History of Architecture and Urbanism in New York City

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CUNY Brooklyn College

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Art 3164
History of Architecture and Urbanism in New York City

Instructor:  Prof. Malka Simon
Lecture:  Fridays 9:30-12:15, Section F9, 5313 Boylan
Credits:  3
Office hours:  Wednesdays 12:30-1:30 and by appointment in 5109 Boylan
Contact:  msimon@brooklyn.cuny.edu

Course Description
This course will explore the history of architecture and urbanism in New York City from the colonial period through the present day. We will study well-known monuments along with lesser-known but important works, and consider the political, cultural, and economic factors that fueled the development of New York's built environment. This course will situate the architecture of New York City within the broader discourse of American architectural history, and will examine the impact that New York had on nationwide architectural trends. Classroom lectures will be supplemented regularly with site visits across the city.

Course Requirements
Midterm (20%)
Paper (35%)
Final (30%)
Presentations (10%)
Attendance/Participation (5%)

Suggested Text
There is no required textbook for this class. However, you may wish to purchase the following:


An excellent guide to New York City's major works of architecture; comprehensive and concise. Available online and at local bookstores. Earlier editions are available for reference in the main library.

Course Structure
This class consists of two parts: classroom lectures for roughly the first half of the semester and site visits for the second half.

Lectures: Students are expected to complete at least three of each week's readings and come to class prepared to discuss the topic at hand. Weekly readings will be posted on Blackboard
and/or made available on the reserve shelf for this course at the Bernstein Library (5300 Boylan).

**Site visits:** Site visits are an integral part of this course and will occur rain or shine. We will walk a lot, so wear comfortable shoes and dress for the weather. Make sure to bring your Metrocard. I will confirm the starting point and meeting time of each week's site visit one week in advance. If you are running late and miss our group at the meeting point, please call one of your colleagues for our precise location.

In addition, students will take turns offering short presentations that elaborate upon the theme of that week's visit. Working in small groups, you will explain to the class the overall historical and architectural relevance of that week's buildings and sites, and offer questions for further consideration and discussion. Once groups have been assigned, I will meet with you to discuss my expectations in greater detail.

If a site visit has an assigned reading listed, all students are required to complete that reading and be prepared to discuss it. See schedule below for details.

**Paper, Exams, Attendance**
Students will write a paper on a topic relating to the architectural development of New York City. Details will follow shortly.

The midterm and final will cover all material discussed in the lectures and site visits as well as assigned readings. The final will not be cumulative. Students will be responsible for all images discussed in class unless otherwise noted. Images will be posted on BlackBoard for you to review.

**Please note that I do not give make-up exams or accept late assignments.** You must submit assignments on time and make sure to be in class for exams. If you fail to adhere to this policy, you will receive a grade of zero for the missing item, which will be factored into your average. If extraordinary circumstances arise, be prepared to provide documentation (police report, doctor's note, death certificate, etc.).

Attendance is mandatory. More than two unexcused absences will result in a deduction from your course grade. Note that the bulk of the exam material will be taken from the lectures, so it behooves you to attend class and take detailed notes. If you do not attend regularly you will not do well in this class! Furthermore, you are expected to participate in class. Your questions and critiques are important in helping to make this class engaging and thought-provoking for everyone.

Please keep in mind that the last day to withdraw from a class is Thursday April 24. If you have any concerns about your progress in this class, I encourage you to meet with me well in advance of this deadline in order to discuss your best course of action.
A note on academic integrity:
The faculty and administration of Brooklyn College support an environment free from cheating and plagiarism. Each student is responsible for being aware of what constitutes cheating and plagiarism and for avoiding both. The complete text of the CUNY Academic Integrity Policy and the Brooklyn College procedure for implementing that policy can be found at this site: [http://www.brooklyn.cuny.edu/bc/policies](http://www.brooklyn.cuny.edu/bc/policies). If a faculty member suspects a violation of academic integrity and, upon investigation, confirms that violation, or if the student admits the violation, the faculty member MUST report the violation.

A note on the Center for Student Disability Services:
In order to receive disability-related academic accommodations students must first be registered with the Center for Student Disability Services. Students who have a documented disability or suspect they may have a disability are invited to set up an appointment with the Director of the Center for Student Disability Services, Ms. Valerie Stewart-Lovell at 718-951-5538. If you have already registered with the Center for Student Disability Services please provide me with the course accommodation form and we will discuss your specific accommodation.

Weekly Schedule
See the course bibliography for complete bibliographic information on the readings below. Note that site visit schedule is tentative and subject to change.

January 31
Introduction


February 7
Production and consumption – industry and retail in New York City


February 14
Coming home – housing types and residential patterns


M. Christine Boyer, "The Fabrication of Style on the Upper East Side," ch. 5 in *Manhattan Manners*.


February 21
Up we go – the skyscraper evolves


Michael W. Brooks, "Skyscraper and Subway," ch. 5 in *Subway City: Riding the Trains, Reading New York*.

Le Corbusier, " 'The Fairy Catastrophe'" from 'When the Cathedrals Were White,'" (1936), pp. 611-18 in Jackson and Dunbar, *Empire City*.

February 28
Time to relax – parks, recreation, and entertainment

Marta Gutman, "Equipping the Public Realm: Rethinking Robert Moses and recreation," pp. 72-85 in Ballon and Jackson, Robert Moses and the Modern City.


March 7
The death and life of New York – urban decline and rebirth


Robert Fishman, "Revolt of the Urbs: Robert Moses and His Critics," pp. 122-29, in Robert Moses and the Modern City.

Introduction and conclusion in Randall Mason, The Once and Future New York.

March 14
Midterm exam
Paper research session

March 21
Site visit – The Financial District
Themes: Early settlement in Manhattan; the architecture of finance

March 28
Site visit – The architecture of industry in Sunset Park

Themes: Intersections of industrial production and architectural innovation; what is an industrial landscape?


April 4
Old Brooklyn – The Wyckoff House
Themes: Early architecture in New York; shifting patterns of urban settlement and density
April 11
Queens – Sunnyside Gardens and the World’s Fair grounds at Flushing Meadows Park
Themes: Variety in housing; utopian visions

April 25
Site visit – Midtown Manhattan
Themes: The evolving skyscraper; public spaces in urban places; transportation and circulation in the city

May 2
Site visit – Prospect Park
Themes: Landscape architecture in the city; what should a park look like?


May 9
Site visit – Brooklyn Heights and Brooklyn Bridge Park
Themes: Housing in New York; change in the city


Papers due last day of class, May 9th
Final exam (tentative): May 23rd, 8-10 am
Prof. Simon
Brooklyn College
Spring 2015

Art 3164/7097
History of Architecture and Urbanism in New York City
Spring 2015

Selected Bibliography

Items marked with a * are on the reserve shelf for this course in the main library. Items marked with a ** are available as reference copies in the main library. Items marked with a *** are available for reference in the Brooklyn Collection.

All links (except where noted) represent availability at Brooklyn College Library.

General Interest:


eBook available to:
- all CUNY students
- Brooklyn College
- Graduate Center


Urban Planning and Development


  * all CUNY students
  * Brooklyn College
  * Graduate Center


Architecture and Building Types


- all CUNY students
- Brooklyn College
- Graduate Center


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Paper Assignment

Your assignment is to write a guidebook that centers around one aspect of New York architecture and urbanism. You may write about a building type (skyscrapers, retail shops, etc.) or you may focus on a particular neighborhood.

The paper will consist of two basic parts: First, you must situate your topic in its appropriate socio-historical context. For example, if you are writing a guide to the Upper West Side, you would need to explain its evolution and development as a neighborhood. Second, you must offer an architectural description and analysis of at least ten buildings or sites that are significant to your topic. Your formal analysis of the sites should be supplemented with some discussion of the site’s history. However, I want the focus of your entries to remain on the appearance of the work you’re describing. You should visit each of the sites you write about, and photograph them as well. Your final paper must include your own photos of the works you write about (you may supplement these with historic/professional images).

You must submit your topic to me for approval by Friday March 14. In Addition, you must submit a paper outline that includes at least five proposed buildings/sites by Friday April 4. Failure to meet these deadlines will result in a penalty on your final paper grade. Please be in touch with me about your proposals if you have any questions. Consult the bibliography for this course to begin your research, and please see me with any questions you might have. You can find an excellent guide to researching buildings in NYC on the website of Columbia’s Avery Architectural Library:
http://library.columbia.edu/subject-guides/avery/nycbuild.html

It is of utmost importance that you document your sources properly. I prefer Chicago style, but you may use any citation style as long as you use it properly and consistently. Failure to do so constitutes plagiarism. Remember, you must footnote the ideas of others, as well as direct quotations. Make sure you know what plagiarism means, and if you are at all uncertain please see me to discuss.

Plagiarism will not be tolerated and will result in an automatic grade of F for both the paper and the course.

I encourage you to meet with me to discuss the assignment and any questions you may have. Drop-in office hours are on Wednesdays from 12:30-1:30 in 5109 Boylan and other times by appointment. Please be in touch via email if you cannot meet with me in person (msimon@brooklyn.cuny.edu). Additionally, you can get help writing your paper from the Art Department’s field writing tutors, Kurt Johnson and
Paul D’Agostino; they hold office hours in the Bernstein Art Library (5300 Boylan). Their hours this semester are as follows:
Monday 9-12:30 (Paul); Tuesday 9-12 (Kurt); Wednesday 9-12:30 (Paul) and 1-4 (Kurt); Thursday 9-2 and 6-7(Kurt).

Papers should be about 10 pages in length (not including images).

**Final papers are due in person on the last day of class, Friday May 9th.** Hard copies only: no electronic copies will be accepted. You must also upload a digital copy your paper to Safe Assign, via Blackboard. No late papers will be accepted. No exceptions.
Below is a grading rubric for this assignment:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Excellent (25 points)</th>
<th>Good (22 points)</th>
<th>Satisfactory (19 points)</th>
<th>Fair (16 points)</th>
<th>Poor (13 points)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Introduction</strong></td>
<td>Research subject is strongly defined. Thorough explanation of all the relevant historic and architectural issues.</td>
<td>Research subject is defined. Explains most of the relevant historic and architectural issues.</td>
<td>Research subject is somewhat ambiguous. Superficial explanation of relevant historic and architectural issues.</td>
<td>Research subject is weakly defined. Inadequate explanation of relevant historic and architectural issues.</td>
<td>No clear research subject. No explanation of relevant historic and architectural issues.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Site/Building history</strong></td>
<td>Clearly explains the entire relevant history of the buildings or sites.</td>
<td>Clearly explains most of the relevant history of the buildings or sites.</td>
<td>Superficially explains most of the relevant history of the buildings or sites.</td>
<td>Poorly explains some of the relevant history of the buildings or sites.</td>
<td>No explanation of the relevant histories of the buildings or sites is provided.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Formal analysis</strong></td>
<td>Thoroughly and critically describes the buildings or sites, using precise architectural terminology</td>
<td>Adequately describes the buildings or sites, using appropriate architectural terminology</td>
<td>Superficially describes the buildings or sites; architectural terminology is ambiguous or unclear</td>
<td>Poorly describes the buildings or sites, using incorrect architectural terminology</td>
<td>No description of the buildings or sites.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Writing quality</strong></td>
<td>Text is well-organized with logical flow from section to section. Language is clear and precise. Sources are clearly and thoroughly documented.</td>
<td>Text is adequately organized with mostly logical flow from section to section. Language is clear. Sources are adequately documented.</td>
<td>Text is loosely-organized and lacks logical flow from section to section. Language is imprecise with some misspellings. Documentation of sources is imprecise.</td>
<td>Text is poorly-organized with little logical flow from section to section. Language is vague with many misspellings. Many sources are missing.</td>
<td>Text is disorganized with no logical flow from section to section. Language is unclear with many misspellings. Sources are not documented.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Failure to adhere to the deadlines for submission of the paper topic and outline will result in a deduction of 3 points for each missed deadline.