Women’s Studies W3916/Architecture A6673
Historical Approaches to Feminist Questions – Gender and the Built Environment
Tuesday 2:10-4 PM
754 Schermerhorn Ext

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The built environment – the human-made surroundings in which we live, work, and play - - is shaped in important ways by ideas about gender, race, and sexuality. Yet the built environment has been a relatively neglected area within women’s and gender studies, a neglect this course seeks to redress. This course will move among literature, architecture, design, and urban planning with a focus on the 19th century in England and the United States. It seeks to lead students to adapt a critical perspective on the built environment, to analyze the rhetoric of architectural space and perhaps to consider why architecture remains among the most male-dominated of all the professions. We will think carefully about the meaning of women’s history and the various approaches to the historian’s work; assignments for the course, described below, will give students the opportunity to undertake archival research and compose and publish their own histories. After a brief introduction to feminist architectural theory, we will begin by exploring the complex environs of the English country house, circa 1860, as well as its transatlantic cousin, the U.S. plantation household. Our end point will be the year 1928, which saw the publication of Virginia Woolf’s A Room of One’s Own as well as Adolf Loos’s design of a house for Josephine Baker (unbuilt). Along the way, we will consider topics such as women’s confinement to the domestic sphere and identification with the home; public and private realms; the organization of sexuality in the city; the feminist utopian spatial imagination; and the evolution of women’s spaces for reading and writing.
CLASS SCHEDULE

January 22
Introductions

January 29
Feminism and Architecture


February 5
Feminism and History
The second half of class will be held in Avery Library where a librarian will provide an introduction to research techniques in architecture


Recommended:


February 12
Separate Spheres
Robert Kerr, The Gentleman’s House (1864) (parts one and two)
In CLIO at http://clio.cul.columbia.edu:7018/vwebv/holdingsInfo?bibId=9338238


Recommended:

February 19
The Architecture of Secrecy
Robert Louis Stevenson, The Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde (1886)
At Project Gutenberg: http://www.gutenberg.org/ebooks/42


Recommended:


February 26
Women’s Work in the Victorian Age

At Project Gutenberg: http://www.gutenberg.org/ebooks/394

Recommended:
March 5

The Plantation Household
At Project Gutenberg: [http://www.gutenberg.org/ebooks/11030](http://www.gutenberg.org/ebooks/11030)


Recommended:


Analytic paper due

March 12

Domestic Reform
Guest lecture by Gwendolyn Wright

At Project Gutenberg: [http://www.gutenberg.org/ebooks/6598](http://www.gutenberg.org/ebooks/6598)


March 19

Spring break
March 26
The New Woman
Kate Chopin, *The Awakening* (1889)

Charlotte Perkins Gilman, “The Yellow Wallpaper” (1892)
At Project Gutenberg: http://www.gutenberg.org/ebooks/1952


Recommended:


April 2
House Beautiful
Alice T. Friedman, "Frank Lloyd Wright and Feminism: Mamah Borthwick's Letters to Ellen Key," *JSAH* 61, no. 2 (June 2002).


Screening of film: “A Girl is a Fellow Here.”

First draft of profile due

April 9
Scientific Management of the Home
Christine Frederick, *The New Housekeeping* (1912). Free eBook at Google Books or from the National Humanities Center website.


Recommended:

**April 16**
**Modern Women**


Recommended:

**April 23**
Guest speaker: Beverly Willis
Research presentations

**Architect profile due**

**April 30**
Research presentations

The following texts will be available at Book Culture:
Kate Chopin, *The Awakening*
Harriet Jacobs, *Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl*
Robert Louis Stevenson, *The Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde*
Virginia Woolf, *A Room of One’s Own*
ASSIGNMENTS

Assignments by weight:
40%  Architect profile
30%  Analytic paper
20%  Seminar presentation
10%  Class participation

Architect profile
The primary written work for this course will give students the opportunity to participate directly in the documentation of women’s contributions to the built environment. You will research and write a 2000-word essay that will potentially become part of an edited and locked web-based archive of early 20th century women architects. The Dynamic National Archive is a project of the Beverly Willis Architecture Foundation and is supported by a grant from the National Endowment for the Arts. The names of the individuals to be profiled will be selected by a national panel of scholars in February. You will use primary historical materials to research your subject and, in composing your profile, follow an outline that will be provided to you. You will also gather images relevant to the work of your subject. Relevant links:
http://bwaf.org/collection/dna/about/

Analytic paper
In a 7-8 page paper, develop an analysis of a work from the syllabus that is articulated through conversation with other critical commentary on the work. Your goal is both to delineate the shape of relevant critical debate on the work you select and to present an original interpretation that builds on prior criticism. You should draw on at least 4-5 different sources, though you will likely give some sources more weight than others in your paper.

Instructions for both of the above papers:
Please submit your papers by the date indicated on the syllabus. Submit your papers as hard copies; they should be double-spaced, stapled, titled and formatted in Times or Times New Roman. Cover pages are not required. Be sure to proofread your work carefully and document any works referenced in MLA style with in-text citations and a bibliography. Late papers will be graded down one increment for each day late, i.e., from A to A-. Papers more than a week late will not be accepted and will receive an F. Please retain copies of all work submitted.

Seminar presentation
Working in groups of two or three (depending on final course enrollment), you will be responsible for researching a topic related to the day’s readings, and assembling a presentation that is lively, informative, and performance-oriented. Please do not read from
a script. Use of visual materials is highly recommended. Your report may either be on a topic related to the day’s assigned reading or may focus on a portion of the reading itself and investigate it through research. On the day of your presentation, you will hand in a write-up of your work together with an annotated bibliography of your sources. It is your responsibility to meet with me AT LEAST A WEEK prior to your presentation to discuss this assignment; at the time of our meeting you should have a preliminary plan in mind.

COURSE POLICIES

Policy on attendance, preparation and classroom conduct
You are expected to attend class and to arrive promptly. This course is organized around discussion, so be prepared to participate actively: come to class prepared to contribute. If you miss a class, you are still responsible for turning in any assignment due that day, and for notifying me about the reason for the absence. Please complete all readings by class time on the day they are assigned and bring a copy of the text to class. Please plan to dedicate your attention to our class colloquy and refrain from accessing the Internet or employing any form of interpersonal communication besides speech during class.

Policy on academic integrity
The intellectual venture in which we are all engaged requires of faculty and students alike the highest level of personal and academic integrity. As members of an academic community, each one of us bears the responsibility to participate in scholarly discourse and research in a manner characterized by intellectual honesty and scholarly integrity. Collaborative scholarship requires the study of other scholars’ work, the free discussion of such work, and the explicit acknowledgement of those ideas in any work that inform our own. This exchange of ideas relies upon a mutual trust that sources, opinions, facts, and insights will be properly noted and carefully credited. Any breach of this intellectual responsibility is a breach of faith with the rest of our academic community and will be investigated by the Office of Judicial Affairs.

Policy on accommodations for students with disabilities
In order to receive disability-related academic accommodations, students must first be registered with Disability Services. More information on the Disability Services registration process is available online at [www.health.columbia.edu/ods](http://www.health.columbia.edu/ods). Registered students must present an accommodation letter to the professor before exam or other accommodations can be provided. Students who have, or think they may have, a disability are invited to contact Disability Services for a confidential discussion at (212) 854-2388 (Voice/TTY) or by email at disability@columbia.edu.