Course Syllabus

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COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY

GRADUATE SCHOOL OF ARCHITECTURE, PLANNING AND PRESERVATION

A6856-1 – Spring 2018

Caribbean Modernism as an expression of Technological Evolution

6:00-8:00 pm at 655 Schermerhorn

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Course Description

Materials and construction techniques of the first three decades of the 20th century produced buildings in the Caribbean that were fire, water, and vermin-proof, which, together with prefabrication, standardization, and manufacturing speed and installation, revolutionized the construction industry in the region. The resulting architecture, with clear influences from Europe as well as from the United States, would intersect in a tropical region that became a crossroad between the old and new world, and produced new ways to use imitation, molded, and prefabricated building materials. Portland cement, as one of the most important innovative materials used in the production of cement block, reinforced concrete, and for pre-manufactured molded cladding material in steel-framed structures, produced long-lasting components that would survive indefinitely.

This course explores the question of whether the adaptation of these technologies to the tropical Spanish Caribbean (Cuba, the Dominican Republic and Puerto Rico) influenced the architecture of the United States during this period. It will examine the degree to which this encounter affected buildings not only from north to south, but also from south to north, and research changes in the use of raw materials and building techniques in the U.S. which may have been a result of Spanish Caribbean influences.

Course Requirements

Class attendance, participation and a potential field trip are required. A short illustrated class presentation and a final research paper (Due April 6, 2018) based on the questions presented during the course, are also course requirements.

Course Calendar

Friday, January 26 - **Course Introduction and Research Parameters**

Review course syllabus and requirements. Introduction to the Spanish Caribbean as a focus of interaction and the advent of Portland cement and its related technologies both in the United States and in the Spanish Caribbean of the time period to be investigated. Research questions are assigned.

Monday, January 29 -

Specific manufacturing processes of different cement technologies in the Spanish Caribbean. Discussion of individual research projects and their progress.

Tuesday, January 30 -

Course themes Comparative Timeline (chronological and geographical): Europe-United States-Spanish Caribbean. Interconnections between landmark buildings, their designers and resulting influences. Local, National and International Expositions as well as important events that had a direct influence and effect on the architecture of these countries.

Wednesday, January 31 -

Preservation Processes of different building technologies as a result of poor maintenance, abandonment, or catastrophic events. Discussion of individual research projects and their progress.

Thursday, February 1 -

Public lecture which is part of the course: "Architecture and Technology in the Caribbean: Antonín Nechodoma and Frank Bond Hatch".

Saturday, February 3 - Class meets 10am-2pm

Invited guest lecturer, structural engineer Edmund Meade of Robert Silman Associates will present the restoration project of the Mineola Courthouse and a more recent project for the restoration of one of

the earliest reinforced concrete factories in New York state. Followed by 10 minute audio-visual presentations by the students of their individual projects.