

July 24, 2020

Greetings to members of the incoming class:

At Commencement on May 16th, 21 graduates completed their studies in the midst of a growing pandemic. Although the ceremonies were virtual, our graduates headed off to real jobs, amidst larger societal responsibilities to combat racial inequity and social and environmental justice that now define our times. The concept of heritage and historic preservation has long been a contributing force to identity politics and especially cultural denial and misrepresentation of communities of color, but it also has equally played a role in rectifying and healing these injustices.

By now I hope you have seen President Gutman's issue of the [University's plans for the fall semester](#). We look forward to welcoming you all to Philadelphia and the campus to pursue your studies both in person and online. This 'hybrid' context will allow you to enjoy the benefits of an academic community while keeping you safe and sound. Because faculty as well as students have the option of deciding how to teach and learn (in person or online), each course's intended preferences can be found on [this fall schedule](#). Canvas has been, and will continue to be, the most widely used platform for course organization and content delivery. More information on this will be sent to you in the next month. As you organize your move to Philadelphia for the start of graduate school, we want to be in touch about a few things to help you prepare. (Note that this letter will not answer all your questions – we'll be in touch a few times over the summer on various other matters. And we're always happy to field your questions.)

Curriculum and course registration

The Stuart Weitzman Office of Student Services (des-studentservices@design.upenn.edu) has been in touch with you already about [registration](#) and other administrative matters. When thinking about your elective course choices, always keep two things in mind: first, the one-page summary of the [MSHP curriculum](#) that is your guide to the whole five-semester curriculum; second/ one year- [MSD curriculum](#), you'll have one- on-one 'meetings' with an academic advisor every semester to discuss and get advice on your courses and chosen concentration for field of study. Your advisors we're assigned in May and you should have already had your first 'meeting' with them over the summer. Once you have narrowed your focus and concentration, hopefully by the end of the first semester, you'll be free to switch advisors if/as your interests change.

Since most of your courses in the Fall 2020 term are required (core courses), your choices won't be terribly complicated for the first semester. Of your two elective choices for the Fall—you may choose something in your expected [focus area \(concentration\)](#) based on the [HSPV course descriptions](#) or you can

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wait to talk to me or your faculty advisor about your individual choices once you've arrived in Philadelphia.

If you contemplate applying to waive a core course, you'll need to send an email request [to me](#) and attach the following: the syllabus of relevant coursework, record of those grades, and samples of work from those courses, if available. If you successfully get a core course requirement waived, you'll still need to earn equivalent credit by taking an additional course. If you cannot be on campus this fall due to a delayed visa or other circumstances, please get in touch with [Micah Dornfeld](#), who will work with you to sort out your fall semester schedule.

Finally, you should be familiar with the School of Design's [Student Handbook](#), which will be updated 2020-2021 in early August. The Handbook lists the policies that guide the academic operations of the school, is updated every year, and should be your first reference for answering questions about administrative and curriculum matters.

Equipment

Everyone will need a laptop and camera (not a cell phone camera). Access will be provided to the School's computing facilities, including desktop machines, printer and plotters, but a portable individual laptop is essential. Specific information about hardware/software and recommended computer specs can be found [here](#) (click on Historic Preservation at the bottom of the page) and was sent to you in an email; technical questions can be emailed to ithelp@design.upenn.edu. Don't forget to "Designify" your computer in early August. Details are here: <https://www.design.upenn.edu/it/designify>.

Photography will be a fundamental tool for all your work during the next two years and most likely in your professional life. We recommend all students acquire a digital SLR (or advanced point-and-shoot digital camera) with at least 18-megapixel resolution. In addition, we suggest you have a sturdy tripod. We have four departmental DSLRs and three tripods for short term borrow, but it is best for you to use and master your own equipment. Camera and related equipment recommendations can be found [here](#). Used equipment is a good option through a reputable camera dealer.

Pre-requisite courses

There are two course pre-requisites you should address before arriving – but they apply differently to different students, so read on!

College-level chemistry

Students planning to focus on Architectural Conservation must come with basic knowledge of chemistry fundamentals in order to enroll in the Conservation Science (HSPV 555) course in the fall semester.

Typically, a college-level general chemistry course with lab will provide this base. An 'online' chemistry course may also satisfy this requirement. Please get in touch with [Frank Matero](#) or [Micah Dornfeld](#) to ask any specific questions about chemistry coursework you've done or are contemplating this summer/fall.

Here are a few examples of online courses which fulfill the requirement:

- General Chemistry at Carnegie Mellon University: <http://oli.cmu.edu/courses/all-oli-courses/chemistry/>
- StraighterLine: <https://www.straighterline.com/chem101xmghsl001000002-b.html>
- International Academic Projects <http://academicprojects.co.uk/chemistry-for-conservators/>
- Coursera at Duke University: <https://www.coursera.org/learn/intro-chemistry>
- Oregon State University: <https://ecampus.oregonstate.edu/online-degrees/undergraduate/online-chemistry-lab-course/>

CAD course

All incoming students are required to have working knowledge of AutoCAD before enrolling for the fall semester. A foundation in the workings and applications of computer-aided drafting (CAD) is essential for getting maximum benefit from first-year core documentation, recording and site analysis courses. It is also an important professional skill in the preservation field. If you have had no exposure to AutoCAD, you must get training before the fall semester.

There are several options to consider. For those of you with working experience in CAD, creating and editing drawing sets, you probably don't need any additional preparation. If you're already somewhat familiar with CAD you might sit down with a friend or colleague who knows the program well and run through a refresher tutorial. For those of you new to CAD, AutoCAD is the standard software used at the School of Design. Local colleges, community colleges, and evening extension programs may offer courses over the summer/fall. You can investigate the online options, too. To download AutoCAD now and view tutorials from Autodesk University, click [here](#). The University also offers free access to the online learning platform [LinkedIn Learning](#) to all of our students. Software tutorials range from introductory to advanced level. To access LinkedIn Learning please go to <http://linkedinlearning.upenn.edu/> and log in using your Pennkey ID and password. If you have difficulty logging in or you have any questions, please email ithelp@design.upenn.edu.

Historic Preservation Summer Institute

All the departments of the School have some pre-semester summer workshops or preparatory courses. As you know, the Graduate Program in Historic Preservation has scheduled a pre-semester mandatory *HSPV 790-901 Summer Institute* for all incoming students before classes formally begin – from Monday, August 17 through Thursday, August 27, 2020. The Summer Institute is led by [Kecia Fong](#), Lecturer in HSPV.

We require all incoming MSHP students to participate in the Summer Institute as it serves several purposes: it gives everyone a start on getting oriented to Philadelphia, its history and architecture; it provides a chance to begin working with the Program's faculty; it gives you a chance to get to know one another in the first-year cohort and meet second-year students as well as alumni; and, importantly, the workshop introduces some of the critical resources, skills, questions, and issues that will be at the center of your graduate studies during your time here. Micah Dornfeld registered you for the Summer Institute course in June. There is a \$500 fee that will be charged to your student billing account on the first day of this non-credit course (August 17).

A detailed summer institute schedule will be sent to you in the coming weeks along with reading assignments and a link to the HSPV 790 course folder. For now, plan to start learning the morning of Monday August 17 via zoom. Domestic students plan to be in Philadelphia by this time as we will be going on socially distant site visits. International students we will make accommodations as we know there have been restrictions with the visa process.

The first day of fall classes is Tuesday, September 1. There will be several School of Design and University-wide orientation events beforehand. [The School of Design New Student Orientation](#) is on Friday, August 28. Again let me reiterate, all in required in person meetings will have synchronous or asynchronous online versions to accommodate those who cannot or choose not to participate in person.

English Language Proficiency (ELP) Workshop

For International students who we required to take the ELP Summer workshop, please note that this has been rescheduled for the Fall and will happen virtually. This will **not** affect you starting classes at Penn. We will be in touch with more information about registration in September.

Research-assistant/student worker/work-study positions

For those of you interested in research assistant, student worker and/or work-study positions, we will send out a list of available fall postings prepared for you in August. We always have more positions than requests so be assured that there will be choices available to you. Compensation for these positions is typically \$12/hour.

Summer reading

A few of you have asked about a reading list to start on now. There will be intense amount of reading once the semester begins, so it's wise to get a head start and get warmed up for the semester.

For the Theories course: Miles Glendinning. [The Conservation Movement: A History of Architectural Preservation](#). Routledge, 2013. Another book – David Lowenthal's [The Past is a Foreign Country](#) (Cambridge University Press, 1985) – is recommended, though the entire book won't be required reading; this is a classic, an intellectual history of the ideas of heritage and preservation in western culture.

In preparation for your coursework in architectural history, historical documentation and site analysis, Profs. Aaron Wunsch and Francesca Ammon suggest you buy and get familiar with any edition of Cyril Harris's [Dictionary of Architecture and Construction](#)* and Virginia and Lee McAlester's [A Field Guide to American Houses](#). These two reference books will be used in first-year classes, and it would be useful for you to have them in advance (and read McAlester in advance). We also recommend that you peruse a basic, slim architectural history survey such as David P. Handlin's [American Architecture](#) (Second Edition: Thames & Hudson, 2004)**.

For an introduction to Philadelphia and to provide context to many of the site visits and discussions of the Summer Institute we strongly recommend Steven Conn's [Metropolitan Philadelphia: Living with the Presence of the Past](#) (University of Pennsylvania Press, 2006). If you're looking for more on the history and architecture of Philadelphia, there are many books to choose from, particularly good starting points are John Andrew Gallery's [Philadelphia Architecture: A Guide to the City](#)*** (Fourth Edition; Paul Dry Books, 2016) and Sam Bass Warner Jr.'s classic [Private City: Philadelphia in Three Periods of its Growth](#)**** (Second Edition; University of Pennsylvania Press, 1987)

*can only be used by one person at a time and not downloaded, also available on Internet Archive [here](#).

** This is only in print, no ebook available.

***This is the 1984 edition. Can only be used by one person at a time and not downloaded.

**** This is the 1968 edition. Can only be used by one person at a time and not downloaded; also available on Internet Archive [here](#).

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Moving

Finally, many of you will be moving to Philadelphia shortly and you should take advantage of the resources the University and the School of Design provide for helping settle here—see the Weitzman School of Design website: <http://www.design.upenn.edu/graduate-admissions/housing>. The Program's student organization – the Penn Preservation Student Association (PPSA) will also be helpful and will be a part of the August workshop. Members of the PPSA can be reached at penndesignppsa@design.upenn.edu.

If you have any more or different questions over the summer, we're here to help. You can get in touch with Micah Dornfeld or in the Historic Preservation office (or micahdor@design.upenn.edu) or drop me a line. Look forward to seeing you in August!

With best wishes,



Frank Matero
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