

**HSPV705  
RECKONING WITH CIVIL RIGHTS SITES:  
ADVANCED SEMINAR/STUDIO**

Spring 2021

Wednesday 2-5pm

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Our country is in the throes of a deep reckoning with racial injustice, economic precarity, legacies of discrimination and violence, and other civil rights issues. This advanced research course explores the presence of these civil rights issues, their heritage, and opportunities for reckoning at the scale of the site and the landscape. How should site of civil rights struggles, triumphs and other legacies be recognized, interpreted, preserved, managed and otherwise made visible?

The course will draw on several fields, including history, preservation, management, and design. It will consist of lecture/seminar sessions (to outline and examine issues) and practical workshops (applying and exploring professional tools for designing, preserving and otherwise sustaining the sites themselves). The workshops will also create a space to collaborate with colleagues at Tuskegee University's Department of Architecture and other partners.

The workshops will focus on two specific civil rights heritage sites:

- Armstrong School, a small, early 20th-century building on the grounds of a Baptist church in Macon County, Alabama. It is a rare legacy of Jim Crow discrimination and separate racial education, a precursor to the Rosenwald Schools. Preservation efforts are in their first stages for the School; we will partner with Tuskegee to devise practical, yet imaginative futures for the school and its surrounding landscape.
- Marian Anderson House, in Center City Philadelphia, the longtime rowhouse home of the renowned musician and civil-rights icon, which has been preserved and interpreted as a heritage site but faces a crossroads in its management, design and programming.

Individual student projects will be related to one of these two sites. WSOD's Center for the Preservation of Civil Rights Sites plans ongoing work with both sites, beyond this semester's work.

Enrollment in the course will be strictly limited to 10-12 students, and we welcome those from a variety of backgrounds, disciplines and departments.

## PRELIMINARY SCHEDULE

### January 20

Problem Statements/Conceptual Framework of the course

Readings will include:

Ta-Nehisi Coates. Between the World and Me. (selections)

The Universal Declaration of Human Rights (<https://www.un.org/en/universal-declaration-human-rights/>)

The Declaration of Independence and the Constitution of the United States.

### January 27 and February 3

Civil Rights Historiography

Review of contexts

Readings will include:

Jeanne Theoharis. A More Beautiful and Terrible History: The Uses and Misuses of Civil Rights History.

W.E.B. DuBois. The Philadelphia Negro.

Hasan Kwame Jeffries. Bloody Lowndes: Civil Rights and Black Power in Alabama's Black Belt.

Equal Justice Initiative. Reports.

National Park Service theme studies and other reports.

Kenneth Foote. Shadowed Ground: America's Landscapes of Violence and Tragedy.

Michel-Rolph Trouillot. Silencing the Past: Power and the Production of History.

As well as varied websites, museum exhibits, and digital humanities sites.

### February 10

Workshop 1:

Introductions to both sites: Armstrong School; Marian Anderson House

Introduce and initiate comparables research

### February 17

Student case studies presentations: find, analyze and present a civil rights heritage site or issue of your choosing

### February 24

#### March 3

#### March 10

Case histories from the National Trust's African American Cultural Heritage Action Fund:

Readings and interviews exploring the stories of six Action Fund grantees associated with civil rights sites, including: (two each week)

- 16th Street Baptist Church in Birmingham
- Bethel Baptist Church in Birmingham
- Tuskegee University in AL
- McDonough School in New Orleans
- Paul Robeson in Philly
- AG Gaston Motel, Birmingham

**March 17**

Workshop 2:

Opportunities Assessments of both Armstrong and Marian Anderson sites

**March 24**

Student-led presentations on issue papers (and associated research)

**March 31**

Workshop 3:

Draft Programming and Preservation Recommendations / Introduce final project assignment

Project dossiers by each team will require:

- research the site's cultural significance and conditions
- conduct interviews about future programming opportunities
- research and analyze comparables
- prepare a final report on the challenges and opportunities
- deliver a presentation to project partners/owners

**April 7**

Student-led presentations on issue papers (and associated research)

**April 14****April 21**

Work sessions with individuals and groups on final project dossiers

**April 28:**

Columbia-Penn student exchange, part 2 (presentation of final project dossiers)

**ASSIGNMENTS:**

Research a case study on civil-rights heritage preservation/memorialization (10-slide deck and short in-class discussion)

Issues paper and presentation (5 pages; lead short in-class discussion)

Project dossiers on either Armstrong School or Marian Anderson House (students will be organized into teams and contribute to both collaborative and individual work products, which will differ somewhat according to site demands)

Participation in class discussions and workshops, including the April 28 student-led exchange/colloquium with students from Columbia's historic preservation program (a continuation of the Fall 2020 dialog)