**Boston: Architecture and Urbanism**

Art and Art History (FAH 95/195) • Spring 2016 • Wed. 10:30-11:45 & Fri. 9-11:30
Daniel Abramson
Office Hours: Wednesdays 12-1:30, or by appointment
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This class presents a history of Boston from the seventeenth through the twenty-first centuries, as seen through the region’s architectural and urban history. Major buildings, architects, and urban planning schemes are examined primarily in terms of economic, political, social, and institutional histories, with a secondary focus on styles of architecture.

The course is structured thematically and chronologically with an emphasis on the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Different classes will examine various areas of the city and region – for example its parks, suburbs, and the Back Bay -- as well as expressions of stylistic trends – for example modernism and postmodernism. Each of these classes, combining lecture and discussion, requires close preparation of several readings, which will be tested with brief in-class writing assignments. (Missed in-class writing assignments are expected to be made up.)

Four other assignments offer different means to learn about Boston’s architectural and urban history. 1) A short paper (5-6 pages) reviewing the book Common Ground surveys broad social, urban, and historical issues related to Boston’s 1970s busing crisis. 2) A redesign project for Copley Square presents the opportunity to study and reconfigure one of Boston’s major public spaces. 3) A neighborhood survey, done in teams, involves visiting, studying, and photographing the architecture of one of the region’s distinctive locales. 4) The term project offers the opportunity to research an aspect of one’s choosing related to Boston’s architectural and urban history, from an individual building or architect, to a district or architectural style. Note that class presentations will be made in conjunction with the Copley Square, neighborhood survey, and term projects.

Students taking the course as FAH 195 will be required to produce a slightly larger term project, with preliminary outline, bibliography, and rough draft. All completed and graded class work can be picked up from the class box in the art history department office, 11 Talbot Ave.

Field trips constitute a significant, required part of the class. These are scheduled for Friday mornings. Six visits will be taken to Beacon Hill, Back Bay, West End/Government Center, the South End, MIT/Kendall Square, and Financial District/Kennedy Greenway. These trips offer opportunities to study Boston’s architecture first-hand, with examination focused on formal, thematic, and contextual aspects of individual buildings and urban ensembles. Field trips are scheduled for the following Fridays: February 5, February 12, March 11, March 18, April 8, and April 22. Attendance is required. On days of field trips, Professor Abramson can be reached at (781) 864-3098.
Requirements
Attendance and participation (15%): Every class
In-class writing (20%): Regularly (if absent, should be made up)
Common Ground essay (15%): Due Feb. 12
Copley Square redesign (15%): Presentations on February 24 and 26
Neighborhood survey (10%): Team presentations on March 16 and 30
Term project (25%): Presentations (5%), April 20 and 27
Final version (20%) due May 9

Note: A failing grade in any of these requirements may result in a failing grade for the course.

Texts (available at Tufts bookstore)
Lawrence W. Kennedy, Planning the City Upon A Hill: Boston Since 1630 (1994) (also on reserve)
J. Anthony Lukas, Common Ground (1986)
All other readings available on course Trunk site.

SCHEDULE

Week 1
Jan. 22 Introduction

Week 2
Jan. 27 Colonial Boston and Its Topography
Kennedy, pp. 11-21
Warden, "Inequality and Instability in Eighteenth-Century Boston: A Reappraisal" (excerpt)
Whitehill, Boston: A Topographical History (excerpt)
Jan. 29 Bulfinch and the Architecture of Oligarchy and Control
Kennedy, pp. 23-41
Goodman, "Ethics and Enterprise: The Values of a Boston Elite, 1800-1860"
Dickens, American Notes (excerpts)

Week 3
Feb. 3 Commerce and Expansion: South End and Back Bay
Kennedy, pp. 43-71
Handlin, Boston's Immigrants (excerpt)
Domosh, Invented Cities (excerpt)
Feb. 5 Trip to Beacon Hill
Lynch, The Image of the City (excerpt)
Horton and Horton, Black Bostonians (excerpt)
Cromwell, “The Black Presence in the West End of Boston, 1800-1864: A Demographic Map”
Week 4
Feb. 10  **Parks, Cemeteries, and Monuments**
Kennedy, pp. 65-108
O’Connell, pp. 89-96
Von Hoffman, *Local Attachments* (excerpt)
Olmsted, *Civilizing American Cities* (excerpts)

Feb. 12  **Trip to Back Bay**
Krieger and Green, “The Shaping of a Square: Copley Square”

**Common Ground**
*Short paper due*

Week 5
Feb. 17  **Culture, Education and Art**
DiMaggio, "Cultural entrepreneurship in nineteenth-century Boston"
Harris, "The Gilded Age Revisited: Boston and the Museum Movement"
Floyd, *Architectural Education and Boston* (excerpt)
O’Connell, pp. 17-24, 41-50

Feb. 19  *no class*

Week 6
Feb. 24  **Copley Square redesign project presentations**

Feb. 26  **Copley Square redesign project presentations**

Week 7
March 2  **Tradition and Modernity**
Kennedy, pp. 109-155
O’Connell, pp. 69-74, 79-82
Holleran, “Boston’s ‘Sacred Skyline’: From Prohibiting to Sculpting Skyscrapers, 1891-1928”
Shand-Tucci, *Built in Boston: City and Suburb, 1800-1950* (excerpt)
Bush-Brown, "Cram and Gropius: Traditionalism and Progressivism"

March 4  **Urban Renewal, Blockbusting, Mission Hill and the Miracle of Boston**
Kennedy, pp. 157-192
O’Connell, pp. 181-187
Fried, “Grief and Adaptation: The Impact of Relocation in Boston’s West End”
Lowell, "For the Union Dead"
Levine and Harmon, *Death of an American Jewish Community* (excerpts)

Week 8
Mar. 9  **Postmodern Boston**
Kennedy, pp. 193-245
O’Connell, pp. 188-191
Venturi, "Copley Square Competition"
Rawn, “The Waterfront: An Urban Pattern"
Mar. 11  *Trip to West End & Government Center*
    Miller and Morgan, "Boston After World War II"

Week 9
Mar. 16  **Neighborhood survey presentations**

Mar. 18  *Trip to South End*
    Kennedy, pp. 218-245
    Small, *Villa Victoria* (excerpts)
    Tissot, *Good Neighbors* (excerpts)
    Peirce and Guskind, *Breakthroughs* (excerpt)

Week 10
Mar. 30  **Neighborhood survey presentations**

Apr. 1  *no class*

Week 11
Apr. 6  **Big Dig and Contemporary Boston, 1990-2010**
    O'Connell, pp. 191-200
    *The Greening of Southie* (film)
    Goldberg, “Boston Leading a Renewal"
    Monti, *Engaging Strangers: Civil Rites, Civic Capitalism, and Public Order in Boston* (excerpt)
    Orlean, “Hooked on Boston: A Love Story”
    Seelye, “Two Decades of Change”
    Amelar, “Boston’s Institute of Contemporary Art”

Apr. 8  *Trip to MIT & Kendall Square*
    Hughes, "MIT Architecture and Values"

Week 12
Apr. 13  **Regional Boston**
    O’Connell, pp. 1-10, 135-163, 206-216

Apr. 15  *no class*

Week 13
Apr. 20  **Term project presentations**

Apr. 22  *Trip to Financial District & Greenway*

Week 14
Apr. 27  **Term project presentations**

Apr. 29  **Conclusion: 2010s**
    O’Connell, 253-259
    Chesto, "Shift from Suburbs to Cities"