SYLLABUS
ARCH 554: HISTORIC SITE MANAGEMENT
Fall 2013 (3 units)
Tuesday 6:00 – 9:00 pm

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Overview
Why do some historic house museums thrive while others struggle from one crisis to the next? With nearly five decades of successful operation, the Gamble House in Pasadena will serve as the paradigm for understanding practical strategies to identify, develop and manage viable historic sites. Learning objectives will include: developing a mission statement, creating a business plan and budget, interpretative planning, understanding conservation issues and collections management, planning visitor infrastructure, planning funding strategies, developing a volunteer base, developing membership support, creating a public relations plan, launching retail sales, and other important operational concerns. This course, with class sessions taking place at the Gamble House (Pasadena) and other historic houses in the area as noted, will serve as an essential foundation for anyone pursuing historic site management or administration.

Primary Texts:


Prerequisite
Class participants will have taken Arch 549, or will have demonstrated to the degree-program director (Prof. Sandmeier) a basic understanding of historic site and preservation concepts.
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The course consists of weekly class meetings, either at The Gamble House or on campus (as noted herein), with discussion of assigned readings and topical lectures. All readings for the following class session will be distributed in class weekly and will be posted on Blackboard. There will be occasional (required) field trips and guest lecturers as noted.

While this syllabus is accurate as of the time of publication, speakers and readings are subject to revision as needed.

Assignments and Grades
Assignments will be distributed in class, and may be submitted by email or by hand as hard copies.

Class participation/weekly reading: 10% of final grade.
Attendance at class session is required, and all students are expected to participate actively and contribute to class discussion with relevant questions and thoughtful observations. Weekly readings are important to developing useful classroom discussions, and so constitute a critical part of the course. Students are expected to understand the main concepts and themes that are touched upon in the readings. Students are also encouraged to follow blog discussions as directed. This can be a valuable “fly on the wall” way to know what historic site managers around the country are thinking. Each week, readings will be posted on Blackboard, and each class will begin with a discussion of the readings.

Short paper #1: 20% of final grade.
Detailed information on this assignment will be distributed in Class #4 (September 17) and will be due at the beginning of Class #6 (October 1).

Mid-term: 20% of final grade.
Detailed information on the mid-term assignment will be distributed in Class #8 (October 15) and will be due at the beginning of Class #9 (October 22).

Short paper #2: 20% of final grade.
Detailed information on this assignment will be distributed in Class #11 (November 5) and will be due at the beginning of Class #13 (November 19).
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Take-Home Final Exam: 30% of final grade.
The final exam for the course will be take-home, the assignment for which will be
distributed in Class # 14 (November 26) and must be submitted by email no later than
Tuesday, December 17, at 9:00 p.m.

Logistics
Attendance: More than one unexcused absence will result in a failing grade for the class.
Medical or family emergencies are the only excuses acceptable for late assignments, make-up
exams, or the granting of incomplete grades.

Students may be excused for recognized religious holidays (per the University’s list at
http://www.usc.edu/programs/religious_life/calendar/). Any conflicts must be discussed
at the beginning of the semester so that the matter can be resolved before the withdraw
deadline if the conflict is not resolvable in an acceptable academic manner.

Any student requesting academic accommodations based on a disability is required to
register with Disability Services and Programs (DSP) each semester. A letter of verification
for approved accommodations can be obtained from DSP. Please be sure the letter is
delivered to me as early in the semester as possible. DPS is located in STU 301 and is open
8:30 a.m. to 5:00 p.m., Monday through Friday. The phone number for DSP is 213-740-0776.

USC seeks to maintain an optimal learning environment. General principles of academic
honesty include the concept of respect for the intellectual property of others, the
expectation that individual work will be submitted unless otherwise allowed by the
instructor, and the obligations both to protect one’s own academic work from misuse by
others as well as to avoid using another’s work as one’s own. All students are expected to
understand and abide by these principles. Scampus, the Student Guidebook, contains the
Student Conduct Code in Section 11.00, while the recommended sanctions are located in
Appendix A: http://www.usc.edu/dept/publications/SCAMPUS.gov/. Students will be
referred to the Office of Student Judicial Affairs and Community Standards for further
review, should there be any suspicion of academic dishonesty. The review process can be
found at: http://www.usc.edu/student-affairs/SJACS/.
Class Schedule

Tuesday, August 27, 2013 (Class #1)
Introduction: Tour of the Gamble House
This tour of the Gamble House will differ from a regular public tour—in length as well as in content—and will focus on how the site balances public access with conservation of its collection and architectural features. We’ll look behind the scenes at administrative offices and other areas of the house that are not typically accessible to tours.

Tuesday, September 3, 2013 (Class #2)
Co-stewardship: The Gamble House, USC and the City of Pasadena
In this session we will examine the Gamble House gift agreement of 1966, which lays out the distinct, legally binding roles of the University, the City of Pasadena, and the Gamble family in overseeing the quasi-public role of The Gamble House in the community.

Tuesday, September 10, 2013 (Class #3)
What is the “Right Stuff” for a Historic Site?
This session will take a critical look at attributes essential to the viability of a historic house museum. We will also identify potential flaws that can cause even the most promising historic sites to fail as institutions.

Tuesday, September 17, 2013 (Class #4)
“What Are We Doing Here, Anyway?”: The Importance of the Mission Statement
In this session we will study the importance of the institutional mission statement—why it is critical that it be broad enough to allow operational flexibility, yet focused enough to provide guidance when faced with important choices. Assignment distributed: Short paper #1 (The House as Museum)

Tuesday, September 24, 2013 (Class #5)
The Story
This session will look at interpretive strategies for developing engaging narratives that can bring a site to life and make the visitor feel connected to the story.

Tuesday, October 1, 2013 (Class #6)
Conservation and Collections Management
A curator’s perspective on how to care for a collection whose most valuable object is the house itself. Guest lecturer will be Anne E. Mallek, Curator, The Gamble House. Short Paper #1 due today.
Tuesday, October 8, 2013 (Class #7)
*Toward a Better Business Plan*
This session will examine economic and operational models that have proven to work well, and not so well, for historic sites. We will also cover ethical standards and best practices.

Tuesday, October 15, 2013 (Class #8)
*Time is Money: Developing a Volunteer Corps and Membership Base*
Most historic sites are not viable, or particularly interesting, without a solid volunteer and membership base. Volunteers bring fresh enthusiasm that staff may lose over time, and members provide financial support while enjoying the company of like-minded people.

Tuesday, October 22, 2013 (Class #9)
*Programming: Education Plans, Changing Exhibits, Flexible Spaces*
This session will be held at the R. M. Schindler House (1924-25), 835 North Kings Road, West Hollywood, and will be led by Kimberli Meyer, Executive Director of the MAK Center for Art and Architecture at the Schindler House.

Tuesday, October 29, 2013 (Class #10)
*Retail sales: “related income” options for historic sites*
This session will look at the retail potential of historic sites, not only in supplementing operational income but to extend the reach of a site’s ‘brand’ and image. To stimulate discussion we will visit the Gamble House Bookstore, adjacent to the main residence.

Tuesday, November 5, 2013 (Class #11)
*When Things Go Horribly Wrong: Emergency Procedures, Disaster Plans, and Security*
We’ll how to prepare for an emergency, and what to do during and after an incident, with focus on earthquake, fire, flood, theft and vandalism. Assignment distributed: Short paper #2 (Non-profit Solvency)

Tuesday, November 12, 2013 (Class #12)
*In My Backyard: A Modernist House in a Neighborhood Setting*
We’ll examine the Van der Leeuw (VDL) Research house designed in 1932 by Richard J. Neutra. After suffering a fire, the house was largely rebuilt beginning in 1963 by Neutra and his son, Dion, thus raising interesting issues around period(s) of significance, historic integrity, and interpretation. The preservation of the house is now overseen by Cal Poly Pomona’s College of Environmental Design. The session will be led by Sarah Lorenzen, chair of the Architecture Department at Cal Poly Pomona.
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Tuesday, November 19, 2013 (Class #13)
Getting the Word Out: Marketing in the Age of PinterFaceTwit
In this session we will examine the marketing role of websites, social media, blogs, media relations, and their inter-connectedness with programming and scholarship. Short paper #2 is due today.

Tuesday, November 26, 2013 (Class #14)
The Power of Passion: Why Even The Best Narratives Will Fail Without It
The most beautiful and noteworthy structure, the most gorgeous grounds, the most engaging story, and the best-funded endowment may not be enough to save the historic site that does not also have people with passion behind it, and in front of it, for that matter. What is this kind of passion, and how does an institution keep it alive? The final exam will be distributed today, and will be due (via email) on December 17 by 9:00 p.m.

Tuesday, December 3, 2013 (Class #15)
Forecasting The Needs of a Future Historic Site
In this last class session we will discuss the broader themes touched on in the course (stewardship of a site, its history and contents; programming; funding, etc.) as they apply to the promised gift to USC of an architecturally significant historic house still occupied by the donors. Class session to take place at the site, 5-minutes from the Gamble House.

Tuesday, December 10, 2013 (No Class—Study Week)

Tuesday, December 17, 2013 (Final Exam to be submitted by email by 9:00 p.m.)