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**instructor:** Louis P. Nelson  
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## **ARH 556: Falmouth Field School in Historic Preservation**

**July 17 to August 7, 2005**

**Louis P. Nelson, Assistant Professor of Architectural History**

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**3 credit hours—undergraduate or graduate**

The Falmouth Field School in Historic Preservation is a three-week, three-credit program in applied historic preservation held on-site in Falmouth, Jamaica. Designed for advanced undergraduate and graduate students, the field school engages many aspects of the practice of preservation in the culturally diverse and economically complex context of the Caribbean. Students will learn a variety of skills, ranging from the conservation of historic brick masonry and timber framing, to recording threatened buildings through detailed measured drawings, to including learn how to “read” the historic fabric of a building. Directed by Louis P. Nelson, of the School of Architecture at the University of Virginia, the field school will include lectures and field studies with Matthew Webster, Director of Architectural Restoration at Kenmore Plantation, and Edward Chappell, Director of Architectural Research at the Colonial Williamsburg Foundation, and other scholars and practitioners. In Falmouth, the field school is supported by the local efforts of Falmouth Heritage Renewal ([www.falmouthjamaica.org](http://www.falmouthjamaica.org)), a non-profit preservation organization with over a decade of experience in historic preservation in Falmouth. This year the Falmouth Field School will overlap an archaeological field school directed by Dr. Kit Wesler from Murray State University. The intentional simultaneity of the schools is intended to encourage an interdisciplinary learning environment. Not only will students from both schools be living together, but they will have the opportunity to work in the field for a day with teams from the other school and they will convene for joint lectures and evening events. Students will also have the opportunity to participate in optional field excursions on the two weekends to historic sites across the island, including New Seville, Good Hope Estate, Colbeck Castle, and Spanishtown ([www.jnht.com](http://www.jnht.com)). Students will be required to complete some preliminary reading in preservation field techniques and architectural conservation as well as some reading on the history of Jamaica.

The Field School is designed for advanced undergrads (3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> years) and graduate students from the School of Architecture. Applicants from other departments and other universities will also be considered. There are no course requirements but preference will be given to students who are enrolled in or who have completed ARH 555: Field Methods in Historic Preservation.

**Course Objectives:** Students enrolled in the field school will learn the fundamentals of reading, recording, and conserving historic vernacular buildings.

*Reading:* Course lectures and experience in the field will introduce students to the essentials of reading the historic fabric of a building. Using archaeological methods of investigation on historic buildings, through hands-on analysis of building form, stylistic details, and construction technology students will learn ways to use surviving fabric to interpret the history of a building and its relationship to the larger built environment.

*Recording:* Students will also learn field techniques in recording these same buildings through exacting existing conditions measured drawings executed to the standards of the Historic American Buildings Survey (HABS). The careful recording of buildings has a two-fold benefit. The production of measured drawings in the field often forces investigators to recognize previously overlooked evidence. But it also has the benefit of recording for posterity a built environment under constant threat of erosion. Students will learn skills essential to the detailed assessment of historic architecture by learning how to record and interpret buildings with little documentary record as a means to substantiate compelling histories. Upon their return to the University of Virginia, students will be expected to translate their field drawings into finished inked drawings, copies of which will be archived in Falmouth and loaded onto the website of Falmouth Heritage Renewal.

*Conserving:* The third course objective is exposure to the theories and practice of architectural conservation. Students will study the materials and practice the trades and techniques that were used to construct the town of Falmouth. Making lime putty, mixing mortar, and laying brick are just a few of the skills students will practice on site. These techniques will provide knowledge and understanding of the processes and materials central to a restoration project. Students will also use their field drawings to begin the process of material selection, project layout, project feasibility, and budget forecasting. Meetings with local preservation leaders, local craftsmen, and architectural historians will be arranged for feedback on all planning and architectural details.

**Student Evaluation:** Students will be evaluated in each of the three skills articulated in the course objectives. These evaluations will be based on the student's productivity and mastery of the skill by the final week of the course. Students will also receive grades for full participation in all activities and for the submission of the final drawings in the week following the field school. Students who do not submit those finished drawings by the beginning of the Fall term will not receive a grade for the course.

Participation:	20%
Reading:	20%
Recording:	20%
Conserving:	20%
Finished Drawings:	20%

All work will be pledged in the spirit of the Honor Code

**Faculty Bio:**

Mr. Nelson offers lecture classes and research seminars on American architecture to 1850, the Early South, and the Caribbean. His interest in the Colonial South has led him past the "sacred 13" colonies where his fieldwork in Jamaica and the Leeward Islands has resulted in some of the first systematic recording of eighteenth-century English architecture in the Caribbean. His first article on the subject focuses on Jamaica and will appear in *Perspectives in Vernacular Architecture X*.

**Readings:**

Students are expected to have read the following prior to their arrival in Falmouth:

Thomas Carter and Elizabeth Collins Cromley, *Invitation to Vernacular Architecture: A Guide to the Study of Ordinary Buildings and Landscapes* (Knoxville, University of Tennessee Press, 2005)

Martin E. Weaver, *Conserving Buildings: a Guide to Techniques and Materials* (New York: John Wiley, 1993)

“Timber Frame Joinery and Design Workbook” and “Historic American Timber Joinery” workbooks available at: <http://www.tfguild.org/>

Students will also need to have downloaded and read the following National Trust briefs:

Preservation Brief 1: Assessing Cleaning and Water-Repellent Treatments for Historic Masonry Buildings

Preservation Brief 2: Repointing Mortar Joints in Historic Masonry Buildings

Preservation Brief 4: Roofing for Historic Buildings

Preservation Brief 21: Repairing Historic Flat Plaster--Walls and Ceilings

**Schedule:**

July 15-16: Students arrive in Falmouth

July 17- 21: Essentials of Reading Architecture

Lecture topics:

Historic Timber Framing

Historic Brick and Stone Masonry

Historic Architectural Metals: Nails

July 22: Optional Field Trip to New Seville

July 23: Optional Field Trip to Spanishtown and Colbeck Castle

July 24 – 28: Recording Historic Architecture

Lecture Topics:

Field Measuring and Written Descriptions

Graphic Techniques and Photography

July 29: Optional Field Trip to New Seville

July 30: Optional Field Trip to Spanishtown and Colbeck Castle

July 31 – Aug 4: Conserving Historic Architecture

Lecture Topics:

Conserving Historic Timber Framing

Assessing Structural Failure

July 5, 6: Completion of field projects

July 7: Depart Falmouth

August 21: Due date for all final drawings

**Accommodations:**

Students will be housed in a newly renovated two-story stone building in the heart of downtown Falmouth. Built in the early nineteenth-century as a Masonic lodge, the building served for much of its life as a Baptist manse. The building has a large workshop on the first floor and a number of dormitory-style sleeping quarters on the upper floor. In the heart of the historic district, the building's location allows easy access to local markets and stores. Students will be provided with three meals a day, a breakfast, a packed lunch, and a hot supper. Students should be advised that these accommodations assume multiple students per room and although fans will be provided, these rooms are not air-conditioned.

**Work Schedule and Free Time:**

Each workday will begin at 8 am and students will be expected to remain on task until 5 pm. Students will receive an hour break for lunch. Evenings and weekends are student free times to enjoy Trelawney's beaches and other attractions. Of note are the natural wonders of Glistening Waters, only a ten-minute drive from Falmouth. The markets, beaches and other attractions of both Ocho Rios and Montego Bay are approximately one hour from Falmouth. Falmouth Heritage Renewal does not own any large vehicles, so students will be responsible for their own transportation to these sites in taxis or on Jamaica's public transportation system.

**Costs:**

The cost per student is \$2700 for in-state students and \$2850 for out-of-state students. This covers tuition, housing, and three meals a day—prepared Jamaican style—but does not include airfare to and from Jamaica nor the cost of the textbooks. Students will be advised about times of arrival into the airport at Montego Bay so that we can arrange transportation from Montego Bay to Falmouth. Those students who choose to arrive outside these times should be advised that negotiating transportation to Falmouth on their own can be a challenge.

**Applications:**

Applications for the Falmouth Field School will be accepted beginning November 15, 2005 at [www.studyabroad.virginia.edu](http://www.studyabroad.virginia.edu)