“The home is not the one tame place in a world of adventure; it is the one wild place in a world of rules and set tasks.” (GK Chesterton, *What’s Wrong with the World*, 1956)

Course objectives:

This seminar explores changing ways architectural researchers have understood and explained domesticity, with particular emphasis on its architectural relation to gender, health, and body. This course differs from a seminar on housing or the history of domestic architecture in that it locates domesticity, meaning “domestic character; home life or privacy; homeliness,” inside and outside the home. According to Witold Rybczynski, “domesticity is a set of emotions, not a single attribute. Domesticity has to do with family, intimacy, and a devotion to the home, as well as with a sense of the house as embodying—not only harboring—these sentiments.”

Exploring the embodiment of domesticity outside the home in public institutions, for example, allows us to probe its power and meaning. Do we inhabit “domesti-cities”?

The overall intention of the course is to provide students with a solid background for further research, through familiarity with the major authors who have contributed to this sub-field of architectural history. A second goal is to encourage students to use primary sources in their research papers. Students are expected to read closely and critically, speak confidently about the readings and engage in weekly group discussions, and to write according to widely accepted scholarly standards.

Recommended Textbook:


Requirements:

- In-class book discussion (20): Perhaps paired with a classmate, each student will prepare and lead discussion about a significant book once during the course in cooperation with me. In the week preceding the respective session, we will meet to discuss the book and its significance. Suggested books are included in the schedule. Including book reviews or any other discourse inspired by the book’s publication is encouraged.

- Paper proposal (10): a 250-word abstract of your proposed paper. Due 13 Feb. The intention is to commit to a topic and get feedback.

- Paper presentation (20): ten-minute paper presentation during the last two weeks of the course. The intention is to share your work with other students.

- Paper (50): a major paper of 5000-7500 words exploring a domestic environment (not restricted to domestic architecture). The emphasis should be on the engagement of a

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1 *The People, Place, and Space Reader*, eds Jen Jack Gieseking and William Mangold, 155.
clear methodology and primary sources. Situate your work in the scholarship we discuss in class. Due 12 April.

Late Policy:

Grades for late work will be penalized at one grade level per day. For example, work graded as “A” but handed in one day late will receive an “A-“. Two days late would result in a “B+”.

Ethics:

Please note that all projects dealing with human subjects require ethics review and approval before research can begin. Consult http://www.mcgill.ca/research/researchers/compliance/human

McGill Policy Statements:

McGill University values academic integrity. Therefore, all students must understand the meaning and consequences of cheating, plagiarism and other academic offenses under the Code of Conduct and Disciplinary Procedures.
Schedule and required readings (subject to change)

Jan 9: First class

Jan 16: Separate spheres


Background readings:
Woolf, Virginia "A Room of One’s Own" in Rendell 25-28.


Jan 23: Not separate spheres/ "interiors"


Background readings:
Colomina, Beatriz “Interior,” Reader 251-55.
Friedan, Betty “The Problem that Has No Name” in Rendell 33-44.
Scott, Joan Wallach, “Gender: a useful category of historical analysis” in Rendell 74-87.
Lerup, Lars “Planned Assaults” in Reader 303-05.

Book discussion:  Dianne Harris, *How the Postwar House Constructed Race in America* or Beatriz Colomina, *Domesticity at War*

Wed Feb 1: Sexuality and space


Background readings:
Freud, Sigmund “The Uncanny,” in Reader 138-41.
Jung, Carl “Memories, Creams, Reflections,” in Reader 135-38.
Le Corbusier in “Towards a New Architecture” in Reader 300-02.

Book discussion: Richard Williams, Sex and Buildings or Sylvia Lavin, Form Follows Libido

Wed Feb 8: Masculine and queer domesticities

   Buildings & Landscapes 17, 1 (Spring 2010): 82-97


3. Potvin, John “The aesthetics of community: queer interiors and the desire for intimacy” in
   Rethinking the interior c. 1867-1896: aestheticism and arts and crafts ed Jason Edwards 
   and Imogen Hart, 169-84.

4. Sanders, Joel "Curtain wars: architects, decorators, and the twentieth-century domestic interior" 
   HDM 16 www.harvarddesignmagazine.org/issues/16/curtain-wars

Background readings:
Wagner, George “The Lair of the Bachelor,” in Reader 170-72.
Urbach, Henry “Closets, Clothes, disClosure” in Rendell 342-52.

Book discussion: Paula Lupkin Manhood Factories and Aaron Betsky Queer Space

Feb 13: Vernacular houses (special guest Prof. Robert Mellin)

Everybody reads: JB Jackson’s essay “The Westward Moving House” reproduced in 
https://placesjournal.org/article/the-westward-moving-house/

Peruse at least one book by the following individuals who changed the ways ordinary houses are 
understood. Our discussion will focus on Jackson and Glassie.

1. Cummings, Abbott Lowell

2. Glassie, Henry

3. Kniffen, Fred

Feb 20: Biographical traces

1. Adams, Annmarie and Cameron Macdonell, “Making Himself At Home: Cormier, Trudeau and 
   the Architecture of Domestic Masculinity,” Winterthur Portfolio 50 No 2/3  
   (Summer/Autumn 2016): 151-89.


3. Arnold, Dana Biographies and Space (intro or one chapter)

Background readings:
Heilbrun, Carolyn  *Writing a Woman’s Life* (intro)

Book discussion: Stratigakos, Despina *Hitler at Home* or Clare Cooper Marcus *Home as a Mirror of Self*

Mar 6: Literary houses

Read three chapters in Diana Fuss, *The Sense of an Interior: Four Writers and the Rooms that Shaped Them*

- Dickinson
- Freud
- Keller
- Proust

Book discussion: Philippa Tristram *Living Space in Fact and Fiction*

Mar 13: Household technologies


Book discussion: Elizabeth Cromley *The Food Axis* or Barbara Penner *The Bathroom*

Mar 20: Home as a site for aging and dying


Background readings:
In lieu of book discussion: watch the film, Away From Her

Mar 27: House types and room uses


Book discussion: Elizabeth Cromley *Alone Together* or Matthew Lasner *High Life*

Wed Mar 29 Homes beyond houses [possible field trip to Faculty Club or Law Reading Room]. Choose 3 of 5.


Book discussion: Abigail Van Slyck *Free for All* or *Manufactured Wilderness*

Apr 3 Student presentations

Apr 10 Student presentations