

## GE/ID 335: Sociocultural Aspects of Design

Inst.: Richard Bordner

Off. Hrs: MWF 10-12, TR 11:30-1 or by app't. (BehSci Bldg 114)

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Texts: Ames, Kenneth 1992. Death in the Dining Room & Other Tales of Victorian Culture.

Chicago: Temple Univ. Press.

Cieraad, Irene (ed). At Home: An Anthropology of Domestic Space. Syracuse: Syracuse Univ. Press.

Tai, Sherman. 1998. Principles of Feng Shui. Singapore: Asiapac Books.

Course Description: The purpose of this course is to provide students with a background in cross-cultural aspects of both exterior and interior design. The main emphasis will be on the use of space and symbolism as forms of communication within a cultural and ritual context, often without the conscious understanding of the inhabitants. Areas of discussion will be: symbolic and cultural templates on residential layout; concepts of the home in different societies; geomantic/feng shui logic in exterior and interior layout in different cultures (specifically Hawai'i, Japan and China); and cultural aspects to interior design both in layout and furnishings. The major areas of regional emphasis from which examples will be taken from are the Americas (both pre-contact and Euroamerican), East Asia and the Pacific.

Course Objectives:

- 1) To increase your awareness of how pervasive cultural aspects of design, especially spatial and symbolic, are in most societies, including contemporary American society;
- 2) To sensitize you to the need to accommodate cultural logic in design decisions;
- 3) To develop a more comprehensive understanding of the basic logic underlying some geomantic systems and feng-shui principles and their application in design decisions;
- 4) To enhance the ability to "read" symbols and icons, both physical and spatial, and be able to interpret their meaning.

Grading:

- 1) Reaction Papers: There will be a series of 3 reaction papers required in response to issues raised in the readings and class discussions. Each paper will be from 4-6 pages **and must show analysis, critical review and synthesis on your part. I want to see that your mind is in action, not a book report.** These papers take the place of exams and must illustrate your comprehension of the class material, especially the readings. These will each count for 15% of the course grade (totaling 60% of the course grade).
- 2) Group Term Project: The group term project will consist of either a real-world or abstract design problem in which a number of cultural factors can be applied. I will provide the scenario and parameters. The paper will discuss both the cultural factors in question and the appropriate solutions in a realistic design setting. The submittal will be a final paper of 6-12 pages in length and a short in-class presentation (10 minutes). The paper will count for 30% of the course grade.
- 3) Attendance/Participation: Attendance is mandatory (university policy). Your participation is critical to the entire group getting any utility out of this class. Summary discussions are handled

in class lectures—the books are readings rather than textbooks, so you must read in advance and participate in discussions. Attendance and participation will count for 10% of the course grade.

Course Grades: Reaction Papers.....	60%(3)	A= 90-100	D= 60-69
Term Project.....	30%	B= 80-89	F= -60
Attend/Part.....	10%	C= 70-79	

*Catalog: Cross-cultural aspects of social space, both at the level of the community and within structures. Emphasis will be on the symbolic and contextual basis of design, especially in vernacular architecture.*

- Jan. 14: Introduction  
Ass: Read Cieraad ch. 1-3
- 16: Perception, reality and theory of explanation in the behavioral sciences and geog.
- 21: Theory, space and perception: How geographers look at space  
Ass: Read Rensel prologue-ch. 1, 5
- 23: The power and subliminals of culture, material culture, symbolism and icons  
Ass: Read Ames Intro-ch. 1, Cieraad ch. 8-9
- 28: E. Hall, proxemics and kinesics
- 30: Concepts, theory & intimidating terminology: anthropology, communications (proxemics)  
Ass: Read Rensel ch. 10, Cieraad ch. 4, 7, 10
- Feb. 4: Semiotic and architectonic analysis, ritual space and post-modern analysis  
Ass: Read Ames ch. 2, 5, conclusion
- 6: Native American & Euroamerican cultural landscapes 1800-2003  
Ass: Read Ames ch. 3-4
- 11: American cultural landscapes and icons: the New England town, Main Street U.S.A., and the Wild West
- 13: American artificial cultural landscapes-Waikiki, Disney and Las Vegas
- 18: Hawaiian cultural landscapes 1000-2000 a.d.  
Ass: Read Tai ch. 1-4, 9
- 20: Spatial & symbolic aspects of Asian societies—Chinese urban planning and feng shui
- 25: Feng shui implications in Chinese formal & vernacular architecture
- 27: Feng shui principles in Chinese interior space use and application
- 4: Japanese perception and the application of feng shui principles
- 6: Japanese interior spatial use and ritual space  
Ass: Read Rensel ch. 2, 4, 6-8
- 11: Moving to real old interiors—spatial concepts in past cultures
- 13: Interior space from proxemic & symbolic perspectives
- 18: Cultural, religious and moral logic in interior space
- 20: Community planning and geomancy in traditional Oceania  
Ass: Read Waialeale, Haleole xeroxes
- 24-28: SPRING BREAK
- April 1: Integrating Euroamerican concepts of design with Oceanic values  
Ass: Read Cieraad ch. 5-6, 11-12
- 3: Planning and Development—history and trends
- 8: Planning in Hawai`i
- 10: Contemporary planning issues on O`ahu
- 15: Community planning issues—values in space
- 17: Modern Ames analysis—the lawn as estate, the dinner table as ritual stage
- 22: Practical application of theory—feng shui and clients
- 24: Group work—case studies
- 29: Group work—final formulation
- May 1: Group work—final formulation/ summation
- 7: **Project paper due 12:45-2:45**