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Building Pedagogy: Studying Architecture and Preservation in American Art and Architectural History

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What role does architectural history have in the study of art history of the United States? This question is posed not to say that architectural history is not a part of many universities' art history programs. Instead, I wish to reflect on the position of architectural history as an area often integrated into courses that focus more broadly on historical periods or in general art history surveys. I certainly support, inclusion of architectural history in these courses, for it gives a more comprehensive conceptualization of what is art. At the same time, there are fewer architectural historians within art history departments, and consequently fewer architectural history courses that engage with the built environment in the way a scholar with expertise in that area can present to students. At the University of Alabama the art history curriculum offers ten upper-level American art history courses, consisting of three historical periods courses looking at American art and material culture, an African American art survey, an African diaspora course, topics in American art and a course on American architectural history.[1] Developing a course specifically on American architectural history in an art and art history department builds students' skills of critical perception and historical content, but also spatial awareness, and knowledge of the specific vocabulary of architecture.[2] My course lectures, assignments, and discussions allow students to explore the established canon of American architectural history and the role of historic preservation through specific case studies and examples of vernacular architecture.[3] I have designed my course to engage with the full spectrum of the

[1] Throughout this article when I refer to American architectural history, I am referring to architecture that was and is constructed in the land that is defined by the continental United States borders.

[2] Julia A. Sienkewicz, "Critical Perception: An Exploration of the Cognitive Gains of Material Culture Pedagogy," *Winterthur Portfolio* 47 n. 2/3 (Summer/Autumn 2013): 130. doi:10.1086/671414.

[3] Henry Glassie, *Vernacular Architecture,* (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 2000), 20. By "vernacular" I am referring to what Henry Glassie defined as the familiar buildings, the study of the commonplace architecture that "urge(s) toward the comprehensive and accommodates cultural diversity." It is not the monumental architecture or high-style instead these are building usually built for function from locally available materials and/or based on buildings recalled by an individual and possible associated with his/her past. Generally this also means not architect-

pyramidal model of Bloom's Taxonomy.[4] This pedagogical tool essentially divides and classifies learning objectives between six categories from lower level to higher levels of cognitive engagement. Consequently, my course guides students to become more active rather than passive learners. In this article I address how the inclusion of the history of the preservation movement in the United State broadens the American architectural canon through the discussion of specific examples from my course. I highlight how students engage with the various levels of Bloom's Taxonomy by focusing on the assignment of a National Register of Historic Nomination Form, and a student led class discussion on Colonial Williamsburg, ultimately demonstrating how a focused course on American architectural history adds another perspective to the discipline of art history.

As I write this essay the Society of Architectural Historians (SAH) is undertaking a two-year study called the *SAH DATA PROJECT: Analyzing Architectural History in Higher Education*.[5] Like so many other disciplines there is an ever-increasing need for quantitative and qualitative data that might help to demonstrate the impact of the field. Thus SAH asks "where is architectural history thriving?"[6] The question of the role of architectural history has been an area of interest for SAH at least since 1999. In that year the *Journal of the Society of Architectural Historians (JSAH)* initiated a special issue focused on the state of architectural history querying where it had been and where it was going. Twenty years later there is still no definitive empirical data, and it is hard to clearly answer the question. Yet, it is an important question to ask, especially when we consider the role of architectural history in the discipline of art history.

The focus on architectural history in art history departments has been shifting. In 1999 Alina A. Payne published the article "Architectural History and the History

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designed. However, after the last quarter of the nineteenth century this definition could include buildings designed by architects for example, any commercial "box-store" building in the United States of America.

[4] Laetitia La Follette, "Bloom's Taxonomy for Art History. Blending a Skills-Based Approach into the Traditional Introductory Survey," *Art History Pedagogy & Practice* 2 (1): 5-6. https://academicworks.cuny.edu/ahpp/vol2/iss1/3. Throughout this article I will be referring back to the diagram and table on the revised 2001 Bloom's *Taxonomy of Educational* Objectives as stated and diagrammed in this article.

[5] "The SAH Data Project: Analyzing Architectural History in Higher Education" accessed April 30, 2020, https://www.sah.org/publications-and-research/sah-data-project. The survey portion will conclude on June 30, 2020.

[6] Sarah M. Dreller, "Where is Architectural History Thriving," SAH Blog, July 9, 2019 accessed April 30, 2020, https://www.sah.org/publications-and-research/sah-blog/sah-blog/2019/07/09/where-is-architectural-history-thriving.

of Art," in which she stated that since the 1970s the role of architectural history was reintroduced as part of the architecture school curriculum. At the same time, art history departments "embraced more non-western, contemporary art, and historiography, new positions in these fields are not created but are reassigned away from the traditional core."[7] In short, departments essentially traded out one field of study for another, often at the expense of the architectural historian. This is often not the fault of departments but speaks of the larger issues in higher education where there is a desire to broaden disciplines, to be more diverse and inclusive. However, ever-increasing budgetary restraints along with cultural notions of what disciplines are of value in the 21st century has forced hard decisions within institutions of higher education. Often changes are made to coverage or staffing in departments in order to seem relevant, yet perhaps at the expense of providing the broadest discussion and analysis of visual and material culture.

This trading out of architectural history for another specialization has an impact upon undergraduate and graduate students in the discipline of art history, for there is a loss of expertise and the discussion of architecture often falls to the periphery. At the same time the built environment – landscape and buildings - shapes people's lives on a daily basis. Yet when there is no architectural historian to provide courses specifically on architecture, the analysis of architecture then is often further limited to the monumental structures. For many students, this may lead to a perception that architecture is extraneous or irrelevant. In general, the exposure students have to architectural history is often limited to introductory comprehensive art history survey courses in which a canonical structure is often discussed for stylistic or aesthetic understanding, with the many other rich aspects of architectural history and analysis left out. While in an art history survey it is always a challenge to go beyond the stylistic characteristics, it is possible. Just like when discussing painting, photography, sculpture, or prints, it is possible to provide more nuance when also discussing monumental architecture. This is done by focusing in and limiting the number of canonical structures. Then, bringing in the larger material culture and history to contextualize it instead of leaving architecture as an outlier.

Architectural history, similarly to art history, has changed significantly from the discussion of styles and has become increasingly interdisciplinary.[8] While

[7] Alina A. Payne, "Architectural History and the History of Art: A Suspended Dialogue," *Journal of the Society of Architectural* Historians 58 n. 3 (September 1999): 293-294. doi:10.2307/991521.

[8] For more information review the following issues of the *Journal of the Society of Architectural Historians* 58 n. 3 (September 1999); 64 n. 4 (December 2005) and 65 n. 1 (March 2oo6). For specific articles related to this article see: Alina A. Payne, "Architectural History and the History

architectural history still focuses on periodization through design and/or structure there has also been an ever-increasing application of theories and methods from other fields such as history, sociology, folklore, and science. At the same time, these disciplines have also become more spatially oriented.[9] Similarly to the art historian, the architectural historian has been trained as a historian with the additional skillset in critical perception, as well as the technical and descriptive vocabulary of the architect. This combined knowledge of the architectural historian facilitates the analysis of the architectural form as well as its historical functions and its contemporary significance.[10] Therefore the role of the architectural historian, no matter their regional specialty or period of expertise, and the courses they provide for an art history department is as significant as those courses that focus on American sculptural history or African American art history or Modern Asian Art or any other specialization. Teaching and learning architectural history broadens our understanding and knowledge of the discipline of art history.

Preservation and Architectural History

Prior to the United States Bicentennial, the inclusion of American architecture in the canon of Western architectural history consisted primarily of works created from the modernist movement onward. All earlier American architecture was seen as aesthetically inferior to European architecture and thus not included in the

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of Art: A Suspended Dialogue," *Journal of the Society of Architectural* Historians 58 n. 3 (September 1999): 292-299. doi:10.2307/991521; Daniel Bluestone, "Academics in Tennis Shoes: Historic Preservation and the Academy," *Journal of the Society of Architectural* Historians 58 n. 3 (September 1999): 300-307. doi:10.2307/991522; Christy Anderson, "Writing the Architectural Survey: Collective Authorities and Competing Approaches," *Journal of the Society of Architectural* Historians 58 n. 3 (September 1999): 350-355. doi:10.2307/991528; Nancy Stieber, "Learning from Interdisciplinarity: Introduction," *Journal of the Society of Architectural* Historians 64 n. 4 (December 2005): 417-418. doi:10.2307/25068191; Dianne Harris, "Social History: Identity, Performance, Politics, and Architectural Histories," *Journal of the Society of Architectural* Historians 64 n. 4 (December 2005): 421-423. doi:10.2307/25068193; Gwendolyn Wright, "Cultural History: Europeans, Americans, and the Meanings of Space," *Journal of the Society of Architectural* Historians 64 n. 4 (December 2005): 436-440. doi:10.2307/25068199; and Maiken Umbach, "Urban History: What Architecture Does, Historically Speaking…," *Journal of the Society of Architectural* Historians 65 n. 1 (March 2006): 14-15. doi:10.2307/25068230.

[9] Nancy Stieber, "Learning from Interdisciplinarity: Introduction," *Journal of the Society of Architectural* Historians 64 n. 4 (December 2005): 417. doi:10.2307/25068191.

[10] Christy Anderson, "Writing the Architectural Survey: Collective Authorities and Competing Approaches," *Journal of the Society of Architectural* Historians 58 n. 3 (September 1999): 352. doi:10.2307/991528; Stieber, "Learning from Interdisciplinarity," 417.

canon.[11] However, American architectural historians began to recognize that American architecture prior to modernism had its own distinct aesthetic character. It is at this point that the scholarship broadened to include greater discussion of American architecture, though still largely framed by aesthetics. This was and is partly due to the fact that there were and are essentially two schools of thought formulated around American architecture: the architectural historians' and the preservationists' perspectives.

According to Daniel Bluestone in his article "Academics in Tennis Shoes: Historic Preservation and the Academy," since the late nineteenth century what were designated as the significant monuments to American architecture varied based on one's perspective.[12] Architectural historians, a largely male professional group, saw architecture based on quality and aesthetic character; whereas historic preservationists, largely consisting of female amateur groups, saw architecture for its national significance.[13] Each group identified different buildings as architecturally significant and since the male professional group predominantly stressed aesthetics, the architectural canon took shape as it did. Even so, historiography is forever shifting. In the 1980s and 1990s the discipline of American architectural history saw an increasingly interdisciplinary approach brought to this field of study.

This interdisciplinary approach has essentially made preservationists' perspective a part of the United States architectural history canon. By including the discussion of the vernacular, American architectural history ultimately "cultivat[ed] site-specific narratives of architectural and human history that help[ed] contextualize the meaning of architecture and place."[14] This socio-political approach has been the basis of some architectural history textbooks, yet these textbooks tend to be the exceptions.[15] I selected Leland M. Roth and Amanda C. Roth Clark's *American Architecture: A History* specifically for its content on vernacular architecture and on the preservation movement in the United States. Admittedly, it is still a textbook largely conceptualized around the canon of the history of style or aesthetics and therefore largely focused on white men and the monumental

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[11] Daniel Bluestone, "Academics in Tennis Shoes: Historic Preservation and the Academy," *Journal of the Society of Architectural* Historians 58 n. 3 (September 1999): 303. doi:10.2307/991522.

[12] Bluestone, "Academics in Tennis Shoes," 300.

[13] Bluestone, "Academics in Tennis Shoes," 301.

[14] Bluestone, "Academics in Tennis Shoes," 306.

[15] Refer to Dell Upton, *American Architecture: A Thematic History (*Oxford University Press, 2019) and Mark Gelernter, *A History of American Architecture: Buildings in Their Cultural and Technological Context* (University Press of New England, 2001).

architecture they built. But, it is not a textbook that stops there. In addition to the textbook's content on vernacular architecture and preservation it also has integrated discussion of Native American architecture, some discussion on women as architects, and it even touches on urban planning. This textbook is a gateway into the discipline of American architectural history. It is a well-illustrated textbook with 640 black and white images and 62 color plates. Roth and Clark have attempted to be more inclusive by including content that goes beyond the canon of monumental architecture.[16] They introduce subjects that I then expand upon through lectures, discussion and assignments.

Class Structure/Content

My American architectural history course enrolls nearly thirty-five students who are not learning to be architects. Sometimes they are interior design or engineering majors along with art and/or art history majors or minors. Since this is an upper-level general education course, the students essentially could have any major and often only have one art history survey course in their academic background. In short, their exposure to architectural history is limited.[17] Therefore, when designing this more traditional lecture-based course I do focus many of my learning objectives in the lower two-thirds categories of Bloom's Taxonomy: "Remember," "Understand," "Apply" and "Analyze" which are then assessed through response papers, exams, and quizzes. This does not mean that the upper one-third categories of "Evaluate" and "Create" are ignored.[18] To integrate the entire taxonomy students are assigned a semester-long project that requires them to complete a portion of the National Register of Historic Places Nomination Form (NRHP form). They are also involved in two student-led class discussions

[16] Meltem Ö. Gürel and Kathryn H. Anthony, "The Canon and the Void Gender, Race, and Architectural History Texts," *Journal of Architectural Education (1984-) 59 n. 3* (February 2006): 70-74. doi:40480647. There is further discussion about architectural history textbooks in this article. The six books discussed since this article was written: M. Moffett, M. Fazio, and L. Wodehouse *Buildings Across Time* is now in its fourth edition, Kenneth Frampton *Modern Architecture: A Critical History* is now in its fourth edition, and Leland Roth and Amanda Roth Clark *American Architecture* is in its second edition and has addressed certain criticism laid out by this article. With this said many programs utilize M. Trachtenberg and I. Hyman *Architecture, from Prehistory to Postmodernity* (second edition), Spiro Kostof *A History of Architecture: Setting and Rituals (*second edition) and William J.R. Curtis *Modern Architecture Since 1900*. While there have been efforts to broaden the canon of architectural history many of the points brought up in the article are still valid arguments to this date.

[17] This was my second year teaching this course at the University of Alabama. After my first year, I recognized that most students did not have the vocabulary to talk about architectural elements and rarely did any students understand structural design or framing techniques.

[18] La Follette, "Bloom's Taxonomy for Art History," 5.

on two separate case studies drawn from the material in the textbook and supplemented by additional readings. To understand how my course utilizes both Bloom's Taxonomy and tries to increase discussion of inclusivity, I want to discuss the course structure more specifically.

I begin the course by introducing the students to architectural vocabulary: elements and structural types. While this does limit the timeframe to discuss the numerous American architectural styles, it is more important to teach students the vocabulary that they will utilize throughout the semester.[19] The students are introduced to architectural terminology in three ways: lecture /textbook, campus architectural tour, and a scavenger hunt assignment. Although the first couple of weeks are primarily focused on memorizing particular terms, students also have to understand and apply this architectural vocabulary. Therefore, the course engages the students with the built environment that surrounds them with a guided campus tour by me. They individually complete an architectural elements scavenger hunt about a week later. The students are given a list of about twenty architectural elements/terms (e. g.balustrade or battlement), then on their own time they go around campus taking selfies with architecture. These selfies are then used to create an illustrated document identifying and defining the term based on definitions from the textbook glossary. It is then submitted for a grade. These terms do not disappear after this assignment. The students are continually assessed for their knowledge of vocabulary through quizzes, pictorial vocabulary sections on the midterm and final exam, and throughout class discussions.

Once the students begin to have some grounding in the architectural vocabulary, the course moves into historical content. Students largely learn about the distinct American canon of the history of style through the investigation of monumental architecture. Out of the over 700 works of architecture from the Roth and Clark textbook, students are responsible for about 150 images which includes about fifteen examples of vernacular architecture. Most of the authors' analysis of vernacular architecture in *American Architecture: A History* is about style dissemination, which fits the overarching theme. This allows the discussion of vernacular architecture to correlate with the monumental architecture thereby keeping the contextualization. There are educational drawbacks to this overall theme based on stylistic development. For even in this discussion of vernacular

[19] Julia A. Sienkewicz, "Against the "Coverage" Mentality: Rethinking Learning Outcomes and Core Curriculum," *Art History Pedagogy & Practice* 1 n. 1 (2016): 4. https://academicworks.cuny.edu/ahpp/vol1/iss1/5. As stated in the first issue of Art History Pedagogy & Practice by scholar Julia A. Sienkewicz "If a semester is organized around ensuring that students are exposed to a long battery of significant objects, artists, and movements, then the focus is on remembering more than on understanding and application."

architecture there is still an emphasis on society's affluent, somewhat undercutting the idea that discussion of vernacular architecture should allow for a wider perspective and more diverse discussion of the built environment.

For example, in "Chapter 5: Appropriation and Innovation" the authors present vernacular architecture by analyzing the John H. Swartout House from Waukegan, Illinois (Figure 3). The analysis of this particular building is largely discussed for its aesthetics.[20] As with any work of architecture, the vernacular structure provides an opportunity to go beyond style dissemination and to apply an interdisciplinary approach through historical interpretation of the regional location and the original ownership.[21] The original owner, John H. Swartout, emigrated from the state of New York. He was a carriage maker and one of the early settlers of Little Fort, now known as Waukegan, Illinois. In 1846 he was a charter member of the Baptist Church and by 1850, a Trustee of the village.[22] By going beyond the discussion of the stylistic characteristics of the building itself and including the historical background of the original owner, a lot more is revealed about the Greek Revival. Swartout was a man of prominence. His house reinforced his position within his community. By the time it came to this part of the United States, the Greek Revival was firmly associated with social status, and explicitly tied to people of affluence or position. At the same time, by including an example of vernacular architecture, students see the way architectural ideas spread and how various styles became so pervasive throughout even the newest portions of the United States.

In addition to the vernacular, the discussion of the monumental Greek Revival shows that architects became more concerned with utilizing historical details within their structures and working to duplicate ancient Greek buildings.[23] The authors talk at length about a variety of monumental Greek Revival structures such as William Strickland's Second National Bank of the United States in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania and Thomas Ustick Walter's Nicholas Biddle House in Andalusia, Pennsylvania (Figures 1 and 2). These two structures exemplify the aesthetic qualities that made a building Greek Revival in the public and private spheres. At the same time, they also tell us about the adaptability of the Greek

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[20] Leland M. Roth and Amanda C. Roth Clark, *American Architecture: A History, 2nd ed. (*New York: Westview Press, 2016), 172-173.

[21] It should be noted any architectural structure allows for a more in-depth analysis. I know that the vernacular in many ways allows instructors to move away from aesthetics for the building's significance is not necessarily the architecture itself but the people who built it.

[22] "The John H. Swartout Residence," City of Waukegan Illinois, accessed May 1, 2020, https://www.waukeganil.gov/474/The-John-H-Swartout-Residence.

[23] Roth and Clark, 162.

Revival from a construction perspective since it could be executed in both stone or wood. This style flourished across the United States, but was usually executed in wood not stone because in this period there were far more carpenters than masons. By studying the Greek Revival, not only do students learn about stylistic characteristics, but also about the type of skilled labor force and technology of the day.

At the same time the textbook is limited on cultural and socio-political explanations since it is largely a text on the history of style. A more interdisciplinary approach adds more depth to understanding some of the other reasons why the Greek Revival arises in the American landscape. The aesthetic discussion has its merits. It allows for the discussion of the concept of didactic architecture and how this relates to American value systems, thus justifying partly why the architecture of the United States moves in this direction. At the same time, there is a larger international political and religious motive that led to the development of the Greek Revival in the United States. The United States, a young nation, politically aligned itself with the Greeks during that nation's attempt to gain independence from the Ottoman Empire at this time. It was the Ancient Greek society who created democracy and many citizens of the United States believed the contemporary Christian Greek descendants had an unalienable right of self-governing, especially from the Islamic Ottoman Turks. Therefore, the Greek Revival did not just appear as a fashion of the day. This architecture for the United States was redolent of so much more and my lectures bring in that further contextualization.

Roth and Clark's discussion of the vernacular, while limited to primarily stylistic dissemination, does broaden the perspective of American architectural history. But, it is the history of the preservation movement itself that shows the greatest possibility for guiding students to analyze the way we understand the historical significance of the American built environment. In "Chapter 10: Late Modernism and Alternatives," the authors dedicated nearly five-pages to the rise of the 20th century historic preservation movement in the United States. By focusing their discussion on the destruction of Pennsylvania Station (Penn Station) of New York City, the authors illuminate how this one event has been identified as a catalyst by many preservationists and historians for Congress passing the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (NHPA).[24] This case study tends to resonate with students, for it demonstrates how profit margins ultimately won the day over culture.

[24] Roth and Clark, 506-509.

Penn Station was a grand example of Beaux-Arts architecture. The sheer scale of this building is incomprehensible to the 21st century mind when thinking that it took up eight-acres of prime Manhattan real estate. This building was only fifty-three years old when the Pennsylvania Railroad Company decided to replace it with a modern skyscraper and a new entertainment facility known as Madison Square Garden. Again, this is another example of monumental architecture, however, the demolition of Penn Station demonstrates that preservation may be about saving buildings that were built within one's lifetime. The NHPA states that a building has to be a minimum of fifty years of age to be considered eligible for determination as architecturally significant. It also created the National Register of Historic Places and the scope of criteria for eligibility. The criteria are that buildings:

A. Are associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad pattern of our history; or
B. That are associated with the lives of significant persons in our past; or
C. That embody the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction, or that represent the work of a master, or that possess high artistic values, or that represent a significant and distinguishable entity whose components may lack individual distinction; or
D. That have yielded or may be likely to yield, information important in history or prehistory.[25]

The four criteria essentially resulted in the melding of the two architectural perspectives associated with high-style and vernacular – aesthetic and socio-cultural significance.

While students learn about the preservation movement throughout this course, they also engage in the practice of architectural history and test its relevance. Students are assigned to complete half of a NRHP form. This assignment not only brings preservation to the forefront of my class, but it engages the students in the full spectrum of the Bloom's Taxonomy. Students have the opportunity to choose a building in Tuscaloosa and/or Northport, Alabama.[26] The students complete

[25] U.S. Department of Interior National Park Service, "II: National Register Criteria for Evaluation," in *National Register Bulletin: How to Apply the National Register Criteria for Evaluation*, https://www.nps.gov/subjects/nationalregister/upload/NRB-15_web508.pdf.

[26] The students do have parameters set up by me in which the choices may not already be listed individually on the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP) and some buildings in select NRHP historic districts are off limits.

sections one through eight of the NRHP form; most of this is filling in boxes.[27] In section seven each student writes a narrative description of the building --not a historical narrative, but a narrative entirely about the structures' formal architectural elements. The assignment ends at section eight in which the student check the boxes to identify what criteria they believe their building qualifies under.

This assignment provides me with the opportunity to reinforce particular skillsets that are applicable for all majors: critical perception, critical thinking, and writing. At the same time, it introduces students to federal paperwork, which for some is a practical learning experience in itself. The students become aware of the need for patience with bureaucratic forms, the need to read carefully, and to follow directions. After completing the NRHP form, students then present their buildings to the class with a short three-minute slide presentation.

What is noteworthy about this assignment is it is a practicum dependent on critical thinking and critical perception. Students ultimately engaged in Bloom's Taxonomy categories of "Evaluate" and "Create" for the assignment, as it guides students to consider the concept of what is historically significant by engaging with their built environment. These learning goals are achieved through the students' utilization of their analytical skills in particular, alongside critical perception or their own cognitive engagement with their surroundings. Critical perception allows students "to understand an object on its own terms," and at the same time the student chooses their buildings based on their own biases.[28] Then utilizing other skillsets (like critical thinking, writing, and oration) students ultimately presented their conclusion through the submission of their NRHP form and a classroom presentation. Through this assignment students become active agents in defining and shaping the United States art historical canon, for they decided what should be analyzed.

Since each student has their own perspective and interests, they often chose a variety of building types.[29] Although the buildings had to meet one of the four criteria for the NRHP, the assignment did not require that these buildings meet the historical integrity standard that the NRHP would require. Some of my students

[27] Refer to U.S. Department of Interior National Park Service, "NPS Form 10-900 Sections 1 – 8 page 6," https://www.nps.gov/subjects/nationalregister/national-register-forms.htm.
[28] Sienkewicz, "Critical Perception," 130.
[29] Another limitation put on the students are that no more than three students can chose the same building. If more than three students choose the same building their names are placed in a hat and drawn at random to decide who can work on that particular building. If their name was not selected then they are required to find another structure.

did choose the high-style buildings such as plantation houses or campus buildings. Other students looked to vernacular architecture. These students chose the familiar or commonplace buildings such as the mid-century modern homes, art deco businesses, 1920s bungalows, and even late-19th century commercial properties. Through this NRHP assignment the students not only learned more about the built environment that surrounds them every day, but also each of these students contributed to broadening and diversifying their own understanding and definition of what should be deemed architecturally significant.

The last example brings preservation practices and interpretation into focus through a student-led class discussion on Colonial Williamsburg. In this course the architecture of Williamsburg, Virginia was studied in two contexts. Students' first exposure came from studying specific stylistic examples of Colonial American Georgian architecture, such as the George Wythe House introduced in chapter three. As the textbook continued chronologically, in "Chapter 8: Nostalgia and Avante-Garde 1915-1940" approximately three-pages are designated to the rise of the Colonial Revival and the creation of Colonial Williamsburg. Most students know of Colonial Williamsburg and they understand that it has restored buildings, but their knowledge does not usually extend further than these facts. As part of the active learning classroom, all students were assigned a chapter from George Humphrey Yetter's *Williamsburg Before and After: The Rebirth of Virginia's Colonial Capital.* At the beginning of the semester, half of the class was assigned to lead the class discussion while the entire class was expected to be prepared to discuss the topic.[30] Approximately 24 hours before the class met as a whole, the student leaders posted two-to-three questions on the course's Blackboard site for review by me and their peers. All students were expected to be prepared for class discussion based on these questions the next day. This class-led discussion guided students to engage in the upper half of the Bloom's Taxonomy learning objectives of "Analyze," "Evaluate," and "Create."[31]

The students who created the questions were the group leaders of smaller groups within the classroom. I broke the students into smaller groups based on themes in their questions. Each group usually had two or three leaders and the other students who had not been responsible for creating questions were assigned to a group at random. This class met for one hour and fifteen minutes so a full hour could be dedicated to student-led discussion. These smaller discussion groups focused on the particular questions as written by the group leaders. Within these groups

[30] In the course of the semester there are two in-class discussion days where each half of the class either is a presenters or active participants. I am only discussing one of the two in-class discussions.

[31] La Follette, "Bloom's Taxonomy for Art History," 5.

dispersed around the classroom there was a continual dialogue between the student leaders and student participants. The students worked together for about twenty to thirty minutes, then remaining in their groups came back as an entire class to share insights and debate from their groups on various points that they drew from the readings and their knowledgebase. I served as the moderator of the class discussions. In general, there was a group spokesperson, however in many cases students would interject with their own opinions or analyses.

This was entirely a creative process in which students devised their own analysis and shaped the class discussion based on what was important or of value to them. Some of the themes that were addressed by the students included, but were not limited to, the role of John D. Rockefeller, Jr. and William Goodwin in restoring Williamsburg to its "eighteenth century appearance;" restoration versus preservation methods; preservation philosophy then and now; who lived in Williamsburg in the 1920s; who was asked to change Williamsburg from a rather sleepy-yet-living twentieth century town into a fully restored or recreated living eighteenth century colonial town? Within these theme-groups students then began to ask further questions addressing ethical challenges, interpretation of a period, and who really had input. Many students noted that the textbook and the additional reading focused largely on white male patronage, the role of the white community and white male architects, yet there was only limited discussion of any minority communities, such as African Americans and/or women. In 1928 when Williamsburg, a town of 2,500 people, voted to move forward with the restoration, there was no input from any of the 700 African American residents because they were not invited.[32] The student discussion revealed that the restoration of Colonial Williamsburg was rather complicated.

Colonial Williamsburg is significant for its role in establishing some of the foundational methods for preservation and restoration in the United States and for being an actual place to experience the "pre-Revolutionary" era.[33] The discussion of the "restoration" of Colonial Williamsburg allowed students to discuss the transformation of 301 acres in a greater social, racial, economic, and historical context. Students recognized that it was more than a restoration of a colonial city. They addressed how the Colonial Williamsburg that was recreated never truly

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[32] Mary Miley Theobald, "African Americans and the Restoration of Williamsburg" *Colonial Williamsburg Journal* (Summer 2014). https://slaveryandremembrance.org/Foundation/journal/Summer14/restoration.cfm. This was the Jim Crow's South and the meeting about the restoration was held in a white's only school. It should also be noted that only 154 people were involved in making the decision of going forward with this urban restoration.

[33] Roth and Clark, 369. No building in "Colonial Williamsburg" was to postdate 1770 CE.

existed but was conceived by Goodwin and Rockefeller in alignment with the perception they and their peers had of the eighteenth-century. It was a place that emphasized the dominant elitist American history of the White Anglo-Saxon Protestant. As such, to recreate Colonial Williamsburg a large portion of the African Americans residents, as well as poor white residents, were disenfranchised and displaced. By 1960 within these 301 acres there were only 81 surviving colonial buildings and most required major restoration, 413 Colonial Revival or "missing" colonial buildings were constructed and nearly 731 buildings that dated after the determined period of significance were demolished.[34]

The entire case study showcased not only architectural history and preservation practices, but also how history is a construct created by those who chose what facts and details to write, or in this case, to build. The creation of Colonial Williamsburg showed students how elitist presumptive ideology disenfranchised nearly a third of the city of Williamsburg population. Ultimately creating an artificial colonial city complex meant to educate and ultimately have tourists consume a very specific non-pluralistic view of American colonial history. Students noted this from their own reading of the Yetter's chapter, the textbook and by creating and discussing their questions with their peers. During the class discussion I also brought in a video from YouTube posted by Colonial Williamsburg called "Williamsburg: Then and Now" that shows the Duke of Gloucester Street side by side 1930 and 2014 illustrating the transformation. I also shared some of the statistical evidence from the article by Mary Miley Theobald, "African Americans and the Restoration of Williamsburg" from the *Colonial Williamsburg Journal*.[35] Overall, by focusing on the 1920s and 1930s restoration of Colonial Williamsburg, students complicated the historical narrative of this place and gained deeper knowledge of the socio-political and racial issues of the period. Through this process, students were led to consider the way people used, viewed and understood what we call American architectural history.

CONCLUSION

From the above discussion of my American architectural history course, I show how I attempt to broaden the American architectural canon by bringing in the discipline of preservation and, by extension the discussion of vernacular architecture. The course has its foundations in the traditional learning objectives

[34] Roth and Clark, 369.

[35] "Williamsburg: Then and Now," YouTube video, 8:32 posted by Colonial Williamsburg, October 10, 2017, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tqfb2Edwx84.

defined by the Bloom's Taxonomy – "Remember," "Understand," "Apply" and "Analyze." This structure is partly due to the fact that many of the students who participate in this class do not have the vocabulary and/or lack the critical perception skills needed to broach architecture. The course progresses through the chronology and stylistic developments of architecture that has existed and continues to exist within the borders of the continental United States. However, this is not a course intended or designed purely for memorization and regurgitation. It is meant to focus on architecture as another art form and it attempts to shift the way students perceive the built environment.

As an architectural historian who teaches within an art and art history department, the content of this course does not solely focus on form, design, and structural systems. While these are important, the built environment – structural and landscape –is also about engagement and consumption. I have demonstrated that the role of the preservationist has shifted American architectural history beyond a discussion of aesthetics toward a more inclusive interdisciplinary analysis. By looking closely at vernacular architecture, students saw that monumental architectural styles disseminate and are associated with greater social and cultural meanings for those who design, commission, built, or live near these structures. Vernacular architecture also becomes a gateway to look at not just individuals but also at larger communities. These buildings are not less than the monumental styles, nor are they at odds with the high style buildings. The discussion of vernacular architecture still allows one to discuss aesthetics and structural systems in a similar context to monumental architecture. At the same time vernacular architecture is the architecture built by all types of "every-day people" hence it is the architecture of pluralism and inclusivity.

While talking about plurality and looking at numerous examples of American architecture does address the lower categories of the Bloom's Taxonomy of learning objectives, it often leads to students compartmentalizing the knowledge. There is a certain skill level required or gained by being able to remember specific examples or explain structural systems or concepts that are fine for class exam assessments but, again, probably seem like trivial details in many students' perceptions. By bringing in the NRHP assignment and the student-led class discussions as demonstrated by the case study of Colonial Williamsburg, students took specific architectural knowledge they learned from the classroom and became active learners. These two examples reveal how the creation of learning objectives that emphasize the upper categories of Bloom's Taxonomy empowered the students to "Create" the narrative and became stakeholders in defining the canon. These assignments move the narrative further away from aesthetics and bring in the perspective of the preservationist. The result is the field of American

architectural history adds to the discipline of art history of the United States for it becomes more inclusive, dynamic and comprehensible to our diverse student population.

On the whole, I have demonstrated how my pedagogical approach, while centralized around the canon of American architectural history, is also more inclusive and pluralistic by bringing in both preservation and the inclusion of the vernacular. These teaching strategies begin to answer the question that I stated at the beginning of this essay(what role does architectural history have in the study of the art history of the United States?). However, I think it is possible to look at this question more broadly in the sense of architectural history's contribution to curriculum. If art history's learning objectives for students are to demonstrate an understanding of select historical periods of art production and identify examples of styles, to provide students with basic terminology in order to discuss art, to understand socio-political context and ultimately understand the importance of pluralism, then architectural history fulfills these objectives. Similarly to art historians, architectural historians utilize critical perception and critical thinking as well as the technical and descriptive vocabulary of the architect. Indeed, combining these elements allows a more complete and interdisciplinary analysis of the built environment. Again, like other specializations in the discipline of art history, there is an in-depth perspective that is likely not to be provided if one has not received an education in architectural history. In general, if art history seeks to develop greater understanding in its students, then architectural history contributes greatly to these goals of the discipline of art history. Architectural history allows us to study a larger footprint of material culture and, therefore, increases our knowledgebase of not only art, but also of humanity.

FIGURES

Figure 1: William Strickland, Second National Bank of the United States, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, 1818-1824.
Library of Congress, Prints & Photographs Division, HABS PA,51-PHILA,22--36. https://www.loc.gov/pictures/item/pa0875.photos.137311p/

Figure 2: Thomas Ustick Walter, Nicholas Biddle House, Andalusia, Pennsylvania, c. 1835. Library of Congress, Prints & Photographs Division, HABS PA,9-ANDA,1-11.
https://www.loc.gov/pictures/item/pa0213.photos.142762p/

Figure 3: John H. Swartout House, Waukegan, Illinois, c. 1845. Library of Congress, Prints & Photographs Division, HABS ILL,49-WAUK,1-2. https://www.loc.gov/pictures/item/il0174.photos.062808p/

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