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**instructor:** L. Scott Philyaw  
**course title:** Early Southern History & Decorative Arts: The Southern  
Backcountry  
**institution:** MESDA/UNCG Summer Institute  
**date offered:** Summer, 2003

**stable URL:** [www.vafweb.org/resources/syllabi/philyaw1.pdf](http://www.vafweb.org/resources/syllabi/philyaw1.pdf)

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## **COURSE SYLLABUS**

### **MESDA/UNCG SUMMER INSTITUTE**

Early Southern History & Decorative Arts

The Southern Backcountry

June 22-July 18, 2003

### **Museum of Early Southern Decorative Arts & The University of North Carolina at Greensboro**

History 545: Southern History and Southern Material Culture in a Museum Context

#### **Visiting Scholar: L. Scott Philyaw**

Associate Professor of History

Western Carolina University

The 2003 MESDA/UNC-G Summer Institute will focus on the early southern backcountry from the time of settlement through approximately 1820. This intensive four-week course will include lectures, collection studies, and workshops by MESDA staff, guest presentations from a variety of scholars, lectures and presentations from me as the Visiting Scholar, and end-of-term presentations by each member of the class. You will also participate in study tours to relevant sites in North Carolina and Virginia.

#### **Course Objectives**

At the end of this course you will have an understanding of what life and culture was like in the early southern backcountry, how it changed over time, and why. You will also learn to identify the characteristics of backcountry material culture and be introduced to the proper care, handling, and display of objects. In blending these two goals, you will also learn how to use objects to interpret the past.

One of the greatest challenges of this course is for you, the student, to synthesize what you learn. Class discussions will help you pull things together, but you also need to do your part by asking questions and sharing your own observations. Many of our discussions and my class presentations will focus on synthesizing material culture and history of this region.

#### **Object Interpretation Exercise**

In comparison to the Chesapeake and Low Country (the summer institute's other focus regions), the Southern Backcountry included a greater variety of cultural and ethnic influences. Any backcountry object may have more than one cultural influence. For this exercise you will be assigned an object, or group of objects, that exhibit some degree of multicultural influences. You will evaluate each object and, in a short presentation, explain the extent that it represents cultural interactions. Additional details will be provided later.

## Research Project

Each student will complete a research project chosen from a list created by MESDA staff. These projects will give you the opportunity to fully immerse yourself in the research services of MESDA while also solving a real research problem.

NOTE: Given the intensive nature of the summer institute all students are strongly encouraged to complete one of the pre-selected topics. If you already have a well-defined project that requires work in the MESDA collections please speak with me about its suitability as a Research Project.

All research projects should integrate information presented in the workshops, lectures, and other course activities.

### There are five steps to your research project:

**Project proposal due** at 4:00 on Wednesday, June 25. In this two-paragraph paper you will introduce your topic, identify questions, and briefly outline your plan of action.

**Abstract and bibliography due at 5:00 on Tuesday, July 1.** This one-page paper will first identify what other scholars have written on your topic. You will then present your own thesis, connect your interpretation to earlier works, and briefly evaluate your sources.

**Penultimate draft due at 5:00, Monday, July 14.** You should strive for completeness while acknowledging that you will probably revise your paper in response my comments on your draft and the questions and comments of your colleagues during the presentations.

**20 minute presentation.** You should treat this as you would a conference presentation or a formal report. Use illustrations, rehearse, clearly state your thesis, and engage your audience. You should also link your topic with what we know of backcountry history and invite questions and/or conversation about your project.

**Final paper due.** This should be word-processed, double-spaced, and clearly written. You should include illustrations, proper citations, and a complete bibliography. Think of this essay as the first step toward publication!

### How your grade will be determined:

My evaluation of your performance will be based on class participation (not just how much you say, but what you say as well), a research project, and an interpretive exercise.

Class participation	25%
Research Project (Presentation and Paper)	50%
“Cultural Interaction” Assignment	25%

### Readings:

As Jonathan Prown notes, the southern backcountry was “a place of striking geographic” and “remarkable cultural contrasts.” (Prown, “The Backcountry,” 35) The articles, chapters, and books that follow are intended to introduce you to that diversity. Several of these essays focus explicitly on cultural interactions, while others examine the evolution of cultural artifacts and institutions. Items 1-3 and 5-9 are available through e-reserve at the Jackson Library of UNC-G. [From Ulster to Carolina](#) is available from the North Carolina Division of Archives and History (Phone: 919-733-7442) and through the MESDA Bookstore (336-721-7360). [Artisans of the North Carolina Backcountry](#) is available from the University of Kentucky Press and from the MESDA Bookstore. Both volumes should be available by order through most bookstores. Copies of all readings will also be available in the MESDA library.

NOTE: In addition to the following, other readings may be assigned to compliment specific presentations and discussions.

## REQUIRED READINGS

- Jonathan Prown, "The Backcountry," in Hurst and Prown, eds., in *Southern Furniture 1680-1830: The Colonial Williamsburg Collection*. (Williamsburg, Va., 1997), 35-46.
- Gregory Nobles, "Breaking into the Backcountry: New Approaches to the Early American Frontier," *William and Mary Quarterly*, 3d ser., 46(1989), 641-70.
- Warren Hofstra, "The Extention of His Majesties Dominions": The Virginia Backcountry and the Reconfiguration of Imperial Frontiers, in *The Journal of American History* (March 1998), Volume 84, No. 4.
- Blethen, Tyler and Curtis W. Wood Jr., *From Ulster to Carolina: the migration of the Scotch-Irish to Southwestern North Carolina*. revised edition. Raleigh: North Carolina Department of Cultural Resources, Division of Archives and History, 1998.
- Daniel B. Thorpe, "Taverns and Tavern Culture on the Southern Colonial Frontier: Rowan County, North Carolina, 1753-1776," in *Journal of Southern History*, (November 1996), 661-688.
- Jeffrey Crow, "The Whiskey Rebellion in North Carolina," in *North Carolina Historical Review* (January 1989), 1-28.
- John Michael Vlach, "International Encounters at the Crossroads of Clay: European, Asian and African Influences on Edgefield Pottery." in *Crossroads of Clay: The Southern Alkaline-Glazed Stoneware Tradition* (Columbia, South Carolina, McKissick Museum, 1990), 17-41.
- Johanna Miller Lewis, *Artisans in the North Carolina Backcountry* (University Press of Kentucky, 1995).
- Ann E. McCleary, "Forging a Regional Identity: Development of Rural Vernacular Architecture in the Central Shenandoah Valley, 1790-1850,) in Koons and Hofstra, eds., *After the Backcountry: Rural Life in the Great Valley of Virginia, 1800-1900* (Knoxville, Tenn., 2000), 92-110.
- Sarah H. Hill, "Weaving History: Cherokee Baskets from the Springplace Mission," in *William and Mary Quarterly* (January 1996), 115-136.

### Due Dates:

- |            |  |
|------------|--|
| June 24    | Readings: Prown, Nobles, and Hofstra.                              |
| June 25    | Research Project: Topic selected.                                  |
| June 26    | Reading: Blethen & Wood  |
| June 30    | Readings: Thorpe, Crow.  |
| July 1     | Reading: Vlach<br>Research Project: Abstract and Bibliography due. |
| July 2     | Reading: Lewis   |
| July 7     | Reading: McCleary  |
| July 14    | Reading: Hill<br>Research Project: Draft of Final Paper due.       |
| July 16-17 | Research Project: Presentations.                                   |
| July 18    | Research Project: Final Paper due.                                 |

# 2003 SUMMER INSTITUTE - SCHEDULE SUMMARY

2003 MESDA \ UNCG SUMMER INSTITUTE: Early Southern History & Decorative Arts  
The Southern Backcountry: June 22 - July 18, 2003  
HIS545: Southern History and Material Culture in a Museum Context

Museum of Early Southern Decorative Arts / Old Salem, Inc. / The University of North Carolina at Greensboro  
(All classes take place at MESDA, 924 South Main Street in Old Salem, unless otherwise noted or announced)

## SUNDAY, JUNE 22

2-5 pm Registration - Salem Academy, Main Building  
6:30 Opening Dinner at the Rondthaler-Gramley House On the campus of Salem College

## MONDAY, JUNE 23

9:00 Registration Continued MESDA  
9:30 Welcome and Orientation  
10:15 The Founding of MESDA  
10:45 Tour of the MESDA Collection  
1:30 Introduction to the MESDA Computer Resources: *Katie Schlee, Librarian and Curator of Research Collections / G. Rohrer, Manager of Information Systems*  
2:30 Tour of MESDA Research Facility, Library and Slide Library: *Martha Rowe, Director, Research Center / Jennifer Bower Manager of Photographic Resources / K. Schlee*  
4:00 Introduction to Summer Institute Research Projects - Collections/Education/Research Staffs  
7:00 Period Style and Terminology (optional): *S. Gant*

## TUESDAY, JUNE 24

### Readings:

Jonathan Prown, "The Backcountry," in Hurst and Prown, eds., *Southern Furniture, 1680-1830: The Colonial Williamsburg Collection* (Williamsburg, Va., 1997), 35-46.  
Gregory Nobles, "Breaking into the Backcountry: New Approaches to the Early American Frontier," *William and Mary Quarterly*, 3d ser., 46(1989), 641-70.  
Warren Hofstra, "The Extension of His Majesties Dominions": The Virginia Backcountry and the Reconfiguration of Imperial Frontiers, in *The Journal of American History* (March 1998), Volume 84, No. 4

9:00 Research Center Exploration: *M. Rowe, Research Center Staff*  
10:30 The Three Regions of the Early South: *Scott Philyaw, Visiting Scholar; Assistant Professor of History, Western Carolina University*  
2:00 Architecture of the North Carolina Piedmont: *Catherine Bishir, Senior Architectural Historian, Preservation North Carolina; Michael Southern, Research Historian, North Carolina State Historic Preservation Office*

Reading and Research: Research open until 7:30 p.m.

On Monday through Thursday (unless otherwise announced) the research center and library will be open until 7:30 p.m. A member of the museum staff will be in charge each evening. Always enter and leave through the office entrance after 5:00 p.m.

## WEDNESDAY, JUNE 25

### Research Project: Topic selected.

8:45 Collection Study I: Chesapeake Furniture: *Sally Gant* Meet in the Auditorium  
10:15 Survey: Decorative Arts of the Delaware River Valley: *Jack L. Lindsey ('80), Curator of American Decorative Arts, The Philadelphia Museum of Art*  
11:30 Survey: Furniture of the North Carolina Piedmont: *June Lucas, Education Associate, Coordinator of Special Programs, MESDA*  
12:30 Speakers' Lunch and Discussion  
*All institute participants are invited to join our guest speakers for lunch and a group discussion. You are welcome to bring your own lunch or sign up on the bulletin board for a box lunch (cost \$7.50 - drinks not included). Payment is by honor system - a box will be available at the front of the auditorium.*  
2:00 Workshop: Woods, Tools, and Technology: *Brian Coe, Director of Interpretive Projects and Fabrication, Old Salem*  
4:00 Research Project Selection Discussion  
Reading and research: Research area open until 7:30 p.m.

## THURSDAY, JUNE 26

### Reading:

Blethen, Tyler and Curtis W. Wood Jr., *From Ulster to Carolina: The Migration of the Scotch-Irish to Southwestern North Carolina*. Revised edition. Raleigh: North Carolina Department of Cultural Resources, Division of Archives and History, 1998.

- 8:45 Collection Study II: Low Country Furniture: *Rosemary Estes, MESDA Interpretive Staff*  
10:15 People of Faith: Religious Groups in the Southern Backcountry: *Robert Calhoun, Professor of History, UNCG*  
11:30 Community and Culture: The Scotch Irish in the Back Country: *Curtis Wood, Professor of History, Western Carolina University*  
12:30 Speakers' Lunch  
2:00 Introduction to research resources at UNCG: *Kathy Crowe, Head Reference Librarian, Jackson Library*  
Reading and Research: Research open until 7:30 p.m.

## FRIDAY, JUNE 27

- 8:45 Collection Study III: Piedmont North Carolina Furniture: *June Luca*  
10:30 The Moravian Archives: An Introduction to The Moravians: *C. Daniel Crews, Director, The Moravian Archives*  
Tour of the Moravian Archives  
1:30 Survey: Decorative Arts of the Moravians in North Carolina: *Johanna M. Brown, Director of Collections, Curator*  
3:00 Lecture: Through the eyes of Outsiders: the Southern Backcountry as seen by eastern elites.  
*S. Philyaw*  
Offices and research open until 5:00 p.m.

## THE WEEKEND:

No scheduled classes on the weekends; opportunities for excursions will be made known. Use Institute participant guest passes to visit as many of the.

The MESDA research room and library are open for research and reading during regular hours  
Saturday: 9:30 a.m. - 4:40 p.m. / Sunday: 1:30 p.m. - 4:30 p.m.

For use of the research areas on the weekend, **always enter through the front entrance, and sign in and out at the MESDA Lobby desk.** The back door will be locked, and it is *very important* that the staff know you are here and when you leave.

## SATURDAY, JUNE 28: EXPLORE THE BACKCOUNTRY

### OPTIONAL MORNING EXCURSION :

#### THE PIERCED GRAVESTONES OF DAVIDSON COUNTY.

Departure from Salem Academy at 9:30 a.m. Return by 12:30.

*Sign up on the bulletin board. We may need a couple of volunteers to drive their cars.*

## MONDAY, JUNE 30

### Readings:

Daniel B. Thorpe, "Taverns and Tavern Culture on the Southern Colonial Frontier: Rowan County, North Carolina, 1753-1776," in *Journal of Southern History*, (November 1996), 661-688.

Jeffrey Crow, "The Whiskey Rebellion in North Carolina," in *North Carolina Historical Review* (January 1989), 1-28.

- 8:45 Collection Study IV: Old Salem: The Tavern Museum: *J. Brown / P. Locklair*  
10:00 Discussion: Taverns in the Backcountry: *S. Philyaw*  
11:00 Survey: Artists Working in the Backcountry: *Sandra Hegstrom, MESDA Interpretive Staff*  
1:30 New Insights on the Moravian Settlements in Wachovia: *Michael O. Hartley, Archaeologist, Old Salem*  
Reading and research: Research area open until 7:30 p.m.

## TUESDAY, JULY 1

### Reading:

John Michael Vlach, "International Encounters at the Crossroads of Clay: European, Asian and African Influences on Edgefield Pottery," in *Crossroads of Clay: The Southern Alkaline-Glazed Stoneware Tradition* (Columbia, South Carolina, McKissick Museum, 1990), 17-41.

**Research Project:** Abstract and Bibliography due.

- 8:45 Collection Study VI: Ceramics. *Vieve Yarbrough-Richards, MESDA Interpretive Staff*  
10:15 Lecture: Thoughts on the Methods and Uses of Material Culture: *Barbara G. Carson, Professorial Lecturer, The George Washington University, The College of William and Mary*

- 11:30 Lecture: "Every one's table is furnished with the same dishes": A look at some aspects of plantation society in the southern Carolina Piedmont, 1785-1830: *Charles LeCount, Director, Historic Brattonsville*
- 12:30 Speakers' Lunch
- 1:30 Workshop: Approaches to Research: Back Country Lifeways: *Kay K. Moss, Adjunct Curator, Schiele Museum of Natural History, Gastonia, North Carolina*
- 3:00 Cultural Analysis Project Discussion  
Reading and research: Research area open until 7:30 p.m.

### WEDNESDAY, JULY 2

**Reading:**

Johanna Miller Lewis. *Artisans in the North Carolina Backcountry* (University Press of Kentucky, 1995).

**Research project:** Outlines due

- 8:45 Collection Study V: Paintings: *S. Hegstrom*
- 10:15 The Shenandoah Valley, Its People, and Material Culture: *Warren Hofstra, Professor of American History, Shenandoah University*
- 11:30 Advantageously Situated in Point of Land, Trade, and Manufacture": Germanic Artisans in the North Carolina Backcountry: *Johanna Miller Lewis, Chair and Professor, Department of History, University of Arkansas at Little Rock*
- 12:30 Speakers' Lunch
- 2:00 Survey: Textile Production in the Backcountry: *Paula Locklair, Vice President for MESDA and the Horton Center Museums*
- 3:00 Movement and Mobility: Migration in the Backcountry: *S. Philyaw*  
Reading and research: Research area open until 7:30 p.m.

### THURSDAY, JULY 3

- 8:45 Collection Study: Back Country Furniture II: *J. Brown*
- 10:15 Insights on Furniture and Gunsmithing in the Shenandoah Valley and Westward: *Wallace Gusler, Master Gunsmith, Furniture Historian, Williamsburg, Virginia*
- 12:00 Speaker's Luncheon
- 1:30 African Americans in Salem: Unveiling the Story: *Mel White, Director, African American Programs, Old Salem*  
Reading and research: Research area open until 7:30 p.m.

### FRIDAY, JULY 4

**No classes are scheduled for this day.**

- 8:30 a.m. Salem Square: Reading of the Declaration of Independence on the steps of Home Moravian Church
- 9:00 - 11:00 a.m. Institute participants, staff and guests are invited to brunch at the home of Sally Gant from 9:00 a.m. - Noon. Directions will be provided  
Research areas will be open from 9:30 - 4:45 p.m. Information on events in Old Salem on this day will be available.

### MONDAY, JULY 7

**Reading:**

Ann E. McCleary, "Forging a Regional Identity: Development of Rural Vernacular Architecture in the Central Shenandoah Valley, 1790-1850." in Koons and Hofstra, eds., *After the Backcountry: Rural Life in the Great Valley of Virginia, 1800-1900* (Knoxville, Tenn., 2000), 92-110.

- 8:45 Collection Study: Textiles. *Becky Minnix, MESDA Interpretive Staff*
- 10:15 Vernacular Architecture of the Shenandoah Valley: *Ann E. McCleary, Assistant Professor of American History, State University of West Georgia*
- 11:30 Moravian Architecture and its Environment in the North Carolina Piedmont. *John Larson, Vice President and Director of Restoration and Planning, Old Salem*
- 12:30 Speakers' Luncheon
- 3:00 Site Visit: Salem and Its Architecture: *John Larson* / walking tour of the architecture of Salem.  
Reading and research: Research area open until 7:30 p.m.

## TUESDAY JULY 8 - FRIDAY, JULY 11 - STUDY TRIPS

### TUESDAY , JULY 8: Study Trip to Randolph and Moore Counties

7:30 a.m. Departure from Salem Academy. We will stop for a quick breakfast on the way.

Private Collection: Mr. and Mrs. William Ivey

The North Carolina Pottery Center

Survey: Traditional Pottery of North Carolina: *Charles G. Zug, III, Professor, Department of English, Curriculum in Folklore, The University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill*

### WEDNESDAY, JULY 9 - FRIDAY, JULY 11: A journey to the Valley of Virginia.

Lodgings: Hampton Inn, Harrisonburg, Virginia - 540-432-1111

Departure from Salem Academy at 7:30 a.m. (stop for breakfast)

Survey: The Decorative Arts of the Great Road: *J. Roderick Moore, Director, The Blue Ridge Institute*

Private Collection: Roddy and Sally Moore

The Quilt Museum: Harrisonburg

Private Collection: Beverley and Jeff Evans

### THURSDAY, JULY 10 - Hagerstown Area

Host/lecturer: H. E. (Gene) Comstock

Survey: The Arts of the Shenandoah Valley: *H. E. Comstock, Author of Pottery of the Shenandoah Valley*

The Washington County Museum of Fine Art

The Miller House, Hagerstown

### FRIDAY, JULY 11: Visits to sites in the central Shenandoah Valley

Host/lecturer: *Gabrielle Lanier, Assistant Professor of History, James Madison University*

The Museum of American Frontier Culture

We will return to Winston-Salem in the evening, stopping for supper along the way.

## MONDAY, JULY 14

### Reading:

Sarah H. Hill, "Weaving History: Cherokee Baskets from the Springplace Mission," in *William and Mary Quarterly* (January 1996), 115-136.

**Research Project:** Draft of final paper due.

- 9:00 Collection Study: The Vierling House: *Brown/Locklair*  
Group Photograph: Meet at the entrance to the Gallery lobby, and walk to a selected outdoor site for our official group portrait.
- 11:00 Discussion: The Native American Influence on Back Country Culture: *S. Philyaw*
- 12:00 Speakers' Lunch
- 1:30 Lecture: The Photographers of Salem: *J. Bower*
- 2:30 Audiovisual Session : Do's and don'ts in using audio-visual aids for project presentations. Gant
- 3:00 Optional Workshop: Publishing in the Decorative Arts.  
Reading and research: Research area open until 7:30 p.m.

## TUESDAY, JULY 15

- 9:00 Collection Study: The John Vogler House. *Brown, Locklair*
- 10:30 The Art and Mystery of Tennessee Furniture: *Robert Hicks, Co-Curator: "Art of Tennessee"*
- 2:00 Optional workshop\*: Basic Principles of Object Photography: *Wes Stewart, Photographer.*  
Reading and Research / Research open until 7:30 p.m.  
Reading and research: Research area open until 7:30 p.m.

## WEDNESDAY, JULY 16

- 11:00 Final Discussion
- 1:30 Research Project Presentations  
A schedule will be posted on Monday, July 14 for sign-up.

## THURSDAY, JULY 17

- 9:30 Research Project Presentations
- 1:30 Research Project Presentations  
Concluding remarks.
- 6:30 Closing Dinner: At the home of Shannon and Paul Reber