Special Topics in Art History:  
The Architecture and Urbanism of El Paso, 1659-1945

El Paso has one of the richest architectural patrimonies in the American Southwest. Various Native American tribes—such as the Manso, Suma and Apache—occupied the region for many centuries before the arrival of the Spaniards in 1500s. It was in 1659 that the colonizers established themselves at El Paso del Norte, at the point of intersection between the Camino Real and the Rio Grande, and began to convert the Natives to Catholicism and develop the surrounding area for agriculture. They founded a series of adobe mission churches along the river valley and in 1789 established a presidio at San Elizario, adapting the architectural traditions of the indigenous peoples for their own needs. In the eighteenth century, El Paso del Norte, today called Ciudad Juárez, was the largest population center along the northern frontier of the Viceroyalty of New Spain. The Mexican period (1821-1848) did not see any significant changes in terms of the architecture of the Borderlands region. In 1827, a wealthy merchant named Juan María Ponce de Léon crossed the Rio Grande and established the first permanent settlement in what is now El Paso—a an adobe ranch with a corral and several other outlying buildings. With the conclusion of the Mexican-American War in 1848 and the annexation of the vast region north of the Rio Grande to the United States, Ponce’s adobe ranch was converted into a military fort, which would become the first architectural nucleus of El Paso, incorporated as a city in 1873. The arrival of the railroads starting in 1881 led to a major population explosion as well as the importation of large quantities of brick, wood and cement for construction. The old adobe buildings of the Mexican and early-American periods were rapidly replaced by Victorian-style brick and wooden buildings, signifying the new Anglo presence in the area. By the 1930s the population of El Paso surpassed 100,000 and the city assumed the character of a modern metropolis. The firm Trost & Trost, established in El Paso in 1903, experimented with reinforced concrete, ushering in the era of the skyscraper and radically transforming the cityscape. In the decades leading up to World War II, several very talented architects—including Otto Thorman, Edward Kneezel and Mabel Welch, were designing buildings throughout the City. This course will focus on the architecture of El Paso from the Spanish Empire through 1945, and it will treat various architectural styles as well as the masterpieces of key local architects. There will be much discussion of the symbolic meaning of architectural types and designs.

INSTRUCTOR BIOGRAPHY

Dr. Grossman earned his B.A. in Art History and English at the University of California-Berkeley, and his M.A., M.Phil. and Ph.D. in Art History at Columbia University. After seven
years of residence in Tuscany, he completed his dissertation on the civic architecture, urbanism and iconography of the Sienese Republic in the Middle Ages and Early Renaissance. He served on the faculty of the School of Art and Design at San Jose State University in 2006-2009, taught art history for Stanford University in 2007-2009, and then joined the Department of Art at The University of Texas at El Paso, where he is Associate Professor of Art History. During summers he is Director of the Roma Aeterna study abroad program while he conducts research in Italy for his publications. He has presented papers and chaired sessions at conferences throughout the United States, including at the annual meeting of the Renaissance Society of America, and in Europe, at the biennial meetings of the European Architectural History Network. In May 2015, the Italian Art Society sponsored his triple session, “Civic Foundation Legends in Medieval Italian Art,” for the 50th International Congress on Medieval Studies in Kalamazoo, Michigan. The following October, he gave a lecture at Humanities West in San Francisco, “Italian Civic Palaces in the Age of the City Republics.” In April 2016, at the 62nd Annual Conference of the Renaissance Society of America in Boston, he presented his paper, “The Castle of Bracciano and the Advent of Artillery: Francesco di Giorgio Martini in Latium”; and in November, he chaired a session on medieval Florentine architecture at the Ladis Trecento Conference in New Orleans. In March 2017, he served as a discussant on a panel at the annual meeting of the Society for Applied Anthropology in Santa Fe. His article “A Case of Double Identity: The Public and Private Faces of the Palazzo Tolomei in Siena” was published in the Journal of the Society of Architectural Historians in March 2013. His conference paper “Sienese Fortifications in the Age of the Guelph Commune” was published in Investigating and Writing Architectural History: Subjects, Methodologies and Frontiers (Turin, Italy: Politecnico di Torino, 2014). His article “Saving Downtown: An Architectural Survey and National Register Nomination for El Paso, Texas” appeared in The Alliance Review in February 2017. His proposal for a co-edited volume entitled Condottieri and Courtly Culture in Renaissance Latium: The Orsini of Bracciano has just been published by Peter Lang (August 2019). His book, El Paso Architecture, which treats the architectural history of El Paso and the surrounding region from 1659 through 1945 is under contract with Arcadia Publishing and will be published in summer 2019. He has submitted a book proposal stemming from his doctoral thesis, the first synthetic treatment of the total architectural production of an Italian city-state, to Brepols Publishers and it is currently under review. At present, his research focuses on the political iconography of the Sienese commune, as manifest in painting, sculpture, architecture, coinage, seals and manuscripts. In addition, he is studying the development of the Italian civic palace, from its origins in the twelfth century through its final transformations in the quattrocento, with the aim of challenging and revising accepted paradigms while forming a new critical apparatus for interpreting the architecture and urbanism of medieval and Renaissance city-states. Off campus, Dr. Grossman served for several years as Vice-Chair of the El Paso County Historical Commission. He currently serves on the Board of Directors of Preservation Texas in Austin and on the Executive Board of The Trost Society, the only non-profit institution in West Texas focusing on historic preservation. He presides over the group’s Architectural Preservation Committee, whose mission is to formulate and implement strategies for protecting the architectural heritage of El Paso while promoting the economic development of the historic districts of both the City and County. Finally, he is the founder and Director of Operations of the El Paso History Alliance, a virtual cultural community with more than 62,000 followers.
STUDENT LEARNING OBJECTIVES

1. To acquire a deep appreciation for the built environment of El Paso and an understanding of the diverse historical, cultural and socio-political conditions of the city’s architectural development.

2. To master basic architectural terminology as it relates to El Paso and to attain the necessary analytical and critical skills for describing, dating and interpreting the city’s buildings.

3. To understand how architects communicated symbolic meaning and how their visions and aims evolved over time.

4. To improve one’s ability to respond to works of art both analytically and affectively, and to write clearly, concisely, coherently, and with grammatical correctness.

5. To build a solid intellectual foundation on which to expand one’s knowledge of art history in other specialized upper-division courses.

COURSE PREREQUISITES

There are no prerequisites for this course although completion of ARTH 1305 is recommended.

COVID-19 PROTOCOLS

When Faculty, Staff and Students are Required to Stay Home
All faculty, staff and students are required to STAY HOME if they:

(1) test positive COVID-19,
(2) are experiencing symptoms related to COVID-19, or
(3) were exposed to any individual who tested positive for COVID-19 within the last two weeks.

The CDC defines an "exposed person” as anyone who has had close contact (less than 6 feet for 15 minutes or more) with someone who has tested positive for COVID-19. The close contact with a COVID-19 positive individual must also have occurred within a specific window: 2 days before the COVID-19 positive individual’s first positive test and until that same individual meets the criteria for discontinuing home isolation.

When Faculty, Staff and Students Must Self-Report
All faculty, staff and students must REPORT if they:

(1) test positive COVID-19,
(2) are experiencing symptoms related to COVID-19, or
(3) were exposed to any individual who tested positive for COVID-19 within the last two weeks.

The CDC defines an "exposed person" as anyone who has had close contact (less than 6 feet for 15 minutes or more) with someone who has tested positive for COVID-19. The close contact with a COVID-19 positive individual must also have occurred within a specific window: 2 days before the COVID-19 positive individual’s first positive test and until that same individual meets the criteria for discontinuing home isolation.

**How to Self-Report**
To make sure reports are tracked accurately, self-reports must be made to screening.utep.edu. Self-reporting will allow the University to provide guidance on how to prevent exposure to others, and provide the criteria and procedures required for returning to campus when appropriate. Information will be safeguarded and used only for supporting you and determining exposure of other faculty, staff and students.

**What Faculty, Staff and Students Must Do Before Coming to Campus**
The web link, [http://www.screening.utep.edu](http://www.screening.utep.edu), which can be saved to a home screen on Apple or Android devices, includes daily screening questions.

All faculty, staff and students will use this link each day before coming to the UTEP campus. Upon completion of the daily screening questions, the page will tell them whether they are clear to proceed to campus or not. Using this tool will automatically send an email to your supervisor letting them know that you are or are not coming to work. If you report COVID-19 symptoms, the system also automatically reports to UTEP Environment, Health & Safety who will reach out to you directly with further instructions.

Faculty, staff and student should comply with these instructions and any subsequent guidance that may be provided by Environmental Health & Safety (EH&S), Human Resources, the Dean of Students, or other university officials.

**What to do when on Campus**
*Each of us helps to build our collective commitment to use best health practices all the time.*
Getting the basics right is the most important thing each of us can do to protect ourselves and each other.

It is everyone’s responsibility to help keep our campus safe by following best practices when on campus, especially faculty, staff, and student leaders who are important role models. All faculty, staff, and students are required to

- Wear face coverings when in common areas of campus or when others are present,
- Maintain a minimum separation of six (6) feet between yourself and others, when possible, and arrange spaces to make this possible in almost all circumstances,
- Adhere to room/space limitations on number of occupants, and
- Wash hands frequently.
**Syllabus Statement Regarding COVID-19 Accommodations:**
Students who use the screening application to report a positive COVID test, exposure or symptoms will not be allowed on campus and may need accommodations. If this occurs, you should contact your instructor as soon as possible so necessary accommodations can be made. If necessary please contact the Dean of Students’ Office and the Center for Accommodation and Support Services (CASS), to help provide reasonable accommodations.

**Compliance**
Because everyone’s cooperation is needed to help prevent the spread of disease, repeated refusal to comply with this policy will be referred to the appropriate University official (Provost for faculty, Human Resources for staff, and Dean of Students for students) and may result in disciplinary action.

**APPOINTMENTS WITH INSTRUCTOR**
The instructor will be available to meet with students online by appointment and can best be reached via his email address: megrossman@utep.edu.

**COURSE FORMAT AND GRADING**
All lectures will be delivered in Education Building 110 or at sites in El Paso County. In addition to completing regular readings, students will be expected to participate in class, complete a weekly short writing assignment, take a midterm, and take a cumulative final examination. The final grade will be determined as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Component</th>
<th>Weight</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Attendance</td>
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<tr>
<td>Participation</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Short assignment 1</td>
<td>5%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Short assignment 2</td>
<td>5%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Short assignment 3</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Short assignment 4</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Midterm #1</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Final examination</td>
<td>30%</td>
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</tbody>
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Make-up examinations will only be permitted following a documented emergency or illness. Assignments must be submitted at the start of class on the due date or will not be accepted. Unexcused failure to submit an assignment on time or to show up for an exam will automatically result in a grade of 0% (F). There will be no extra-credit assignments. All grades will be calculated as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Percentage</th>
<th>Grade</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>94-100%</td>
<td>A</td>
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<tr>
<td>90-93%</td>
<td>A-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>87-89%</td>
<td>B+</td>
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<tr>
<td>84-86%</td>
<td>B</td>
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<tr>
<td>74-76%</td>
<td>C</td>
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<tr>
<td>70-73%</td>
<td>C-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>67-69%</td>
<td>D+</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>64-66%</td>
<td>D</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>60-63%</td>
<td>D-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&lt;60%</td>
<td>F</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Those students who will earn a failing grade (F) in the course no matter how well they perform on the final examination will not be permitted to take the final examination and will be assigned a failing grade (F) for the course.

**CLASS ATTENDANCE AND BEHAVIOR**

Attendance at all class meetings is absolutely mandatory as well as essential for success in this course since a substantial portion of the material on the tests and final examination will be discussed only in lectures and will not be available in the assigned readings. Students who do not plan to attend every single lecture (punctually) are advised to drop the course immediately and re-register in the future when perfect attendance will not be an issue. Role will be taken at the start of every class. Students are required to attend on time, refrain from talking, eating, chewing gum, sleeping, and using electronic devices; and they must remain for the duration of the lecture. For the on-site classes, they are expected to arrive at the appointed locations by 9:20am. The following rules must be observed:

1. Students who arrive late must notify the instructor via email immediately. Attending a lecture 30 minutes late or more will be counted as an absence.

2. If a student must leave early and has a documented excuse, the instructor must be informed before the start of class via email; otherwise the student will be marked as absent. Only serious illness or an actual emergency are legitimate excuses.

3. In the event of an excusable absence requiring missing an entire lecture, the instructor must be notified via email within 24 hours and written documentation of the absence must be sent to him within one week.

Each unexcused absence will result in a 2% reduction of the final grade. Each late login will be counted as half an unexcused absence and thus result in a 1% reduction of the final grade. Five unexcused absences will automatically result in a failing grade (F) for the course. Two unexcused absences between the first class and Census Day (June 8) will result in an automatic and permanent drop from the course.

Any student who engages in disrespectful behavior may be expelled from the class and marked as absent. In the event of a second offense, that student may be permanently dropped from the course and assigned a final course grade of “F”.

**ADDING, DROPPING, WITHDRAWALS, PASS/FAIL, INCOMPLETES**

Students are responsible for understanding the policies and procedures about adding and dropping, and for withdrawing from the course in a timely manner if it becomes necessary. Students are responsible for understanding that June 24 is the last day to drop the course. See http://catalog.utep.edu/undergrad/welcome-to-utep/academic-calendar/. An incomplete grade (I) can be assigned at the discretion of the instructor and approval of the department chair; but in
order to be granted an “Incomplete”, the student must be passing the course and encountering a legitimate emergency beyond his/her control that requires extra time to complete the coursework.

**ELECTRONIC DEVICES AND NOTE-TAKING**

The use of cellphones and other electronic devices (including recording devices) are prohibited during class. It is important that students focus their attention on the lectures without distractions and that they take careful and detailed notes. Students should write down and memorize key terms, phrases and dates.

**BLACKBOARD**

All files posted on Blackboard are the intellectual property of the instructor and may only be used for Art History 3399, except with his written consent. These include but are not limited to:

1) The course syllabus.

2) A study sheet listing key artworks in the order in which they appear in the course. This will be updated regularly.

3) PowerPoint lecture files.

**RECOMMENDED BOOKS**


**THE UTEP LIBRARY AND COURSE RESERVE SHELF**

The university’s main library is an invaluable resource and contains many relevant books and periodicals. Students are welcome to contact the library staff for assistance with research.
POLICY ON ACADEMIC INTEGRITY AND SCHOLASTIC DISHONESTY

Cheating, plagiarism or collusion on any assignment or test will be reported to the Dean of Students and may result in a failing grade for the course and/or other disciplinary action. All papers must be original to the course (with no recycling of work from another class), meet all the requirements of the assignment, and properly cite all sources, including from the internet. Most importantly, all direct citations must be set in quotations and footnoted. See the UTEP policy on academic integrity and scholastic dishonesty: https://www.utep.edu/student-affairs/osccr/student-conduct/academic-integrity.html

STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES

Reasonable accommodations will be made for students with limitations due to disabilities provided that they contact the Center for Accommodations and Support Services (CASS) and procure the proper documentation: https://www.utep.edu/student-affairs/cass/ (tel: 747-5148). Students with disabilities documented by CASS must notify the instructor within the first two weeks of class in order to inform him of any special needs. If particular accommodations are required for the tests and final examination, the instructor must be informed and presented with the appropriate CASS documentation at least ten days before each scheduled test or no accommodations will be permitted.

SEMINAR/GRADUATE CREDIT

Students who are taking this course as ARTH 4383 in order to satisfy the art history seminar requirement, or as ARTH 5390 or ARTH 5399 in order to earn graduate-level credit, will be assigned additional readings, additional assignments, and a research paper (12-15 pages for ARTH 4383 and 15-18 pages for ARTH 5390 or ARTH 5399). These students are expected to meet with the instructor regularly.

COURSE SYLLABUS

The readings are intended to complement the lectures. The instructor may announce modifications to the syllabus during the semester, with fair notice. It is expected that the reading assignments will be completed in a timely manner (by the class after they are assigned) in order that students are prepared for the corresponding lectures as well as the examinations. Each writing assignment will be assigned on a Thursday and must be completed by the following Monday.
WEEK ONE

June 6  Architectural History of El Paso (Education Bldg. 110)

“Indians, Missionaries, Soldiers and Settlers: History of the El Paso Valley,” Texas Beyond History,
https://www.texasbeyondhistory.net/paso/history.html

June 7  Architectural History of El Paso Paso (Education Bldg. 110)

Acosta, Palomo Acosta and Christopher Lang, “Adobe,” Handbook of Texas, Texas State Historical Association,
https://www.tshaonline.org/handbook/entries/adobe

Timmons, W. H., “El Paso, TX,” Handbook of Texas, Texas State Historical Association,
https://www.tshaonline.org/handbook/entries/el-paso-tx

June 8  The Spanish Missions and Presidios: meet at Presidio Church of San Elizario


June 9  Architectural styles Paso (Education Bldg. 110)


Writing assignment no. 1 due June 13, 9:20am. Convert to pdf and email to megrossman@utep.edu.
**WEEK TWO**

June 13  **Sunset Heights:** meet at 525 Corto Way at Yandell.


June 14  **Downtown El Paso:** meet in San Jacinto Plaza

El Paso Downtown National Register Historic District Nomination (Blackboard).

June 15  **Downtown El Paso:** meet in San Jacinto Plaza

Writing Assignment no. 2 due June 20, 9:20am. Convert to pdf and email to megrossman@utep.edu.

June 16  **Montana Avenue Historic District:** meet at corner of Ange and Montana.

“Historic Designations in Texas,” Texas Historical Commission, [https://www.thc.texas.gov/designations](https://www.thc.texas.gov/designations). Click and read all of “National Register of Historic Places,” “Recorded Texas Historical Landmarks,” and “State Antiquities Landmarks.”


**WEEK THREE**

June 20  **MIDTERM and UTEP campus architecture Paso (Education Bldg. 110)**

There will be an in-class presentation followed by a 90-minute campus tour.

Magoffin National Register Historic District Nomination, pp. 9-13, 40-52 (Blackboard).
June 21  **Magoffin Historic District:** meet at Magoffin home, 1120 Magoffin Ave.

“Chihuahuita, Texas,” Wikipedia,  
https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Chihuahuita,_Texas


“El Paso’s Chihuahuita and El Segundo Barrio Neighborhoods Named to National Trust’s 2016 11 Most Endangered List.” National Trust for Historic Preservation,  

June 22  **Chihuahuita:** meet at corner of Santa Fe and Montestruc.

Segundo Barrio National Register Historic District Nomination, pp. 13-23, 109-52 (Blackboard).

William J. Palmore, “From Passage to Place,” *Texas Architect*,  
https://magazine.texasarchitects.org/2020/07/09/from-passage-to-place/

June 23  **Segundo Barrio:** meet at El Paso St. and Paisano Dr., northwest corner.

Writing Assignment no. 3 due June 27, 9:20am. Convert to pdf and email to megrossman@utep.edu.

**WEEK FOUR**

June 27  **Segundo Barrio:** meet at Sacred Heart Church, 602 S. Oregon St.


June 28  **Union Plaza District:** meet at corner of Overland and Leon.


June 29  **Kern Place:** meet at corner of Cincinnati and Kern Dr.


Writing Assignment no. 4 due July 1, 9:20am. Convert to pdf and email to megrossman@utep.edu.

June 30  **Manhattan Heights:** meet at Memorial Park

**WEEK FIVE**

July 1  **FINAL EXAM:** 10:00am-12:45pm Paso (Education Bldg. 110)