

TEACHING
*Cultural
Heritage*
PRESERVATION

HISTORIC PRESERVATION
CULTURAL RESOURCE STEWARDSHIP
AND RELATED FIELDS

DEVELOPED BY
Coppin State University | Goucher College | Morgan State University | National Park Service

In cooperation with Participants in Curriculum Forum

A Course Outline

S E P T E M B E R 2 0 0 2



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WHAT IS

Cultural Heritage

PRESERVATION



“CULTURAL HERITAGE PRESERVATION” involves the preservation of the physical heritage of living societies, including their buildings, structures, sites, and communities. It includes the protection of landscapes that societies transformed through agricultural and industrial development. It embraces material culture, including artifacts, archives, and other tangible evidence. “Cultural heritage preservation” also encompasses the transmission of intangible aspects of a society, such as oral traditions, music, and community rituals.

Cultural heritage preservation may refer to protecting evidence of the distant past, such as the archeological sites where the Anasazi Indians of the American Southwest once lived. It also pertains to the preservation of recent history, such as places and oral histories associated with the civil rights movement in the United States. Cultural heritage preservation also may be applied to the recognition of the heritage of contemporary cultural groups, such as the Haitian American community of South Florida, the Asian American fishermen of the Gulf Coast, or the Narragansett Indian Tribe in Rhode Island.

When applied to a non-living society, cultural heritage preservation often involves caring for the material of the past such as archeological artifacts, rock carvings, or ruins. By preserving those artifacts, we gain insight into the culture of the groups that crafted them, how their societies functioned, and how they lived. When applied to living societies, cultural heritage preservation seeks to assist groups with retaining, understanding, and enjoying their cultural identity. In a sense, cultural heritage preservation keeps this material and intangible culture alive in our memory as a part of what has shaped us as a people, nation, and culture. ■



WHY WAS THIS

Course Outline

DEVELOPED





CULTURAL HERITAGE ACTIVITIES are occurring in thousands of communities across the nation. These activities range from efforts to preserve a historic municipal building, such as Central High School in Little Rock, Arkansas, to surveys of sites and descendent communities associated with historical events, such as the Japanese American Relocation Camps of World War II. Where once interest in these places and events was confined to small groups of activists, today their preservation is of interest to many Americans as a way to more fully understand their own and America's past.

Local, state, and the federal governments undertake many different types of preservation activities. These activities include identifying and documenting historic places, providing financial and other incentives for preservation, and educating the public about the benefits of preservation. In addition, national, state, and local private, non-profit organizations are involved in many types of preservation activities, including operating historic house museums and outdoor villages, working to revitalize historic urban neighborhoods, and developing historic sites as tourist attractions. Cultural groups work to preserve their heritage in various ways, through clubs, ethnic traditions, oral history, etc. Finally, and perhaps most importantly, hundreds of thousands of citizens are involved in preserving cultural heritage through owning historic places, volunteering for preservation organizations, preserving family records, and supporting politicians who value preservation.

Despite the great appeal of this subject to many people, minorities are not well represented as preservation professionals or activists. This lack of representation exists despite the fact that minorities have worked in their own way to preserve their cultural heritage. This may be due, in part, to the lack of diversity content in cultural heritage activities and the resultant inability of groups to see their interests represented in these activities. Official histories have contributed to this impression. In order to transform this field, diverse professionals must be attracted to it and diverse individuals must become involved in it.

This course outline for teaching cultural heritage preservation was developed to encourage post-secondary educational institutions to create undergraduate courses focusing on the preservation of minority cultural heritage or to incorporate parts of this material into appropriate existing courses. Although the course could be taught in any institution of higher education, it is intended for Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs), Hispanic Serving Institutions (HSIs), Asian American Studies programs, and Tribal Colleges. ■



This course has **THREE** primary purposes:

1

TO INTRODUCE STUDENTS TO THE FIELD OF CULTURAL HERITAGE PRESERVATION AND ENCOURAGE THEM TO DEVELOP WAYS TO APPLY CULTURAL HERITAGE PRESERVATION CONCEPTS AND METHODS TO THEIR OWN COMMUNITIES. THIS WILL HELP STUDENTS BETTER APPRECIATE THEIR OWN CULTURAL HERITAGE AND ITS ROLE IN THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE NATION.

2

TO INCREASE THE NUMBER OF DIVERSE INDIVIDUALS ENGAGED IN CULTURAL HERITAGE PRESERVATION WORK THROUGH THEIR CHOSEN PROFESSIONS SUCH AS ARCHITECTURE, ANTHROPOLOGY, LAW, TEACHING, OR COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT. THIS WILL HELP TO ENSURE THAT ALL CULTURAL GROUPS ARE ACTIVE PARTICIPANTS IN DEFINING, PRESERVING, AND INTERPRETING THE NATION'S CULTURAL HERITAGE.

3

TO INCREASE THE NUMBER OF PERSONS OF DIVERSE CULTURAL BACKGROUNDS INVOLVED DIRECTLY IN CULTURAL HERITAGE PRESERVATION AS PROFESSIONALS: AS HISTORIANS, CURATORS, HISTORICAL ARCHITECTS, OR HISTORICAL LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTS AS WELL AS IN ALLIED FIELDS, SUCH AS ANTHROPOLOGY, PUBLIC HISTORY, COMMUNITY PLANNING, AND ARCHIVAL WORK. THESE PROFESSIONALS WORK WITH FEDERAL GOVERNMENT PRESERVATION OFFICES, STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICES, LOCAL GOVERNMENT PRESERVATION OFFICES, TRIBAL PRESERVATION OFFICES, AND PRIVATE SECTOR ORGANIZATIONS. AN INCREASED NUMBER OF DIVERSE PROFESSIONALS WILL ALLOW THE FIELD TO MORE FULLY REFLECT THE DIVERSE AND MULTICULTURAL CHARACTER OF 21ST CENTURY AMERICA.

WHAT IS THIS

Model COURSE

?



THIS COURSE ALLOWS STUDENTS TO EXPLORE the preservation field in a manner that introduces them to basic concepts and the range of preservation activities. Introducing students at the undergraduate level to cultural heritage preservation is an essential first step toward engaging them in preservation as a meaningful part of their lives and encouraging them to consider a career in one of the cultural heritage preservation fields. The course also will underscore the reality that many cultural groups have worked to preserve their cultural heritage, but their work has been regarded as an activity separate from established historic preservation activities.

This course has been developed to provide a flexible model covering the principles and practices in the preservation field today. Educators who adopt this course should tailor it to the students being taught as well as to the academic discipline within which it is being offered. For example, if the course is taught in an architecture department in a Historically Black College or University, it may be appropriate to focus on the preservation, restoration, and revitalization of African American communities. If the course is being taught in a department of history or cultural studies in a Hispanic Serving Institution, it may be appropriate to focus on the preservation and interpretation of Hispanic American heritage in nearby communities. ■

This course in cultural heritage preservation is organized in three major units that embody major activities in the field.

UNIT ONE: *Place and Culture* focuses on how people of different cultures define and understand place and culture, why some places and cultural activities are considered historic, and where community interests may differ from established preservation practices. This unit is designed to help students understand and interpret historic places and cultural heritage activities.

UNIT TWO: *Power and Politics* examines the forces that have shaped our concepts of historic places and cultural heritage and how these concepts are being reshaped to reflect the diversity of 21st century America. Studying this unit will help students understand the factors that lead to different definitions of what is historic and worthy of preservation and how they can contribute to this dialogue.

UNIT THREE: *Process and Profession* explores how various processes and professions contribute to the preservation of cultural heritage. This unit includes the laws and regulations that govern preservation in the United States and discusses how various professions identify, document, preserve, and interpret historic places and cultural heritage.

Overview of Course AND Suggested Implementation Strategies

Each unit consists of Learning Objectives, Learning Activities, and Learning Resources. The Learning Objectives identify what students are expected to learn. Under each Learning Objective, a series of Learning Activities is suggested. These are intended to reinforce class discussions and readings associated with the Learning Objective as well as to bring students into contact with people involved in cultural heritage preservation work. In addition, each Learning Objective identifies relevant Learning Resources in the forms of printed readings and videotapes. Appendix I contains some Internet addresses that will lead educators and students to hundreds of sites related to cultural heritage preservation.

This course is designed to be taught over an academic quarter or semester, but it may be adapted to other time periods by condensing all three Units, using only one or two Units, or selectively using a few of the Learning Objectives. Educators may also wish to adapt it to a short course by focusing on only one Unit or one or two Learning Objectives. Educators may also wish to incorporate selected Units within an existing course.



This course has been designed to be compatible with a number of disciplines including history, cultural studies, American studies, architecture, and community planning, as well as others. Further, it is anticipated that the model course can be offered by a single department or by a number of departments as part of an interdisciplinary course.

While the course outlines specific subject matter, activities, and resources, it should be tailored to reflect the students' cultural heritage or heritages in the students' environments and communities. Local, state, and federal preservation agencies and organizations in the environs can be valuable resources for the identification of local, state, and regional cultural heritage activities. These agencies also may provide guest speakers to discuss their various programs. In addition, educators may want to contact local community development agencies, metropolitan planning departments, museums, cultural organizations, preservation organizations, and historical societies to help identify activities as well as to invite their staffs to participate in the course.

Developing opportunities for internships, practicums, mentoring programs, and other work experiences to provide students with greater insight into cultural heritage and historic preservation will enhance the course. Educators may want to contact the state historic preservation office, National Park Service headquarters and regional offices, nearby cultural sites, local non-profit preservation organizations, and house museums, as well as local architects, planners, and others specializing in cultural heritage preservation to determine if these opportunities exist or could be developed. ■