

Rethinking Home

The changing idea of "home" in America from the late 19th century to the present

Purpose: The purpose of this seminar is to examine how the inter-relationships of architectural design and societal changes help to create our concepts of "home."

Moderator:	Ellen Kosmer
Co-moderator:	Betsy Siersma
Date and Time:	Thursday morning, 9:30-11:30 10 weeks, starting September 27 (no class Nov. 8, Nov. 22)
Format:	Seminar
Location:	UMass Kinney Renaissance Studies Center, Amherst

Description: The word "home" evokes strong memories and emotions that go far beyond the dictionary definition "a place where one lives." How we think of home is shaped in part by the physical structure and design of the space we inhabit. Our dwellings help to define us. In this seminar we will begin our explorations in the crowded tenements of the late 19th century and through the decades that follow investigate ways in which residential architecture has both shaped and mirrored our lives.

Shifts in environmental resources, demographics and lifestyles have redefined who we are -- and how we want to live. Today, nuclear families account for 20% of America's households, and nearly 30% are single adults living alone, a growing phenomenon across all ages and incomes. The architectural response to these changes has been, for example, the creation of tiny houses, reuse of factories and unused commercial buildings into living spaces, and experimentation in the use of new building materials.

Role of participants: Participants will choose a subject from a list provided by the moderators, give a 30-minute presentation and lead a discussion. Participants will also do a simple design project. Possible topics: California Arts and Crafts, Wright's Usonian House, Levittown, Johnson's Glass House; Venturi's postmodern Vanna house; Mockbee's Rural Studio, and others.

Resources: There is no one book that is in print and is affordable that we can use as a text or resource for this seminar. The internet will have lots of information and images about the topic you select. A bibliography of resources that may be obtained at local libraries will be provided at the Preview.

About the Moderators: Ellen Kosmer is an artist and an art historian. Betsy Siersma was a curator and almost became an architect. Both have moderated a number of seminars.

Maximum number of participants: 15

Auditors accepted: yes, up to 2

Course # 18FRT