

# *Field Methods in Historic Preservation*



*Farmers Bank. Shinnston, West Virginia.*

**HIST 409/609 | Spring 2025**  
**Monday, Wednesday, Friday | 2:30 – 3:20PM**  
**Woodburn Hall 105**

Instructor: Dr. Michael Allen  
Office: Chitwood Hall 220  
Office Hours: Monday/Tuesday, 10:00AM – 12:00PM  
Email: michael.allen@mail.wvu.edu

# INFORMATION

## Description

Historic preservation is field specific to the United States of America, and it spans activist movements, professional practices, law and bureaucracy, scholarly research and public policy. This course aims to provide an overview of the current practices that comprise historic preservation, an understanding of the development of the field and practical knowledge of how to utilize historic preservation methods. We will hold the tools in our hands, but also question how it came to be that these are the tools that we use, and who decided that. This semester, there will be a special attention to the creation and reproduction of values through historic preservation practices. Students will choose work among several topics, which intersect with community and national projects:

- The redevelopment plan for the lower area of the Greenmont Historic District in Morgantown;
- Popular values for the Personal Rapid Transit system at West Virginia University;
- Historic preservation of historic buildings in the mining community of Osage, West Virginia;
- National preservation policies addressing climate change.

(There may be additional areas added as the semester advances.)

## Learning Objectives

- Students will become familiar with historic preservation law and policy.
- Students will learn about the creation and evolution of historic preservation in the US.
- Students will apply methodologies for researching and recording historic places.
- Students will apply methodologies for public engagement around historic places.
- Students will learn and apply project management skills.
- Students will develop skills to write effectively for professional audiences.

## Office Hours

Office hours exist to support your learning, and not all learning can occur during the regular course time. I strongly encourage students to make use of individual meetings to cover questions, concerns and curiosities. I am amenable to meetings outside of office hours, including by phone or Zoom.

## Academic Policies

Please familiarize yourself with WVU's academic policies, including those pertaining to academic integrity and standards, inclusivity, COVID-19, class recording, and mental health, among others. You can find these statements here:

<https://tlcommons.wvu.edu/syllabus-policies-and-statements>

## Course Delivery and Organization

This course is an in-person lecture and discussion-based seminar. Course material, including assignments, will be delivered via eCampus, organized by week. I may amend the syllabus as the semester progresses, but all major readings are included here.

## Attendance and Participation

Attendance is mandatory, but can be excused with instructor permission. Excuses will be made for health and mental health reasons as well as personal crises, and can be made for travel or activities related to other courses or university activities. Please confer with me as soon as possible about any requests for an excuse, and do so *before* the session you would need to miss. Unexcused absences will proportionally affect the “Attendance and Participation” portion of your course grade. Given the single weekly meeting time, the class cannot function without your arriving prepared and ready for discussion.

We will need to undertake field work that may require time outside of class, but our trips and schedule will be adjusted in weeks one and two.

## Use of Technology and Artificial Intelligence

While the use of electronic devices is necessary to access eBooks and PDFs, as well as to enhance learning by looking up things to share with the class or looking up terms and phrases (or translating if English is not your first language), it can be distracting if activity is unrelated to learning. I reserve the right to request that you put electronic devices away if I feel that your use is problematic.

The use of AI is not prohibited, not discouraged – but also not enthusiastically embraced. Generally, AI is useless for historic research, and even more so for regional or local histories. It has some application for historical research yet. Also, the carbon footprint of a ChatGPT query is ten times that of a Google search, so use of AI in mass actually threatens historic sites by negatively impacting carbon emissions. The use of ChatGPT to generate course writing is not allowed.

## Assignments and Evaluation

Attendance and Participation	10%
Discussion Lead	10%
Reading Responses	15%
Historic Preservation Controversy	20%
Historic Property Inventory Forms	20%
Final Project	25%

## ASSIGNMENTS

### Discussion Lead

You are responsible for leading a class discussion, with assignments made in week two. When it is your turn, give a presentation (10 minutes) about the readings. You are encouraged to be creative, argumentative, satiric – just have a clear stake in your readings. You may use video clips or songs in your presentation to underscore points, but they cannot constitute the majority of content presented. In addition to this presentation, come prepared with at least three questions to facilitate class discussion. Important issues to consider include methodological framing, argument and evidence, construction of voice, and apparent bias (if detected). Feel free to circulate discussion questions or other materials to the class before the presentation.

## Reading Responses

You are required to submit five reading responses for the course readings; at least two for the required books, and the others spanning major themes across the readings. These essays are meant to be critical reflections on the authors' arguments, framing, and positions. For the weeks without books, you should select at least two readings to write about. I encourage drilling deep into two texts rather than skipping across more. Responses should be 300-600 words long. They are due the week the reading is assigned, at the beginning of class.

## Historic Property Inventory Forms

Each student is responsible for completing two Historic Property Inventory (HPI) forms, including photographs, architectural descriptions, condition assessments, property histories, and statements of significance. These will be due in week 13 and will be determined by course partnerships/projects.

## Historic Preservation Controversy

Each student will research a contemporary historic preservation controversy -- which can be local, regional, national or international -- and create a 10-minute presentation to present at midterm as well as an essay laying out the controversy and the student's own position in the controversy. The essay should be at least 2,000 words long. The presentations will occur and essays will be due on week nine.

## Final Project

The class will divide into groups for the final project, and groups will be assigned on of the areas listed below (subject to change):

- The redevelopment plan for the lower area of the Greenmont Historic District in Morgantown;
- Popular values for the Personal Rapid Transit system at West Virginia University;
- Historic preservation of historic buildings in the mining community of Osage, West Virginia;
- National preservation policies addressing climate change.

Final project assignments will be made in week eight. The final work will consist of either research reports, building inventories, oral histories or other work as discussed in week 12 and proposed by the end of week 13. Details of final project assignments will be worked out within the group structures. Final project grades will be individual.

## Late Work/Extensions

Late work will be reduced by half a letter grade (5 percentage points) for each day that it is late. Extensions will be granted on a case by case basis, without judgment. I encourage you to reach out if you anticipate failing to make a deadline, as it is best for both of us to know that in advance (and for you to get an extension).

## Grading Scale

A+	98-100%	B	83-86%	C-	70-72%	F	59-0%
A	93-97%	B-	80-82%	D+	67-69%		
A-	90-92%	C+	77-79%	D	63-66%		

B+ 87-89%

C 7 3-76%

D- 60-62%

## READINGS

All articles, book excerpts and other documents will be posted on eCampus. Students must obtain copies of the required books.

### Required Texts

Erica Avrami, *Second Order Preservation: Social Justice and Climate Action through Heritage Policy* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2024).

Brian Balogh, *Not in My Backyard: How Citizen Activists Nationalized Local Politics in the Fight to Save Green Springs* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2024).

Mindy Thompson Fullilove, *Root Shock: How Tearing Up City Neighborhoods Hurts America, and What We Can Do About It* (New York: New Village Press, 2016).

Whitney Martinko, *Historic Real Estate: Market Morality and the Politics of Preservation in the Early United States* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2020).

### Recommended Reference for Field Work

Virginia McAlester, *A Field Guide to American Houses: The Definitive Guide to Identifying and Understanding America's Domestic Architecture* (New York: Knopf, 2015).

## COURSE SCHEDULE

### Week 1 (January 13): Introduction

<b>M</b>	Introduction and overview
<b>W</b>	Mapping knowledge about historic preservation
<b>F</b>	<p>Lecture: <i>What The People Want</i></p> <p>Reading:            John Ruskin, "The Lamp of Memory," <i>The Seven Lamps of Architecture</i> (New York: The Noonday Press, 1961).            Bonnie McDonald, "To Do Historic Preservation Right, We Need To Move Beyond Our Fixation on Historic Material," <i>Next City</i> (January 10, 2024)  <a href="http://nextcity.org/urbanist-news/historic-preservation-improve-move-beyond-historical-material">http://nextcity.org/urbanist-news/historic-preservation-improve-move-beyond-historical-material</a></p>

### Week 2 (January 20): What Is Historic Preservation? Who Is It For?

<b>M</b>	<i>No class meeting, Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Day</i>
<b>W</b>	<p>Reading:            Steward Brand, "Preservation: A Quiet, Populist, Conservative, Victorious Revolution" <i>How Buildings Learn: What Happens After They're Built</i> (New York: Penguin Books, 1994).            Dolores Hayden, "Contested Terrain," "Urban Landscape History" and "Place Memory and Historic Preservation," <i>The Power of Place: Urban Landscapes as Public History</i> (Cambridge: The MIT Press, 1995).</p>
<b>F</b>	<p>Reading:            J.B. Jackson, "To Pity the Plumage and Forget the Dying Bird," <i>Landscape in Sight: Looking at America</i> (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1997).            Rem Koolhaas, "Preservation is Overtaking Us," <i>Future Anterior</i> 1.2 (Fall 2004).            Frederic Jameson, "Nostalgia for the Present," <i>Historic Preservation Theory: An Anthology: Readings from the 18<sup>th</sup> to the 21<sup>st</sup> Century</i> (Sharon, Conn.: Design Books, 2023).</p>

### Week 3 (January 27): Who Is Historic Preservation For?

<b>M</b>	<p>Reading:            Ned Kaufman, "Protecting Storyscape," <i>Place, Race and Story: Essays on the Past and Future of Historic Preservation</i> (London: Routledge, 2009).            Kofi Boone, "Black Landscapes Matter," <i>Ground Up Journal</i> 6 (2020).            Kyshia Henderson, Samuel Powers, Michelle Claibourne and Sophie Trawalter, "Confederate Monuments and the History of Lynching in the American South: An Empirical Examination," <i>PNAS</i> (October 11, 2021).  <a href="http://www.pnas.org/doi/10.1073/pnas.2103519118">http://www.pnas.org/doi/10.1073/pnas.2103519118</a></p>
----------	---

<b>W</b>	Reading: Martinko, <i>Historic Real Estate</i> , Introduction and Chapters 1-3
<b>F</b>	Reading: Martinko, <i>Historic Real Estate</i> , Chapters 4-6 and Epilogue

**Week 4 (February 3): Historic Preservation and Heritage Conservation**

<b>M</b>	Reading: Jukka Jokilhetto, "Conservation," <i>A History of Architectural Conservation</i> (London and New York: Routledge, 2018). Steven W. Semes, "A Brief History of Preservation Philosophy," <i>The Future of the Past: A Conservation Ethic for Architecture, Urbanism and Historic Preservation</i> (New York: W.W. Norton Company, 2009).
<b>W</b>	Reading: David Lowenthal, "The Purpose of Heritage," <i>The Heritage Crusade and the Spoils of History</i> (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998). Laurajane Smith, "Heritage as a Cultural Process," <i>The Uses of Heritage</i> (London: Routledge, 2006).
<b>F</b>	Reading: Françoise Choay, "Seven Proposals on the Concept of Authenticity and Its Use in Historical Heritage Processes," <i>Historic Preservation Theory: An Anthology: Readings from the 18<sup>th</sup> to the 21<sup>st</sup> Century</i> (Sharon, Conn.: Design Books, 2023). Chris Wilson, "Place Over Time: Restoration and Revivalism in Santa Fe," <i>Giving Preservation A History: Histories of Historic Preservation in the United States</i> (New York and London: Routledge, 2004). J.B. Jackson, "The Necessity for Ruins," <i>The Necessity for Ruins</i> (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 1980).

**Week 5 (February 10): Practices**

<b>M</b>	Section 106  Reading: William J. Murtagh, "The Preservation Movement and the Private Citizen Before World War II" and "Government and Preservation Since World War II," <i>Keeping Time: The History and Theory of Preservation in America</i> (New York: John Wiley & Sons, 2006). Kristal Buckley, "Heritage Work: Understanding the Values, Applying the Values," <i>Values in Heritage Management: Emerging Approaches and Research Directions</i> (2019). <a href="http://www.getty.edu/publications/heritagemanagement/part-two/4/">http://www.getty.edu/publications/heritagemanagement/part-two/4/</a> National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA) <a href="https://www.achp.gov/sites/default/files/2018-06/nhpa.pdf">https://www.achp.gov/sites/default/files/2018-06/nhpa.pdf</a> National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) <a href="https://www.govinfo.gov/content/pkg/COMPS-10352/pdf/COMPS-10352.pdf">https://www.govinfo.gov/content/pkg/COMPS-10352/pdf/COMPS-10352.pdf</a>
<b>W</b>	National Register of Historic Places

	<p>Reading: National Park Service, <i>National Register Bulletin 15</i> (1998). <a href="https://www.nps.gov/subjects/nationalregister/upload/NRB-15_web508.pdf">https://www.nps.gov/subjects/nationalregister/upload/NRB-15_web508.pdf</a></p> <p>Thomas F. King, "Repeal the National Historic Preservation Act," <i>Bending the Future: 50 Ideas for the Next 50 Years of Historic Preservation in the United States</i> (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 2016).</p> <p>Gail Dubrow, "Taking Action: An Overview of LGBTQ Preservation Initiatives," <i>Preservation and Place: Historic Preservation by and of LGBTQ Communities in the United States</i> (Oxford and New York: Bergahn Books, 2019).</p>
<b>F</b>	<p>Historic Districts</p> <p>Reading: David Hamer, "Development of the Concept of the Historic District," "Urban History in the Historic District," and "History That Is and Is Not Represented," <i>History in Urban Places: The Historic Districts of the United States</i> (Columbus: Ohio State University Press, 1998). National Register of Historic Places Registration Form: Greenmont (2004).</p>

### Week 6 (February 17): Who Preservation Fails

<b>M</b>	<p>Reading: Thompson, <i>Root Shock</i>, pp. 3-70. Jeremy C. Wells, "10 Ways Historic Preservation Policy Supports White Supremacy and 10 Ways to End It," unpublished paper (2021).</p>
<b>W</b>	<p>Reading: Thompson, <i>Root Shock</i>, pp. 71-133.</p>
<b>F</b>	<p>Reading: Thompson, <i>Root Shock</i>, pp. 134-240.</p>

### Week 7 (February 24): TBD

<b>M</b>	<i>Instructor away – no class</i>
<b>W</b>	<i>Instructor away – no class</i>
<b>F</b>	Guest: Aja Corrigan, historian and preservation activist from St. Louis, Missouri

### Week 8 (March 3): Uses of Preservation

<b>M</b>	<p>Reading: Balogh, <i>Not in My Backyard</i>, pp. 1-110.</p>
<b>W</b>	<p>Reading: Balogh, <i>Not in My Backyard</i>, pp. 111-205.</p>
<b>F</b>	<p>Reading: Balogh, <i>Not in My Backyard</i>, pp. 206-300.</p> <p><i>Final Project Groups Selected</i></p>



### Week 9 (March 10): Controversy Presentations

<b>M</b>	Student Presentations
<b>W</b>	Student Presentations
<b>F</b>	Student Presentations  <i>Controversy Essay Due</i>

### Week 10 (March 17) – Spring Recess, No Class Meetings

### Week 11 (March 24): The Future of Historic Preservation

<b>M</b>	Guest: Elizabeth Blasius, Principal, Preservation Futures  Reading: Bonnie McDonald, <i>The Relevancy Guidebook</i> (2023). Michael R. Allen, “Conclusion,” <i>Dissonant Modernism: Mass Housing as Architectural Heritage in the US</i> (unpublished, 2024).
<b>W</b>	Reading: Avrami, <i>Second Order Preservation</i> , p. ix-62.
<b>F</b>	Reading: Avrami, <i>Second Order Preservation</i> , p. 63-174.

### Week 12 (March 31): To Preserve or Not to Preserve?

<b>M</b>	Guest: Erica Avrami, Associate Professor of Historic Preservation, Columbia University
<b>W</b>	Reading: Caitlin DeSlivey, “Palliative Curation: The Death of a Lighthouse,” <i>Curated Decay: Heritage Beyond Saving</i> (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2017). Kenneth E. Foote, “Innocent Places” and “The Mark of Shame,” <i>Shadowed Ground: America’s Landscapes of Violence and Tragedy</i> (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1997).
<b>F</b>	<i>Student Group Meetings With Instructor</i>

### Week 13 (April 7): Project Work

<b>M</b>	Guest: Brad White, Senior Program Director – Built Environment, Richard H. Driehaus Foundation
<b>W</b>	TBD  <i>Final Project Proposals Due</i>
<b>F</b>	TBD  <i>Historic Property Inventory Forms Due</i>

**Week 14 (April 14): Project Work**

<b>M</b>	TBD
<b>W</b>	TBD
<b>F</b>	<i>No class meeting, university closed</i>

**Week 15 (April 21): Project Work**

<b>M</b>	TBD
<b>W</b>	TBD
<b>F</b>	TBD

**Week 16 (April 28): Final Presentations**

<b>M</b>	Student Presentations
<b>W</b>	Student Presentations
<b>F</b>	Student Presentations

**Final Work Due: May 9**