Cultural Landscapes Seminar: ARCH 566 (3 credits)

Robert Mellin, Ph.D., RCA, FRAIC, Associate Professor
School of Architecture, McGill University

Seminar meets Wednesdays from 10:35am-1:25pm in room 207
Office hours by appointment: 398-6719 or by email
robert.mellin@mcgill.ca

Catalogue Description:

An overview of cultural landscapes studies, methodologies, and resources. Comparative studies of the connection between people, particular places, and artifact systems are interpreted through architecture, critical regionalism, and material culture. Precedents for the interpretation of cultural landscapes by architects, ethnologists, anthropologists, folklorists, historians, writers, filmmakers, photographers, and artists are presented.

Course webpage:


Please note that the course outline and schedule will be updated weekly on the web page, so you should check for assignments, clarifications, possible schedule changes, and for supplementary references. PDF files for many of the assigned readings (except for the novels of Sebald) and for some supplementary readings will be available online.

Pedagogical objectives:

This seminar provides an overview of cultural landscapes studies, methodologies, and resources, including analysis and discussion of the work of architects embracing critical regionalism in architecture and housing. Comparative studies of the connection between people, particular places, and artifact systems are interpreted through architecture, critical regionalism, housing, urban design, material culture, and intangible culture. Precedents for the interpretation of cultural landscapes by architects, ethnologists, anthropologists, folklorists, historians, writers, filmmakers, photographers, and artists are presented. Rather than focusing on the study of individual buildings, the focus of this course is on understanding and interpreting the artifact system at all scales, reaching beyond the study of form to syndetically interpret meaning and address values.

Required submissions:

Weekly assignments: due at the start of the next seminar session or as indicated.

Prepare a typed, concise synopsis of the assigned reading(s)- minimum of one paragraph, maximum of one page. Please make sure your name and assignment number is included in your submission.
Mid-term Paper: due February 15

The Mid-term paper requirement is the submission of an annotated bibliography for books, articles, and films. Please note that one book must be selected from Sebald’s novels (see bibliography). A concise paragraph (max. one page) should be written summarizing the aspects most relevant to you in each book or article. Please aim for five to ten typed, double-spaced pages. Books cited for the weekly assignments may be used for the annotated bibliography as long as chapters different from the weekly assignments are used.

End-of-term Project: due April 4

You will prepare a small project that interprets and represents a particular cultural landscape in Montreal or elsewhere. Be prepared to present your work to your colleagues during the last seminar session. The end-of-term project should have the format of Anne Meredith Berry’s Gros Morne Time Lines (see the pdf file linked to the web page). Gros Morne Time Lines is a fold out book, but you will produce a web version that requires scrolling to the right (continuous images) on a standard Dreamweaver web page template. I will provide that uses a simple table for positioning images. If you are not comfortable using Dreamweaver or if you do not have this program, you may submit jpg images. This piece (text, photos, drawings) will feature your documentation and interpretation of a particular area, building, condition, way of living, or artifact in Montreal (or elsewhere if you have access during the term), with reference to time, place, space, and possibly with reference to other aspects like light, materials, and details. As you will find from your readings on Sebald (see Searching for Sebald), the visual character / layout of text and graphics is very important for this assignment.

Each “page” or image on the sample of the assignment format on the course web page is a jpg image 6” wide by 8” high at a resolution of 105dpi. Folded paper in a book was used for continuity in the original document. However, you can enhance the continuity by presenting a continuous image with graphics and text arranged accordingly. For example, if you decide to have 20 pages with the dimensions shown above, you can present one final image that is 120” wide by 8” high at 105dpi (you must use width multiples of 6”). The final image must be in jpg format (colour or grayscale) at 105dpi for the web page, and a second image at 300dpi (same dimension constraints) must be provided for printing purposes. Your name and your project title must be integrated in the graphic design of your images. The end-of-term assignment is due the day before the last class meeting date (jpg images to be placed in a folder with your name on the folder).

There are two points of departure for independent study that may help you to prepare for your end-of-term project for this course. The first is an article by Mitchell (2003) on “Medium Theory” (available on the web and as a pdf accessed from the seminar web page: this is a preface to the 2003 Critical Inquiry Symposium). The second involves the novels of Sebald (Austerlitz, or The Rings of Saturn, or The Emigrants) and a particular secondary source (Searching for Sebald: Photography after W. G. Sebald: The Institute

Grading:

Weekly assignments (10): 20%
Mid-term paper: 25%
Participation: 10%
Presentation 10%
End-of-term project: 35%

Seminar Schedule:

1) January 11: Robert Mellin

   Introduction: vernacular architecture, cultural landscapes, resources, study precedents, student project examples.

2) January 18: Robert Mellin

   Rural Cultural Landscape and Housing Case Study Part One: Tilting, Fogo Island, Newfoundland

3) January 25: Robert Mellin

   Rural Cultural Landscape and Housing Case Study Part Two: Tilting, Joe Batt’s Arm, Little Fogo Islands

4) February 1: Avi Friedman

   Recent writing on place

5) February 8: Ricardo Castro

   Syndesis and Pattern Language: The Architecture of Rogelio Salmona (Professor Ricardo Castro)
6) **February 15: Robert Mellin**

   *Urban Cultural Landscape Case Study:*
   *Housing and Urban Form in St. John’s, Newfoundland*

7) **February 29: Robert Mellin**

   *Regional Cultural Landscape Study:*
   *Newfoundland Modern: Architecture in the Smallwood Years, 1949-1952*

8) **March 7: Robert Mellin**

   *A Forgotten Cultural Landscape:*
   *Havana, Cuba*

9) **March 14: Nik Luka**

   *Approaches to Cultural Landscape Studies*

10) **March 21: Annmarie Adams**

    *Domestic Environments:*
    *Inside the Home*

11) **March 28: Robert Mellin**

    *Crossing Cultural Landscape Boundaries:*
    *Housing and architecture in Ahmedabad, India*

12) **April 4**

    *Student Presentations*

13) **April 11**

    *Student Presentations*
McGill Policy Statements:

Please make sure you read the information in the section titled “McGill Policy Statements” on the McGill University web page below:

http://www.mcgill.ca/tls/resources/outline/#GENERAL

Bibliography

(note that you do NOT have to read all these books. They are presented here for your convenience and possible reference)

Library books on reserve in blue:

Cultural Landscapes: General


Alexander, Christopher et. al. *A Pattern Language* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1977) NA9050 A49x


Coyula *Havana: Two Faces of the Antillean Metropolis* (Mario et. al.) HT384 C92 H387 2002


de Certeau *The Practice of Everyday Life* (, Michel, with Luce Giard and Pierre Mayol) HN8 C4313 1984 (try to find the U. of Minnesota 1998 edition if you decide to purchase this book)


Jackson, J. B. *A Sense of Place, a Sense of Time* (New Haven, Yale University Press, 1994) F796 J27 1994


Kubler, George *The Shape of Time* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1962) N66 K8

Lippard *The Lure of the Local* (Lucy) GF503 L56 1997

Lippard *On the Beaten Track: Tourism, Art, and Place* (Lucy) G155 A1 L57 1999


Moore, Charles *The Place of Houses* NA7125 M66


Tuan, Yi-Fu. *Space and Place: The Perspective of Experience* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1977). G71.5 T8 1977


Architecture


McCoy, Esther, *Case Study Houses, 1945-1962* NA7235 C2 M2 1977

Mellin, Robert. “Site and Services Case Study,” M. Arch. Thesis (McGill, 1984) and Open House International article. AS42 M3 1984 M48

Owen, David. A. Like No Other Place (Chicago: Center for American Places, 2010)

Pallasmaa, Juhani. The Eyes of the Skin (London: Academy Editions, 2005)


Polyzoides, Stefanos, Courtyard Housing in Los Angeles NA7238 L6 P6 1982


Artists, Photographers


Creates, Marlene. *Signs of Our Time* TR647 C733 2006

Creates, Marlene *Places of Presence* N6549 C74 A4 1993b

Creates, Marlene *Language and Land use* N6549 C74 A4 1998


Galassi, Peter. *Jeff Wall* (New York: Museum of Modern Art, 2007). (there are many other books on Jeff Wall in the library).


Gursky, Andreas. *Andreas Gursky* (Ostfildern: Hatje Cantz Verlag, 2007).

Gursky, Andreas. *Architecture* (Ostfildern: Hatje Cantz Verlag, 2008).


Kauffman, Ross. Born into Brothels (2004: view the special features after you watch the DVD). HQ792 I5 B67 DVD

Keller, Judith and Anne Lacoste Where We Live: Photographs of America from the Berman Collection (Los Angeles, J. Paul Getty Museum, 2006).


Pratt, Christopher. All My Own Work (Toronto: Douglas & McIntyre, 2005).


Suburbia


**Material Culture**


Literature


