Final Essay**

The final will be an in-class examination consisting of short answers and two essay questions. It will be comprehensive, drawing from material throughout the entire semester. For students scoring a B or better on the in-class exam and the short essay, you may opt to write an essay on a topic of your choice, as long as it is pulled from the course materials and receives my approval.

For research assistance, Meggan Houlihan is the librarian supporting the Department of History and this course. Contact her at [meggan.houlihan@colostate.edu](mailto:meggan.houlihan@colostate.edu).

**Architectural Treasure Hunt**

Periodically throughout the semester I will ask you to take a picture of particular architectural form, style, or component. You will then submit your photograph to Canvas. These will be extra-point assignments.

**Graduate Student Evaluation**

I will hold graduate students in this class to the highest standards for all assignments in this course, reflecting the rigors of the graduate school.

**Assignment Schedule**

All writing assignments must be submitted to Canvas by 11 a.m. on their respective due dates. I will only offer the midterm exam at the date and times below. Those exams will be taken online, through Canvas.

Assignment Name	Due Date	Time
Notable Quotable 1	Friday, September 3	Due at 10 a.m.
Notable Quotable 2	Friday, September 24	Due at 10 a.m.
Midterm Examination	Friday, October 1	10–10:50 a.m.
Notable Quotable 3	Friday, October 15	Due at 10 a.m.
Notable Quotable 4	Friday, November 5	Due at 10 a.m.
Short Essay	Friday, November 12	Due at 10 a.m.
Notable Quotable 5	Friday, December 10	Due at 10 a.m.
Final/Term Paper	Tuesday, December 14	Final 11:50 a.m.–1:50 p.m. (Everything due at 1:50 p.m.)

**Grading**

Attendance, Canvas Discussion Participation, and Pop Quizzes .....	15%
Notable Quotables.....	20%
Midterm .....	20%
Short Essay.....	20%
Term Paper .....	25%

Please note that I maintain grades in Canvas merely as a reference for your convenience. While your grades in Canvas are a close approximation of your actual scores, they DO NOT fully represent the grades in my grade book. If you would like to know your official grade, please see me during office hours.

**Grading Scale**

100 A+	87–89 B+	77–79 C+
93–99 A	83–86 B	73–70 C
90–92 A-	80–82 B-	60–69 D
Any grade below a 60 is an F.		

**Late Assignments**

I expect promptness with all assignments. Late assignments will be docked one percentage point per day late. If you are having a problem completing your assignment, please contact me as soon as possible to make other arrangements.

## COURSE SCHEDULE AND READING ASSIGNMENTS

**Please have all the week's readings completed Fridays before class.**

### PART I: INTRODUCTION; NATIVE AMERICAN AND COLONIAL ARCHITECTURE

#### Week 1 (8/23–8/27): Introduction, Reading Buildings, and Native American Architecture

Outram, Christine. "Why I Left the Architecture Profession." *ArchDaily*, October 21, 2013.  
<https://www.archdaily.com/440358/why-i-left-the-architecture-profession>.

Cortés, Hernán. "From Second Letter to the Spanish Crown (Description of Tenochtitlan)." (Available on Canvas)

McAlester, "Looking at American Houses," section and "Native American" and "Pre-Railroad" in the "Folk Houses" section (pp. 3–132).

#### Week 2 (8/30–9/3): Spanish, English, and French Colonial Architecture of the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries

Wilson, Chris. "Spanish and Pueblo Santa Fe." *The Myth of Santa Fe: Creating a Modern Regional Tradition*. Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1997: 20-45. (Available on Canvas)

McAlester, "National" and "Manufactured" in the "Folk Houses" section and "Postmedieval English, Dutch Colonial, French Colonial, and Spanish Colonial," in the "Colonial Houses" section (pp. 135–198).

- **Friday 9/3: Discussion on Cortés, Outram, and Wilson (Notable Quotable 1 Due)**

### PART II: ENLIGHTENMENT AND REVOLUTION

#### Week 3 (9/8 and 9/10): Colonial Refinement and Georgian Architecture | to 1776

Shammas, Carole. "The Housing Stock of the Early United States: Refinement Meets Migration." *The William and Mary Quarterly*, Third Series, 64, no. 3 (July 1, 2007): 549–90. (Available on Canvas)

McAlester, "Georgian" in the "Colonial Houses" section (pp. 201–214).

- **Monday 9/6: NO CLASS: Labor Day**

#### Week 4 (9/13–9/17): Architecture of the Revolution and Early Republic | 1776–1840

Richard Bushman, "Houses and Gardens," in *The Refinement of America: Persons, Houses, Cities* (New York: Vintage Books, 1992). (Available on Canvas)

McAlester, "Federal" and "Early Classical Revival" in the "Colonial Houses" section and "Greek Revival" in the "Romantic Houses" section (pp. 217–264).

**Week 5 (9/20–9/24): Vernacular Architecture of Early America**

Deetz, James. *In Small Things Forgotten: An Archaeology of Early American Life*. Expanded, revised, and subsequent ed. New York: Anchor Books, 1996. (Book)

- *Friday 9/24: Discussion on Shammass, Bushman, and Deetz (Notable Quotable 2 Due)*

**PART III: INDUSTRIALIZATION AND ROMANTICISM**

**Week 6 (9/27–10/1): First Industrial Revolution, the Romantic and the Picturesque | 1840–1880 (Part 1)**

No readings assigned this week.

- *Friday 10/1: Midterm Exam*

**Week 7 (10/4–10/8): First Industrial Revolution, the Romantic and the Picturesque | 1840–1880 (Part 2)**

Masteller, Jean Carwile, and Richard N. Masteller. "Rural Architecture in Andrew Jackson Downing and Henry David Thoreau: Pattern Book Parody in Walden." *The New England Quarterly* 57, no. 4 (1984): 483–510. (Available on Canvas)

McAlester, "Gothic Revival," "Italianate," "Exotic Revivals," and "Octagon" in the "Romantic Houses" section (pp. 267–313).

**PART IV: URBANIZATION AND SUBURBANIZATION**

**Week 8 (10/11–10/15): Victorian-Era Architecture | 1860–1900 (Part 1)**

Garvin, James L. "Mail-Order House Plans and American Victorian Architecture." *Winterthur Portfolio* 16, no. 4 (1981): 309–34. (Available on Canvas)

McAlester, "Victorian Houses" section (pp. 315–394).

- *Friday 10/15: Discussion on Masteller and Masteller; and Garvin (Notable Quotable 3 Due)*

**Week 9 (10/18–10/22): Victorian-Era Architecture | 1860–1900 (Part 2)**

Larson, Erik. *The Devil in the White City: Murder, Magic, and Madness at the Fair That Changed America*. Bismarck, N.D.: Vintage, 2004. (Book; read first third.)

**Week 10 (10/25–10/29): Industrial and Commercial Architecture of the Nineteenth Century**

Larson, Erik. *The Devil in the White City: Murder, Magic, and Madness at the Fair That Changed America*. Bismarck, N.D.: Vintage, 2004. (Book; read middle third.)

- *Friday, 10/29: Halloween Haunted House Spooktacular*

## PART V: ORGANIZATIONAL REVOLUTION AND PERIOD REVIVALS

### Week 11 (11/1–11/5): Period and Exotic Revivals | 1880–1940

Larson, Erik. *The Devil in the White City: Murder, Magic, and Madness at the Fair That Changed America*. Bismarck, N.D.: Vintage, 2004. (Book; read last third.)

McAlester, "Eclectic Houses" section (pp. 407–546).

- *Friday 11/5: Discussion on Larson (Notable Quotable 4 Due)*

### Week 12 (11/8–11/12): Craftsman and Rustic | 1905–1930

McAlester, "Prairie" and "Craftsmen" in the "Modern Houses" section (pp. 549–578).

- *Friday 11/12: Short Essay Due*

## PART VI: MODERNITY

### Week 13 (11/15–11/19): Jazz Age Modern and the Allure of Speed | 1920–1950

Rennix, Brianna, and Nathan J. Robinson. "Why You Hate Contemporary Architecture." *Current Affairs*, October 31, 2017. <https://www.currentaffairs.org/2017/10/why-you-hate-contemporary-architecture>.

Scherer, Herbert. "Marquee on Main Street Jack Liebenberg's Movie Theaters: 1928-1941." *The Journal of Decorative and Propaganda Arts* 1 (1986): 62–75. (Available on Canvas)

McAlester, "Modernistic," in "Modern Houses" section (pp. 581–585).

### Fall Break 11/20–11/28

### Week 14 (11/29–12/3): Postwar Modern | 1945–1960

Freidrichs, Chad. *The Pruitt-Igoe Myth*. DVD, Documentary. First Run Features, 2011.

Glutzer, Paige. *How the Suburbs were Segregated*. New York: Columbia University Press, 2020. (Book; read first half)

McAlester, "Minimal Traditional," "Ranch," and "Split-Level" and the entire "Mainstream Modern" section of the "Modern Houses" chapter (pp. 587–683).

### Week 15 (12/6–12/10): Modern and Postmodern | 1960–2000

Glutzer, Paige. *How the Suburbs were Segregated*. New York: Columbia University Press, 2020. (Book; read second half)

McAlester, "Styled Houses Since 1935" chapter (pp. 685–763).

- *Friday 12/10: Discussion on Rennix, Sherer, "Pruitt-Igoe," and Glutzer (Notable Quotable 5 Due)*

**Final: Tuesday 12/14, 11:50 a.m.–1:50 p.m.**

**Term Paper (for those who qualify and elect to write one): Due Tuesday 12/14 at 1:50 p.m.**

## CAREER PATHS FOR HISTORY MAJORS AND HOW TO PURSUE THEM

### Business

*Why it's a good choice:* The critical thinking and communication skills that History majors learn, along with our students' ability to analyze how societies change over time, constitute a good preparation for careers in business.

*What to do:* CSU's College of Business offers a minor in Business Administration; see the web site (<http://www.biz.colostate.edu/undergraduatePrograms/academicPrograms/Pages/businessMinor.aspx>) for information about the minor.

### Digital History Technologies

*Why it's a good choice:* Technologies such as Geographic Information Systems (GIS), network imaging, mobile technologies, and Web 2.0 are changing how we study and represent historical processes such as environmental change, migration, and economic activity. Acquiring digital skills while polishing the historians' craft of synthesizing, analyzing and interpreting information can make students more competitive for various jobs in government, public history (see below), NGOs, and the private sector. These skills may also make students more competitive for graduate degree programs.

*What to do:* Enroll in HIST475 History in the Digital Age and pursue a minor in Geography, offered through the Department of Anthropology, including courses applicable to the minor that incorporate remote sensing and GIS techniques.

### Graduate School in History (M.A. and / or Ph.D.)

*Why it's a good choice:* If you love history and have the aptitude, graduate studies can provide intellectual stimulation and lead to a career teaching history at the university level or working in the field of public history (see below).

*What to do:* Talk to a History Department faculty member who teaches in your field(s) of interest about graduate programs and about the courses you should plan to take now to prepare for graduate school. The History Department at CSU offers an M.A. in History; our graduates have been admitted to some of the top Ph.D. programs in the U.S.

### Pre-Law

*Why it's a good choice:* The History major, with its emphasis on critical thinking and communication skills (both oral and written), is excellent preparation for law school.

*What to do:* Review the pre-law advising resources at: <http://polisci.colostate.edu/undergraduate/pre-law> or make an appointment with College of Liberal Arts pre-law Advisor Dr. Courtenay Daum in the Political Science Department at [Courtenay.Daum@colostate.edu](mailto:Courtenay.Daum@colostate.edu)

### Public History

*Why it's a good choice:* Public history—the profession of presenting history to the public through museums; archives; national parks; historical buildings and landscapes; film and new media; or writing histories for government, corporate, or public audiences—is a good fit for students who want to work in history outside the traditional teaching professions.

*What to do:* Take a course about public history (for example, HIST 479 / Practice of Public History, HIST 478 / Heritage Resource Management, or HIST 476 / History of America's National Parks). Talk to History faculty members about other useful undergraduate courses, careers in this subfield, and our M.A. program's concentration in public history, which has an excellent placement record for internships and jobs.

### Social Studies Teaching

*Why it's a good choice:* Teaching history and related subjects in the public schools is a wonderful career with many employment opportunities.

*What to do:* Talk to an academic advisor in the History Department about the requirements for the Social Studies Teaching concentration in the History major and visit the School of Teacher Education and Principal Preparation

web site at <http://www.stepp.caahs.colostate.edu/>. Please note that a 3.0 grade point average is needed for admission to CSU's education program.

**Other Resources to Explore Careers in History**

The CSU Career Center offers information and advice about academic majors and careers at <http://career.stuser.colostate.edu>.

The American Historical Association's booklet *Careers for Students of History* is available online at <http://www.historians.org/pubs/careers/index.htm>. Explore the rest of the web site, too!