

GSAPP A4510 Studio I: Historic Preservation Studio

Fall 2016

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SYLLABUS

Introduction

Studio I is the central focus of the first semester of the Historic Preservation program, and a foundational course for a three-studio sequence within the program. It is the only full-class studio in the sequence where all students gather to engage studio objectives together. It is simultaneously broad in reach and narrow in focus. Studio I both complements and benefits from other first semester coursework; it is the space for engaging overarching historical and contemporary issues of preservation, urbanism, planning, and architectural design. The goal for Studio I is to equip students with skills, techniques, and critical thinking – the means to engage practice and research – in order to engender leadership, interpretation, and advocacy – the ability to exercise judgment and propose solutions.

Course Description

Studio I will engage students in questions of preservation and its role in a larger context of environmental, social, cultural, historical, and physical built environments of New York, while also contemplating preservation's role beyond high-growth, hot-market cities. It will encourage students to think about non-traditional partnerships to explore, existing preservation tools and tools to create, and diverse potential outcomes. Studio I will explore two distinct sites in New York City – one vacant, touristic, and disconnected; the other full, developing, and integrated into urban fabric. The contrasts between these two sites and their contexts will provide a range of diverse challenges and opportunities to explore. The studio will offer models for approaching preservation, planning, and design questions and the role of the preservationist, planner, architect, conservator, advocate, and historian in contemporary practice.

Learning Objectives

This course will help students to:

- Investigate the construction and physical condition of the built environment;
- Analyze the context and parameters of each site (building, landscape, neighborhood) in order to define its limits and the forces at work within its physical and social territories;
- Propose short, medium, and long-term solutions and recommendations that identify significance (through myriad lenses) and make a case for action;
- Exercise judgment regarding preservation from an engaged, informed, and critical position; and

- Understand diverse roles for the preservationist in contemporary practice.

Methodology

The studio will utilize a consistent three-step methodology as the means to engage each site. This approach will yield diverse outcomes – both in format and in proposed solutions. There will be pinups and group discussions as well as one-on-ones with students and faculty to advance outcomes for each step. The three-step process is:

- Investigation
 - Observe and document the built environment
 - Explore the construction of the building and/or site
 - Research the general history of the site – its provenance, constructional techniques in use, alterations, improved and/or damaged, social history (i.e. previous residents or businesses)
 - Identify relevant precedents and current challenges (environmental, economic, logistical, social)
 - Establish a baseline understanding of the building's history, materiality, and context.
- Analysis
 - Observe and document current usage and activity patterns (programmatic, environmental)
 - Explore possible future usage and activity patterns (programmatic, environmental)
 - Research potential tectonic, programmatic, economic, and logistical solutions
 - Test scenarios (programmatic, usage, architectural, etc.) that contemplate varied outcomes
- Proposition
 - Identify and prioritize solutions and accompanying recommendations
 - Consider short, medium, and long-term strategies
 - Outline a framework, make a case, and propose a vision for the site and project
 - Contemplate realistic possibilities as well as more exploratory outcomes
 - Define a purpose and articulate significance, envisioning a sustainable and resilient future for the site

Studio Format

Studio is many different things simultaneously. It is the physical environment within which you will create the majority of your work. It is the space within which we will meet as a large group or on an individual basis, with faculty, peers and outside critics. It is the group of individuals, of diverse background, who comprise the studio unit – students, faculty, teaching assistants. It is the intellectual environment for research, exploration, risk-taking, and leadership. It is the core and central focus of your work within the program and for your degree.

Studio will at times demand intense, collaborative work and at other times demand individual, tremendous effort. **We challenge each student to take risks and explore territories outside of your individual discipline or familiar areas of comfort.** And we encourage you to observe and learn from your peers; other students can often be your best critics, role models, and instructors.

We expect that students will work in studio on a regular basis, both inside and outside of class time. This is essential to the discourse and identity of the studio. We expect students to discuss, share, and present work during the majority of classes, either in an individual desk critique, a crit (conversation and discussion) with faculty, or in a group crit with varying formats (pin-up, review or jury, presentation to others).

Studio I will engage students in two sites (Site I and Site II) around which work will be centered using the three-step methodology outlined above. Faculty will distribute a brief for each site with a schedule relative to that site and with a guiding framework for processes and deliverables. While faculty will provide options for types of deliverables students can generate, the direction, outcomes, and final products for each site will be largely student- and group-determined. These deliverables will also be informed by the “investigation” step, by individual and group interests, and by stated constituent (or user) needs.

A guest lecturer will speak twice during the semester -- timed to align with the start of Site I and II projects -- on methods, tools, and resources available for historical research to arm students with a set of techniques for gathering primary research.

Site visits and other field trips will be scheduled over the course of the semester. Students should spend class time at work in studio unless other arrangements are made with faculty.

Course Requirements

Specific course requirements will be outlined within each project brief. Outcomes will not necessarily be identical across all students for all projects, but the level of effort and expectation for quality of execution will be consistent. Grading will be based on achievement of studio learning objectives, participation, attendance, and the timely completion of project brief requirements. Midterm assessments will be given to each student via an individual meeting and discussion with studio faculty.

Supporting Coursework

The fall semester also offers the course “Digital Visualization for Historic Preservation” specifically as a compliment to Studio I. This course is strongly encouraged for students, especially those without direct experience drawing and representing the built environment and spatial ideas. It is relevant for students of all backgrounds, and will introduce a variety of software available in studio and necessary for completion of course requirements.

Schedule

	Monday	Thursday	Non-class Site Visits
week 1		9/8/16	SATURDAY: 9/10/16
		First day of studio; begin Site I investigation	Mandatory Site I wa
week 2	9/12/16	9/15/16	
week 3	9/19/16	9/22/16	
	investigation pin-up; begin analysis		
week 4	9/26/16	9/29/16	
		analysis pin-up; begin proposition	
week 5	10/3/16	10/6/16	
week 6	10/10/16	10/13/16	
	midterm review; project #1 final review	Site II studio walk-through	
week 7	10/17/16	10/20/16	
week 8	10/24/16	10/27/16	
		investigation pin-up; begin analysis	
week 9	10/31/16	11/3/16	

week 10	11/7/16	11/10/16
	holiday - no class	analysis pin-up; begin proposition
week 11	11/14/16	11/17/16
week 12	11/21/16	11/24/16
		holiday - no class
week 13	11/28/16	12/1/16
week 14	12/5/16	12/8/16
		final review
week 15	12/12/16	
	last day of studio	

Please note that certain dates/milestones may be adjusted throughout the course of the semester.

**Greyed out dates indicate when Prof. Emilie Evans will not be present in class.

Resources and Bibliography

See the Studio I Reading List located in the "Studio I_General" folder within "Files" on Canvas.