

2012 BLC Field School

Project Picturing Milwaukee: Thurston Woods Pilot Project



Project Partners and Co Sponsors

Agape Community Center, Thurston Woods (<http://agape-center.org>)
 Buildings-Landscapes-Cultures, University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee and Madison (<http://www.blcprogram.org>)
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 Historic Milwaukee Inc. (<http://www.historicmilwaukee.org/>)
 Office of the Provost and Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs, UWM (http://www4.uwm.edu/acad_aff/)
 Wisconsin Humanities Council (<http://www.wisconsinhumanities.org/>)

Class Details

Field School Course Numbers
 Architecture 390 (without any prerequisites)
 Architecture 534 (with prerequisites that can be waived by the instructor)
 Number of Credits: 3
 Instructor: Arijit Sen (senA@uwm.edu); Graduate Student Associate: Chelsea Wait (cawait@uwm.edu)

Course Description

This hands-on course provides students an immersion experience in the field recording of the built environment and cultural landscapes and an opportunity to learn how to write history literally “from the ground up.” Classes and meetings will be held at the Agape Community Center in Thurston Woods and outdoors on site. Digital workshops and lab training will be organized at the UWM campus in the School of Architecture and Urban Planning. Class will meet on weekdays from 9:00 AM to 4:00 PM (except for community workshops and events on weekends listed below).

Students will receive training on site documentation (including photography, measured drawings, digital documentation, audio-visual production), historic interpretation of buildings and landscapes (focusing on how to “read” buildings within its material, political, social, cultural and economic contexts), and primary source research (including oral history, archival research). They will create site reports on buildings and cultural landscapes that will become part of the historical record of Wisconsin.

This summer, our focus will be on the Thurston Woods Neighborhood in Milwaukee, Wisconsin – the area between Florist Avenue, 26th Street, Silver Spring Drive, and Sherman Boulevard Originally part of the Town of Granville, Thurston Woods was annexed by the City of Milwaukee in 1956. While the neighborhood had reached higher densities due to infill development between the 1930s and 1950s, many still associate Thurston Woods with a pastoral landscape. Thurston Woods has a rich collection of vernacular housing types, including Arts and Craft, Cape Cod, Craftsman, and mid-century modern. Berryland Public Housing Development was originally built for veterans returning from the Second World War. Other local spaces of historical and cultural significance include Agape Community Center, Christ Memorial Lutheran School, Jared C. Bruce Academy and Thurston Woods Campus School. Thurston Woods is also

a perfect case study for a park system. Examples such as McGovern Park, Schoenecker Park, Smith Park, and Havenwoods State Forest show how parks reflect our cultures changing values and outlook towards spaces of recreation, wilderness, leisure, health, commodity and spirituality. Our focus will be on documenting the dominant housing types, relating the residential and commercial landscapes to the larger ecological and parks context.

For more information, please contact Prof. Arijit Sen at senA@uwm.edu.

Tentative Weekly Schedules

Preparatory Workshop (attendance required): Monday June 4, 10:00 AM 4:00 PM – Lunch provided

Class dates: June 11-July 14

Weekly team meetings: Every Thursday 3:00 - 4:00 PM

Week 1 – Field measurements and Documentation

Directed by **Jeffrey Klee**, Architectural Historian, Colonial Williamsburg

Monday June 11-Friday June 15

9:00 AM – 4:00 PM daily at the Agape Community Center, Thurston Woods

This week we will measure, draw, and document buildings and landscapes

Week 2 – Oral Histories and Workshops

Directed by **Michael Frisch**, Professor of History and American Studies/ Senior Research Scholar, University at Buffalo, State University of New York and Principal, The Randforce Associates, LLC, Oral History and Multimedia Documentary, University at Buffalo Technology Incubator and **Michael Gordon**, Professor of History, UWM

Monday June 18-Saturday June 23 (off Wednesday)

9:00 AM – 4:00 PM daily at the Agape Community Center, Thurston Woods or the School of Architecture and Urban Planning Computer Labs.

This week we will interview, audio and video tape interactions with local residents

Week 3 – Media and Archives

Directed by **Erin Dorbin**, Hey Man Cool Digital History Productions

Monday June 25-Saturday June 30

9:00 AM – 4:00 PM daily at the Agape Community Center, Thurston Woods or the School of Architecture and Urban Planning Computer Labs.

This week we will begin planning producing multimedia documentaries and add archival background information

Week 4 – Photographs, Documentation and archival collections

Directed by **Jasmine Alinder**, Associate Professor, UWM History

Monday July 2 - Sunday July 8 (with Wednesday July 4 and Saturday July 7 off)

This week we will collect, document, analyze and study collected photographs including historical photos.

Week 5 – Documentation and Reviews

Directed by **Matthew Jarosz**, UWM School of Architecture and Urban Planning

Monday July 9 - Friday July 13

This week is dedicated to documentation and production of the final project documents.

Learning objectives

This course is a fieldwork, skill building, research methods and application course. As a result students are expected to demonstrate an expert level of comprehension and learning in the following ways:

1. Demonstrate an ability to collect information from the field.
2. Demonstrate an advanced ability to interpret social and material evidence. Demonstrate an ability to read, evaluate, and interpret the built environment as cultural artifact; uncover the ideological and symbolic underpinnings of the material world.

3. Demonstrate an ability to document and represent knowledge of the social and material aspects of cultural landscapes in visual and textual forms.

Required Text

Thomas Carter and Elizabeth C. Cromley, *Invitation to Vernacular Architecture: A Guide to the Study of Ordinary Buildings and Landscapes*, Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 2005. (\$14.00 - 24.00)

Valerie Yow. *Recording Oral History: A Guide for the Humanities and Social Sciences*, 2nd ed. Walnut Creek, CA: Altamira Press, 2005. (\$18.00 - 30.00)

Grades

40% Participation, regular attendance, completing assigned readings, intellectual curiosity, taking intellectual risks, suspending disbelief and trying out ideas that are different

30% Competence in the field

30% Quality of work and final product

University policies

In this course, university policies and procedures will be followed for academic misconduct, accommodation for disability and religious observation, discriminatory conduct, sexual harassment, and other matters.

The university has a responsibility to promote academic honesty and integrity and to develop procedures to deal effectively with instances of academic dishonesty. Students are responsible for the honest completion and representation of their work, for the appropriate citation of sources, and for respect of others' academic endeavors. Please familiarize yourself with University Plagiarism policy.

A student may appeal a grade on the grounds that it is based on a capricious or arbitrary decision of the course instructor. Such an appeal shall follow the established procedures adopted by the department and school. These procedures are available in writing from the department chair.

If you need special accommodations in order to meet any of the requirements of this course, please contact the instructor as soon as possible. Also, please see the instructor if you anticipate a conflict in attending a class because of a religious observation. Sexual harassment, bigotry towards race, class or sexual orientation will not be tolerated. It subverts the university's mission and threatens the careers, educational experience, and well being of students, faculty and staff.