

HISC 172/272: Building America

UC San Diego - Spring 2005
Fridays 9:00 - 11:50 AM, H&SS 3086

Professor Emily Thompson

H&SS 4059 — Office Hours Wednesdays 1:00-3:00 or by appointment
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This course explores the history of the built environment in America. Topics range from skyscrapers to suburbs, canals and railroads to factories and department stores. The goal is to understand not just the history of structures and infrastructures, but how social and cultural values have been built into our material environment. Students will additionally focus on developing skills in critical reading, of both texts and places.

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BOOKS: Books are available for purchase at the UCSD Bookstore, and are also on reserve at the library. Students are welcome to purchase the books from any other sources they choose.

William Cronon. *Changes in the Land: Indians, Colonists and the Ecology of New England*. (NY: Hill and Wang, 1983).

John Kasson. *Amusing the Million: Coney Island at the Turn of the Century*. (NY: Hill and Wang, 1978).

Wolfgang Schivelbusch. *The Railway Journey: Industrialization of Time and Space in the Nineteenth Century*. (Berkeley: UC Press, 1986).

Carol Willis. *Form Follows Finance: Skyscrapers and Skylines in New York and Chicago*. (NY: Princeton Architectural Press, 1995).

PACKET: A collection of additional required readings will be on reserve in the library, and will also be available through the library's e-reserve service. Be sure you master accessing this material well before any such reading deadline arrives.

CLASS MEETINGS: The focus of this course will be our discussions of each week's reading assignment. Students should not only complete all reading before class, but should also spend time evaluating what they have learned and formulating questions to bring to class for discussion. All students are expected to participate fully in discussion on a regular basis.

ASSIGNMENTS: In addition to regular and substantial participation in weekly discussions, students will be required to write three short papers of approximately 1000 words (4 pages) each, and one final paper of approximately 1500 words (6 pages). Two of the short papers will be book reviews. The third short paper and the final paper will consist of critical readings of a place, building, or structure of the student's choosing, somewhere on campus or off. Papers will be evaluated for style and grammar as well as intellectual content, and students are encouraged to consult Professor Thompson or the Language Program at Oasis (<http://oasis.ucsd.edu/lang/lang.shtml#>), to improve the quality of their writing. Other than working with Professor Thompson or with an Oasis writing tutor, no collaboration of any sort is permitted. All students must complete all assignments in order to pass the course. Hard copy is required, late submissions will be penalized.

SPECIAL NEEDS: If you require any special accommodations in order to fulfill the requirements of this course, you must indicate so to the professor immediately. Confirmation of your situation from an advisor or dean may be required. No last minute or after-the-fact accommodations will be made.

PLAGIARISM: Academic dishonesty will be dealt with as outlined in the UCSD Policy on Integrity of Scholarship. See pp. 62-65 in 2004-2005 General Catalogue, or go to:
<http://wwwsenate.ucsd.edu/manual/appendices/app2.htm>

GRADING:

Seminar Participation:	50%	98-100 = A+	93-97 = A	90-92 = A-
Short Papers: 3 @ 10%:	30%	87-89 = B+	83-86 = B	80-82 = B-
Final Paper:	20%	77-79 = C+	73-76 = C	70-72 = C-
		60-69 = D	0-59 = F	

If you take the course P/F, you must receive a grade of C- or better to pass the course.

SCHEDULE:

WEEK	DATE	SUBJECT/READINGS
1	1 APR	NO CLASS – PROFESSOR IS OUT OF TOWN
2	8 APR	Course Introduction: BEGIN READING CRONON
3	15 APR	Cultures of Development: CRONON

4 22 APR Moving People and Goods: Canals
PAPER 1 DUE AT START OF CLASS: READING A SPACE

Ronald Shaw, "The Canal Network," Ch 6 in *Canals for a Nation: The Canal Era in the United States, 1790-1860* (1990), pp. 160-197; notes pp. 254-259.

Carol Sheriff, "The Politics of Land and Water," and "The Perils of Progress," Chs 4 and 6 in *The Artificial River: The Erie Canal and the Paradox of Progress, 1817-1862* (1996), pp. 79-109, 138-171; notes pp. 200-206; 212-221.

Samuel Hopkins Adams, "The Big Breach" and "The Parlous Trip," in *Grandfather Stories* (1955), pp. 35-56.

Charles Dickens, "Some Further Account of the Canal Boat...", Ch 10 in *American Notes for General Circulation* (1842), pp. 191-201; notes pp. 349-350.

5 29 APR Reconceiving Time and Space: Railroads: SCHIVELBUSCH

6 6 MAY Building Up: Skyscrapers: WILLIS and:

Olivier Zunz, "Inside the Skyscraper," Ch 4 in *Making America Corporate, 1870-1920* (1990), pp. 103-124 (including photos); notes pp. 231-237.

7 13 MAY Getting Out: Suburbs: KASSON and:
PAPER 2 DUE AT START OF CLASS: BOOK REVIEW

William H. Whyte Jr., "The New Suburbia: Organization Man at Home," Chs 21-24 in *The Organization Man* (1956), pp. 267-329.

Kenneth Jackson, "The Drive-In Culture of Contemporary America," Ch 14 in *Crabgrass Frontier: The Suburbanization of the United States* (1985), pp. 246-271 (including photos); notes pp. 372-376.

8 20 MAY Architectures of Production: Factories

John Kasson, "The Factory as Republican Community," Ch 4 in *Civilizing the Machine: Technology and Republican Values in America, 1776-1900* (1976), pp. 55-106; notes pp. 241-249.

David Hounshell, "The Ford Company and the Rise of Mass Production in American," Ch 6 in *From the American System to Mass Production, 1800-1932* (1984), pp. 217-261; notes pp. 370-375.

Ben Hamper, *Rivethead: Tales from the Assembly Line* (1992), pp. 92-97; 105-116; 163-165. CAUTION: This #&*#@! reading contains much foul language.

**9 27 MAY Architectures of Consumption: Department Stores
PAPER 3 DUE AT START OF CLASS: BOOK REVIEW**

Susan Strasser, "The New Retailing," Ch 7 in *Satisfaction Guaranteed: The Making of the American Mass Market* (1989), pp. 203-251; notes pp. 314-320.

William Leach, "Strategies of Display and the Production of Desire," in Simon Bronner, ed., *Consuming Visions: Accumulation and Display of Goods in America, 1880-1920* (1989), pp. 99-132.

Susan Porter Benson, "The Clerking Sisterhood: Saleswomen's Work Culture," Ch 6 in *Counter Cultures: Saleswomen, Managers and Customers in American Department Stores, 1890-1940* (1986), pp. 227-282.

Malcolm Gladwell, "The Science of Shopping," *New Yorker* (4 November 1996): 66-75.

10 3 JUN Listening In: Soundscapes:

Emily Thompson, "Noise and Modern Culture," and "Acoustical Materials and Modern Architecture," Chs 4 and 5 in *The Soundscape of Modernity: Architectural Acoustics and the Culture of Listening in America, 1900-1933* (2002), pp. 115-228; notes pp. 358-395.

Jonathan Sterne, "Sounds Like the Mall of America: Programmed Music and the Architectonics of Commercial Space," *Ethnomusicology* 41 (Winter 1997): 22-50.

**FINAL PAPER: READING A SPACE:
HARD COPY OF FINAL PAPER DUE FRIDAY JUNE 10 at NOON,
IN MY OFFICE, H&SS 4059**