This course will investigate architectural and building practices as historical forms of cultural expression in order to a) place individual designs and structures into their broader social, economic, and environmental context and b) consider the need to preserve them as aspects of global cultural heritage. Students will investigate individual building traditions around the world as cultural landscapes and gain an initial foundation in preservation practice and theory in various international contexts, particularly as developed through UNESCO’s World Heritage programs. Weekly topics will include investigations of specific national or regional traditions, theories of urban development and preservation, and the role of existing built environments in contemporary sustainable development practice.

The course is intended to help students 1) gain knowledge of diverse design and preservation practices, 2) develop their abilities to analyze historic buildings, landscapes, and sites in terms of development patterns, cultural contexts, and cultural meaning, and 3) develop an understanding of key concepts from related fields that inform design and preservation practice, including archaeology/anthropology, architectural history, public policy, and urban planning.

The course will include presentations and discussions of diverse architectural and cultural traditions in each meeting. Students will make a weekly presentation on a reading of their choosing and will carry out a term project (which can combine documentary research with design practice) that presents a case study of a specific World Heritage-type site or issue.

This course meets the architectural history requirement for the MS Degree in Historic Preservation and the Specialization in Historic Preservation for the MArch Degree.

There are no pre-requisites for this course.