

**The Ohio State University
Freshman Seminar Program
Proposal Sheet**

Course Information.

1. Attach a sample syllabus that includes the following. Sample syllabi can be found at <http://freshmanseminars.osu.edu>.
 - a) The course goals,
 - b) A brief description of the content,
 - c) The distribution of meeting times,
 - d) A weekly topical outline,
 - e) A listing of assignments,
 - f) Grade assessment information (including whether the course will be graded by letter grades or Satisfactory/Unsatisfactory),
 - g) The required textbooks and/or reading list, and
 - h) The academic misconduct and disability services statements (sample statements can be found at <http://artsandsciences.osu.edu/currofc/resources.cfm>).

2. Attach a brief biographical paragraph that includes the current research interests, teaching awards and honors, and undergraduate courses taught by the participating instructor(s). The paragraph will be included in materials for first-year students.

Elizabeth Hewitt, Department of English

Proposer's Name(s) and Academic Unit(s)

Signature(s) of Proposer(s)

Hewitt.33@osu.edu

E-mail Address(es) of Proposer(s)

2-1153

Contact Phone Number

March 29, 2006

Date of Submission

Signature(s) of Head(s) of Academic Unit(s)

Please indicate how many quarters you would like to offer the seminar and which quarters: ____ AU ____ WI ____ SP

I would like to offer the course 1 quarter and I would be able to offer it in any of the quarters of 2006-2007

This request form and the attachments should be mailed to the Program Coordinator, Rod Romesburg, 105F Brown Hall, 190 West 17th Avenue, or e-mailed to Rod Romesburg at romesburg.2@osu.edu. For additional information, please call 292-6248.

Model Homes: the Cultural Work of American Houses

Professor Elizabeth Hewitt

Department of English

Course Credits: 2

Course Description and Goals:

This seminar will study the ways in which the idealization of homeownership and private property have been essential to our understanding of the model citizen living “the American Dream.” Why is success to be found in good housekeeping and private home ownership? How can looking at a history of houses and domestic architecture (and especially their representations in literary texts) allow us to make sense of this version of the American success story? The seminar will offer students the opportunity to engage in reading and research in a variety of disciplines (literature, material culture, history, sociology, political science) and we will consider how literature (fiction and films) have been used to convince readers that private space is the essence of good citizenship even as they also critique and undermine this same claim. The major assignment of the course will be an opportunity for the students to play history detectives and offer a reading of either a domestic object in their home or a reading of the domestic architecture (interior design) of their chosen home. The course will therefore also introduce students to the tools (and pleasures) of research in the humanities: I will introduce students to basic research skills (like searching for books and book chapters with OSCAR), as well as more advanced research, especially focused on using the extensive OSU online resources (both bibliographical and full-text databases), the Knowlton School of Architecture’s digital library, the Library of Congress’s American Memory project, and the resources of the Ohio Historical Society. We will also learn how to find and evaluate bibliographical references, online sites, and journal essays.

The American Dream House and American Slavery

Week 1: Introduction

Week 2: Reading: selections from Catherine Beecher’s The American Woman’s Home (approximately 20 pages).

Week 3: Reading: selections from Harriet Jacobs’s Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl (packet); selections from Uncle Tom’s Cabin (approximately 40 pages)

Week 4: Field trip to Kelton House (Columbus Ohio)

American Immigration and American Slums

Week 5: Stephen Crane, “Maggie: A Girl of the Streets” (approximately 50 pages)

Week 6: Jacob Riis, How the Other Half Lives (selections, approximately 40 pages)

Week 7: Anzia Yezierska, selected stories from Hungry Hearts (approximately 40 pages)

American Suburbia and the Management of Privacy

Week 8: Mr. Blandings Builds his Dreamhouse (dir. H.D. Potter, 1948), and selections from Dolores Hayden, Building Suburbia : Green Fields and Urban Growth, 1820-2000 (30 pages)

Week 9: Candyman (dir. Bernard Rose, 1992), and selections from Andrew Wiese, Places of Their Own: African American Suburbanization in the Twentieth Century (30 pages)

Week 10: Conclusions and sharing final projects

Texts:

Course reader packet

Jacob Riis, How the Other Half Lives

Dolores Hayden, Building Suburbia

Course Policies:

Attendance. This will be a seminar that requires active participation as we work through texts. Consequentially, I require that students attend all class meetings and read the assigned texts.

Response journal. Students should write responses to the assigned texts – these need not be formal responses, but rather an opportunity to record thoughts, impressions, possible ideas for further enquiry. I will collect these responses at the end of the quarter.

Final Project. The final project will be an opportunity to do interdisciplinary historical research on either a domestic object or domestic architecture. Students will choose an object (like a particular household appliance, or wallpaper pattern, or piece of furniture) or choose an entire house (preferably a house they have lived in) and using both primary and secondary research will offer an analysis of the cultural, economic, and aesthetic significance of this object/domicile. The project will combine historical analysis (a consideration of the ways in which the object or house reflects the era in which it was produced); architectural and art criticism (how does the object's design reflect larger cultural trends, and what do these cultural trends say about American identity more largely?); sociological analysis (what can we say, for example, about the importance of women's work in looking at the location of the kitchen?) Our reading focus on literary texts will allow students to see the degrees to which literature attends to the construction and management of household objects, and it will also give them exposure to 3 crucial historical moments in American domestic management. The final project will be approximately 6 pages long (not including applicable pictures and photographs). Throughout the quarter, I will introduce students to research that will all be aimed at this final project.

Grading. Grading will be letter grades and will be based on the following: 40% on attendance and classroom participation; 30% response journals; and 30% final project.

Plagiarism. As defined by University Rule 3335-31-02, plagiarism is the representation of another person's work or ideas as one's own; it includes the unacknowledged word for word use and/or paraphrasing of another person's work, and/or the inappropriate unacknowledged use of another person's ideas. All cases of suspected plagiarism, in

accordance with university rules, will be reported to the Committee on Academic Misconduct.

Students with Disabilities. Students who feel s/he may need an accommodation for a disability should contact me. Ohio State's **Office for Disability Services** (150 Pomerene Hall, 614-292-3307, TDD292-0901) will work with you and me to coordinate reasonable accommodations for documented disabilities.

Elizabeth Hewitt

Biographical Statement

I am an Associate Professor in the Department of English, and both my research and teaching focus is in antebellum American literature (including literature from the 17th-19th centuries). I have taught at The Ohio State University since 1999 (before that I was a professor at Grinnell College and Hamilton College). I have taught courses in American and African American literary history (English 290, 550, 551, and 552, H590.08), film and literature (English 578.02), women's literature (English 592), and analytic writing (English H110L, 398, and H398).

My first book was entitled Correspondence and American Literature, 1785-1865 (Cambridge University Press, 2004) and was about the centrality of letter writing to the development of American literature in the first 70 years of the nation. I am currently working on a study of the importance of money and economic exchange to the understanding of authorship and fictional narrative in 19th century American literature. My interest in political economy is also central to the topic of this course, which will consider the ways that the development and production of houses (and the things inside houses) not only require money, but also were depicted as themselves crucial to the idealization of self-possession on which modern capitalism was based.