HSPV 661 Theories of Historic Preservation 2

Spring 2021 / Second half of the semester, March 18-April 29
Thursday 9:00-11:45 / on Zoom and Canvas

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Office hours by appointment (contact me by email)

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“The retention of old things has always been a central ritual in human societies.”
George Kubler, The Shape of Time

“The key to the heritage enterprise is valorization (mise en valeur)....”
Françoise Choay, The Invention of the Historic Monument

“Like the resource it seeks to protect, wildlife conservation must be dynamic, changing as conditions change, seeking always to become more effective.“
Rachel Carson, Silent Spring

Why do we preserve old things and places? How do we organize ourselves to do so? How do we gauge impact and communicate results? To what extent are crises in the preservation field related to crises of theory? These basic questions drive the inquiries of this course in theories of preservation – the successor to HSPV 660, which covered fundamental ideas in the history and theory of historic preservation as a professional field.

Theories are the models we construct to understand the world. And we must understand the world – the parts we are exploring – before intervening in it. For particular phenomena like historic preservation, theories are essential to constructing the subject of our work, stimulating intellectual debate, defining the profession – informing practice in all senses. Theories are used to explain, to direct, and to predict phenomena. Theories map the intellectual and ethical terrain of preservation, and suggest ways we can navigate through it. They are an essential, critical tool for the development of the profession (practically, culturally, intellectually) and of professionals.

As with other cognate fields of knowledge and practice, historic preservation is premised on several kinds of theory. From Ruskin and Viollet’s positions on architectural restoration, to urban theorists’ myriad models for orchestrating the combination of new and old buildings, to political and economic concepts of public good and the role of markets, to theories of cultural change and ecological conservation, preservation is buffeted by theories from many fields. The preservation field is also enabled, animated, and challenged to produce theory about the performance of materials and buildings, about the interpretation of history and art, about the function of settlements and urbanism, and the functions of preservation in civil society. The need for theory is abiding, though has changed dramatically over time. We traced the long, complex, and disparate history of preservation theories in HSPV 660; preservation theory has become frankly divergent in recent years, and our challenge in HSPV 661 is exploring this.

The work of the Theories course will consist of lectures, discussions, reading assignments, writing assignments, and a variety of in-class exercises. Most weeks we’ll spend some time debating, as a group, a contemporary issue to explore deeper theoretical questions. Against the foundational ideas and themes covered in the fall – the origins and evolution of the field, the development of theories of and about preservation, the trajectory of preservation discourse and practice up to the present – the second half of the course will explore recent critiques and alternative theories relating preservation to broad economic, cultural, social, political and environmental dynamics. We’ll also have some conversations with other experts in the field – sometimes live, sometimes recorded – to explore issues more deeply.
Learning objectives for both halves of the theory course include:

- Gain familiarity with a broad spectrum of theories of preservation – explanatory, normative and predictive; humanistic, political, and scientific
- Establish literacy with key preservation concepts and contemporary issues: the built environment, history and historiography, the construction of heritage (the usable past); significance, authenticity, integrity, levels of intervention; the points of connection and conflict between preservation and design, economic development, public policy, and culture and creativity
- Understand the historical evolution of the historic preservation field
- Understand the canonical literature on historic preservation theory and history – as well as critical, reformist and alternative perspectives
- Understand different epistemologies applied to practicing historic preservation
- Develop the ability to construct arguments about preservation theory and connect them clearly to practical phenomena, issues, projects and decisions – in other words, developing your own theoretical framework
- Practice debating positions on preservation issues (site-specific and policy/political) – be well-informed and persuasive, within the discourse of the field and in public
- Develop an ethical sense of preservation practice, advocacy and research.
SCHEDULE

Class 1, March 18
Review, Overview, Mapping questions of Preservation Theory

Subjects:
Recap HSPV660
Outline HSPV661
Mapping current & emerging theoretical issues in contemporary scholarship and practice
Values-centered theory revisited

Reading:
https://www.getty.edu/conservation/publications_resources/books/values_heritage_management.html

Assignments:
In-class discussion

Class 2, March 25
Critical Heritage Studies & Engaged Preservation

Subjects:
Critical Heritage Studies
Gentrification
Community-centered practice

Reading:

One article (your choice) from the past ~5 years of the International Journal of Heritage Studies [available through Franklin]


https://doi.org/10.1080/10464883.2018.1496727

Assignments:
Assignment 2 Book choice due (on Canvas)

Class 3, April 1
Urban Conservation and Sustainable Development

Subjects:
Urban conservation
Sustainable development
Regeneration & governance

Reading:


UN Habitat’s Sustainable Development Goals website: https://sdgs.un.org/goals


In-class Guest: Eduardo Rojas

| Class 4, April 8 | Economic theories |

Subjects:

Theories of value
Economic techniques appropriate to heritage
Gentrification & neighborhood change
Circular economy

Reading:


In-class Guest: David Throsby

Assignments:

Idea for Assignment 3 Case Study is due (on Canvas)

| Class 5, April 15 | Environment and climate |

Subjects:

Central concepts from environmental conservation
Relating historic preservation and environmental conservation
Climate change and climate justice

Read:


Climate Heritage Network website: [https://climateheritage.org/](https://climateheritage.org/)

Assignments:
This is the last week to schedule a one-on-one talk/walk

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<th>Class 6, April 22</th>
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<td>Cultural landscape theories/centering on change</td>
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Subjects:

Cultural landscape ideas and practices  
Rethinking materiality and all that stems from it

Read:


In-class Guest: Caitlin Desilvey, University of Exeter

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<td>Scenarios for the future of heritage and preservation</td>
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Subjects:

Concepts of community and culture  
Theories of engagement  
Modeling the future of heritage and preservation

Read:


A self-chosen selection of articles, chapters and cases from:


Blackspace: [https://www.blackspace.org/](https://www.blackspace.org/)

Other resources from the CPCRS website: [https://cpcrs.upenn.edu/resources](https://cpcrs.upenn.edu/resources)

Or other works, authors or projects you know about.

**Assignment:**
Record and upload a 3-minute presentation on your case study
Final Case Study (text, images, captions) due on May 6 (on Canvas)
ASSIGNMENTS AND GRADING

[1] One-on-one talks with your professor

Sometime in the first five weeks of the course (before April 5), you will schedule a half-hour conversation with me. We’ll talk about why and how theory matters to you as a professional, practitioner and/or scholar. And what your curious about in the realm of theory, history and future of the field. Send me an email to schedule. If you’re in Philly, we can potentially meet on campus or in a park. 20% of total grade.


Issues about preservation theory often are sufficiently complex that fundamental ideas and debates are best represented in full-length books. Some are classics (Jane Jacobs; George Kubler: James Marston Fitch); others are brand new (Caitlin DeSilvey; Rodney Harrison, Laurajane Smith). Some are monographs; others edited collections of multiple authors.

This assignment is designed to let you engage in greater depth and detail than the usual weekly readings allow. You’ll focus on one extended work. Choose one book, read and think about it, and write a short response. Note that a response is not meant to be a summary, nor is it merely descriptive of what’s in the book; it interprets and analyzes its meaning for yourself and for fellow preservation students.

You’ll have wide latitude in choosing your book, and several weeks to read and think about it. The product will be a two-three page (500-750 word) response to the book’s connection/contribution/impact on preservation theories.

A list of possible books is offered below. You are free to go beyond this list, and even read in other languages. Send me your choice ASAP – by the beginning of Class 2 at latest – I will approve it ASAP so you can get started. The paper is due at Class 5. 30% of total grade.

[3] Write a Case Study

Your most substantial project for the semester will be a case study, researching a site that you believe embodies challenging preservation theory issues. Examples might be taken from readings about theory, from the field or from the press (Bamiyan buddhas, destruction of Aleppo, an economic hardship case here in Philadelphia, a project where social justice and preservation align, affordable housing issues in San Francisco, policies for adaptive reuse, or a successful addition to an architectural landmark, etc., etc.).

Your individual case study will bear the challenge of presenting the case, its background, and its issues to an educated public audience – using a relatively small amount of words and images. You’ll have 1000-1250 words of text, 4-6 images, a caption for each images (of +/- 100 words each). Dairong and I will give you a graphic design template to use within a few weeks

Your choice of a site is due by the beginning of Class 4 (April 8): it should consist of 2-3 paragraphs explanation of the case’s main points, submitted via Canvas. I’ll get back to you right away to approve your case or suggest an alternative.

You’ll make a short, recorded presentation on your case before the last class session (April 29). The final “published” case will be due one week later (May 6). The entire project is worth 30% of final grade (taking into consideration choice of a good case, research, execution and presentation). The case studies will be collected and published in the form of a small book, posted on the HSPV website.

[4] Participate and engage in class

You are expected to attend all class sessions, participate in exercises and discussions, and generally be intellectually present and engaged. We all know the pandemic and Zoom makes this more challenging. I’m sympathetic. At any point in the semester, let me know if there are ways to make online engagement easier or more rewarding for you! 20% of total.
Overall grading rubric for the course:

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Final letter grades will be figured on the basis of these assignments. General guidelines for grades are as follows: A+ Exceptional; A Outstanding; A- Excellent; B+ Very good; B Good; B- Competent; C+ Fair; C Acceptable; C- Marginal; F Failure.

Academic culture

Academic integrity is the foundation of the University’s culture of learning and research. Everyone, at all times, is expected to abide by the principles set out in the University’s Code of Academic Integrity—see http://www.upenn.edu/academicintegrity/. Students with questions or concerns about plagiarism or any other issues regarding academic integrity or the classroom environment are welcome to approach the professor.

Use of digital devices and wireless internet access during class time must be confined to course-related activities. Uses unrelated to the course can be distracting to others in the classroom. This will be monitored and managed throughout the semester (and could result in loss of in-class internet access, or dismissal from a class session).

Academic Resources

The University provides a number of resources to support improvement of your writing, studying and learning skills. I encourage you to take advantage of them. In this and every other course in the School, you are welcome to make an individual appointment to talk to your instructor. The following University-wide points of contact may be helpful:

The Marks Family Writing Center provides individual help with writing. The Weingarten Learning Resources Center provides support and guidance on a range of academic work issues, including time management and organizational skills. Communication within the Curriculum offers guidance on speaking and making effective presentations. Weigle Information Commons in Van Pelt Library is a clearing house to these and other sources of support. And Career Services offers assistance on a number of issues related to academic work – as well as post-academic job searching and career advice.

Diversity and Inclusion

Our Commitment to Diversity, as stated on the School’s webpage:

“The University of Pennsylvania Stuart Weitzman School of Design is committed to creating an educational setting in which all students, faculty members, and staff members are valued. We strive to create an inclusive culture that celebrates difference and is strengthened by contributions from people of all races, religions, countries of origin, genders, ages, sexual orientations, physical abilities, learning differences, and socioeconomic backgrounds. We aspire to support and retain a student body, faculty and staff who are representative of the multiple communities and publics with which we collaborate and work. A diverse community here enhances our ability to prepare the next generation of artists, architects, landscape architects, planners, and preservationists to become leaders and innovators in a multicultural society.”

I want to ensure that everyone has the resources they want or need in order to participate fully in this course. Students who are differently abled are welcome let me know if you need special accommodations in the
curriculum, activities, instruction or assessments of this course to enable you to participate fully. I will keep all conversations confidential.

I am happy to meet for any reason; please send me an email directly to organize a time. Also keep in mind that Emily McCully, the School’s director of student services, has many resources to support students in many aspects of graduate student life – she is super helpful!

ADDITIONAL OPTIONAL READINGS

For each class, I’ve chosen a few readings everyone should focus on. The other readings listed below are supplemental, for those who want to read more widely.

**Values-Centered Theory, revisited**


**Economic thinking**


Cerisola, Silvia. A new perspective on the cultural heritage–development

Gentrification


Rodwell, Dennis. "Gentry"? Heritage Conservation for Communities.” Change Over Time. Volume 8, Number 1, Spring 2018.

Avrami, Erica, Cherie-Nicole Leo, Alberto Sanchez Sanchez. “Confronting Exclusion: Redefining the Intended Outcomes of Historic Preservation.” Change Over Time. Volume 8, Number 1, Spring 2018.


Sustainable development, environmental conservation, urbanism


Change Over Time issue 5.2 on climate change and resilience


UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs): https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/sdgs

Community, Culture and Engagement


Materiality, Intangible Heritage, Cultural Landscape Approaches

Rodney Harrison. Heritage: Critical Approaches. Routledge 2013. especially chapters, 1, 2 and 6


http://whc.unesco.org/en/series/26/

**BOOK LIST – POSSIBILITIES FOR ASSIGNMENT 3**

In addition to the books listed above...


