

HISTORY AND THEORY

Keller Easterling and Eeva-Liisa Pelkonen, Study Area Coordinators

This study area explores the relationship between design, history, and theory through a broad range of courses in which the analysis of buildings, cities, landscapes, and texts supports the articulation and criticism of fundamental concepts, methods, and issues. Historical and contemporary projects and writings are studied in context and as part of the theoretical discourse of architecture.

For entering M.Arch. I students who have not had significant prior architectural training, the pre-first-year visualization course (ARCH 1000) includes a broad survey of Western architectural history to the nineteenth century. For all M.Arch. I students, there is a first-year required survey course of nineteenth- and twentieth-century architectural history (ARCH 3011) followed in the second term by a required course on architectural theory (ARCH 3012).

In addition, M.Arch. I students must satisfactorily complete one elective course from this study area that requires one or more research papers of at least 5,000 words. With the exception of courses in which a student elects to do a project in lieu of a research paper, or courses whose descriptions specifically indicate that they do not fulfill the History and Theory elective requirement, all elective courses in this study area fulfill this requirement. Provided a 5,000-word research paper is required, the elective courses ARCH 4222 and ARCH 4223 also fulfill this History and Theory elective requirement, although those listed from the Urbanism and Landscape study area cannot be used to satisfy both the History and Theory and the Urbanism and Landscape elective requirements.

For the M.Arch. II program, a sequence of two post-professional design research seminars is required (ARCH 3072, ARCH 3073). These focus on design as research and build to an individual project within a larger themed symposium in the final term of the program.

REQUIRED COURSES

[ARCH 3011, *Architecture and Modernity I: Sites and Spaces*]

(Required of first-year M.Arch. I students; available as an elective for M.Arch. II and M.E.D. students.) The course embraces the last century and a half's history of architecture, when traditional fables began to yield to more scientifically conceived ideas of architecture's role in the creation of civilizations. As architecture gained importance in advancing social and industrial agendas, it also built a basis for theoretical reflection and visionary aesthetics. The expanding print and media culture accelerated the migration of ideas and propelled architecture beyond its traditional confines. Discussion of major centers of urban culture and their characteristic buildings alternates with attention to individual concepts and their impact in an increasingly interconnected culture of design. 3 Course cr

ARCH 3012a, *Architecture and Modernity: Theories and Projects* Staff

(Required of first-year M.Arch. I and M.E.D. students; available as an elective for M.Arch. II students.) This course explores the history of Western architectural

theory, from 1750 to the present, through the close reading of primary texts. Lectures place the readings in the context of architectural history; the texts are discussed in required discussion sections. Topics include theories of origin, type and character, the picturesque, questions of style and ornament, standardization and functionalism, critiques of modernism, as well as more contemporary debates on historicism, technology, and environmentalism. 0 Course cr

ARCH 3072a, Design Research I: Cross-Disciplinary Perspectives Anthony Acciavatti (Required of and limited to first-year M.Arch. II students.) This introductory class familiarizes students with a new skill set: how to conduct applied design research seen through the lens of each of the research perspectives taught in the program. In the process, students begin to develop their own research questions. 3 Course cr

ARCH 3073a, Design Research II: Methods Workshop Jordan Carver and Ana Duran (Required of and limited to first-year M.Arch. II students.) This seminar requires students to explore an assigned theme based on urgent contemporary issues in architecture and urbanism, both through individual projects and as a group. Students also select thesis projects adjacent to the course theme to take into the subsequent post-professional seminar and post-professional design studio. 3 Course cr

[ARCH 3091, Methods and Research Workshop]

(Required of first-year M.E.D. students; available as an elective for M.Arch. I and M.Arch. II students with permission of instructor.) This course introduces students to methods of architectural writing and research, laying the groundwork for an advanced research project. By investigating various text genres, such as surveys, journalism, manifestos, scholarly essays, critical essays, and narratives, this course studies ways of writing about architecture, urbanism, and the environment. Recent debates concerning the relationship between architectural history and theory and the questions about disciplinary and interdisciplinary boundaries are explored. Working toward a substantial research paper requirement, students are introduced to hands-on research through a series of library and archival workshops. Limited enrollment. 3 Course cr

ARCH 3092a, Independent M.E.D. Research Keller Easterling (Required of and limited to M.E.D. students in each term; credits vary per term, determined in consultation with the director of M.E.D. Studies.) The proposal submitted with the admissions application is the basis for each student's study plan, which is developed in consultation with faculty advisers. Independent research is undertaken for credit each term, under the direction of a principal adviser, for preparation and completion of a written thesis. The thesis, which details and summarizes the independent research, is to be completed for approval by the M.E.D. committee by the end of the fourth term. 3 Course cr

ELECTIVE COURSES

ARCH 3105a, Designing Capital: Histories of Architecture and Accumulation David Sadighian
3 Course cr

ARCH 3106a, Circa 1600 Kishwar Rizvi
3 Course cr

ARCH 3107a, American Architecture and Urbanism Elihu Rubin

3 Course cr

ARCH 3108a, Domo Ludens: Modern Art and Architecture at Play Michael Schlabs

The notion of play occupies a special place in the history of modern art and architecture. Theorized in the 19th century by Friedrich Froebel as fundamental to the process by which children learn, play would form the basis of Froebel's kindergarten, now a model for early childhood education worldwide. The aesthetic intensity of Froebel's program would likewise contribute to a variety of radical educational projects in the 19th and 20th centuries, including the Bauhaus. Later, Johan Huizinga's seminal meditation on the "play element in culture," *Homo Ludens*, would provide an intellectual foundation for a number of 20th century aesthetic and political movements, among them the Situationist International. Finally, a generous focus on play has recently reemerged within the discourse on a range of 21st century art and design practices, characterized by a shared focus on participation and performativity, as in the work of Rirkrit Tiravanija and Lottie Child. This course, then, explores the place and problem of play in three ways: as a critical framework for understanding the aesthetic qualities of the human environment; as a mode of experience, giving meaning to that environment; and as a working method employed by artists and architects as a specific form of practice. 3 Course cr

ARCH 3240a, Spatial Concepts of Japan: Their Origins and Development in**Architecture and Urbanism** Yoko Kawai

The seminar explores the origins and developments of Japanese spatial concepts and surveys how they help form the contemporary architecture, ways of life, and cities of the country. Many Japanese spatial concepts, such as *ma*, are about creating time-space distances and relationship between objects, people, space, and experiences. These concepts go beyond the fabric of a built structure and encompass architecture, landscape, and city. Each class is designed around one or two Japanese words that signify particular design concepts. Each week, a lecture on the word(s) with its design features, backgrounds, historical examples, and contemporary application is followed by student discussion. Contemporary works studied include those by Maki, Isozaki, Ando, Ito, SANAA, and Fujimoto. The urbanism and landscape of Tokyo and Kyoto are discussed. Students are required to make in-class presentations and write a final paper. Limited enrollment. 3 Course cr

ARCH 3252a, Landscape, Film, Architecture Landscape, Film, Architecture**Landscape, Film, Architecture** Fatima Naqvi

Movement through post-1945 landscapes and cityscapes as a key to understanding them. The use of cameras and other visual-verbal means as a way to expand historical, aesthetic, and sociological inquiries into how these places are inhabited and experienced. Exploration of both real and imaginary spaces in works by filmmakers (Wenders, Herzog, Ottinger, Geyrhalter, Seidl, Ade, Grisebach), architects and sculptors (e.g. Rudofsky, Neutra, Abraham, Hollein, Pichler, Smithson, Wurm, Kienast), photographers (Sander, B. and H. Becher, Gursky, Höfer), and writers (Bachmann, Handke, Bernhard, Jelinek). Additional readings by Certeau, Freytag, J.B. Jackson, L. Burckhardt. 3 Course cr

ARCH 3267a, Semiotics Francesco Casetti

Digging into semiotics tradition, the seminar provides analytical tools for "close readings" of a vast array of objects and operations, from verbal texts to all sorts of

images, from cultural practices to all sorts of manipulation. Semiotics' foundational goal consisted in retracing how meaning emerges in these objects and operations, how it circulates within and between different cultural environments, and how it affects and is affected by the cultural contexts in which these objects and operations are embedded. To revamp semiotics' main tasks, after an introduction about the idea of "making meaning," the seminar engages students in a weekly discussion about situations, procedures, objects, and attributes that are "meaningful," in the double sense that they have meaning and they arrange reality in a meaningful way. Objects of analysis are intentionally disparate; the constant application of a set of analytical tools provides the coherence of the seminar. Students are expected to regularly attend the seminar, actively participate in discussions, propose new objects of analysis, present a case study (fifteen–twenty minutes), and write a final paper (max. 5,000 words). Enrollment limited to fifteen. *Also FILM 833*. Students from Film and Media Studies and the School of Architecture have priority: they are asked to express their choice by August 25. Students from other departments are asked to send the instructor up to ten lines with the reasons why they want to attend the seminar by August 26. The seminar is aimed at bolstering a dialogue that crosses cultures and disciplines. 3 Course cr

[ARCH 3290, Body Politics]

COVID-19 underscores how public health and environmental justice are intimately related. This seminar explores the urgent need for transdisciplinary teams representing design, science, and the humanities to create safe, hygienic, accessible, and inclusive spaces that accommodate all bodies, including people of different races, genders, religions, and abilities that fall out of the cultural mainstream. Through in-depth analysis of everyday spaces – homes, workplaces, hospitals, museums – we look at how the conventions of architecture, transmitted through building typologies, standards, and codes, have marginalized or excluded persons who fall outside white, masculine, heterosexual, able-bodied norms. After analyzing each of these sites in their cultural and historical context, students generate innovative design proposals that allow a spectrum of differently embodied and culturally identified people to productively mix in a post-pandemic world. Limited enrollment. 3 Course cr

[ARCH 3299, Independent Course Work]

Program to be determined with a faculty adviser of the student's choice and submitted, with the endorsement of the study area coordinator, to the Rules Committee for confirmation of the student's eligibility under the rules. (See the School's Academic Rules and Regulations.) 3 Course cr

[ARCH 3300, History, Historiography, Avant-Garde: Reading Manfredo Tafuri's *The Sphere and the Labyrinth*]

Is the concept of an avant-garde still viable in architecture today? Or should it be consigned to the dustbin of modernist ideas? When did the avant-garde originate and how should its history be written? Manfredo Tafuri's *The Sphere and the Labyrinth: Avant-Gardes and Architecture from Piranesi to the 1970s* was initially published in 1980. It remains the only sustained effort to define and historicize avant-garde theory and practice specifically in relation to architecture. The seminar undertakes a close reading of Tafuri's rich, rewarding, and difficult book, beginning with the challenging methodological introduction, "The Historical 'Project,'" and traversing a series of

critical episodes from the eighteenth century to the late twentieth. Open to Ph.D. students and others with a strong background in architectural history. 3 Course cr

ARCH 3301a, New York as Incubator of Twentieth-Century Urbanism: Four Urban Thinkers & the City They Envisioned Joan Ockman

The seminar is constructed as a debate among the ideas of four urban thinkers whose influential contributions to the discourse of the modern city were shaped by their divergent responses to New York City's urban and architectural development: Lewis Mumford (1895–1990), Robert Moses (1888–1981), Jane Jacobs (1916–2006), and Rem Koolhaas (1944–). In counterposing their respective arguments, the seminar addresses issues of civic representation and environmentalism, infrastructure development and urban renewal policy, community and complexity, and the role of architecture in the urban imaginary. The focus is twofold: on the contribution of the “urban intellectual” to the making of culture; and on New York's architectural and urban history. New York has been called the capital of the twentieth century. By reassessing the legacy and agency of these visionary thinkers, the seminar not only reflects on New York's evolution over the course of the last century but raises questions about the future of cities in the twenty-first century. A selection of historical and theoretical material complements seminal readings by the four protagonists. Each student is responsible for making two case-study presentations and producing a thematically related term paper. Limited enrollment. 3 Course cr

[ARCH 3302, Tall Tales]

Architecture is a body of fantastic lies. Speculative and projective, architectural production corrals, traffics in, and concocts imaginaries; its histories and theories are steeped in myth and regimes of mythmaking. This course provides space to interrogate the particular, ongoing, and mutating narratives, fictions, and myths perpetuated around the design, development, and material realization/ construction of high-rise residential towers from the turn of the century to the start of what has been referred to as the Reagan era, alongside the various political, financial, and social agendas that motivated their development. The course aims to nurture modes of recognition of “housing” as critical loci where architectural form, federal and state power, municipal interactions of zone (zoning envelope, building volume, and air rights), finance, body, law, rhetoric, aesthetics, real estate development, and conceptions of racial difference come into view. The course reckons with typology and the seeming difficulty with imagining subjects racialized as black holding a position up in the sky. 3 Course cr

ARCH 3303a, Urban Century Theorizing Global Urbanism Vyjayanthi Rao

From the beginning of the twentieth century to the present, urbanization has gradually come to dominate political, economic, social, and cultural landscapes of the contemporary world. To be urban was to be modern, and the development of modern social theory relied on using the city as its research laboratory. Two decades into the twenty-first century, features of urbanization such as density, resource extraction, environmental degradation, and intense social inequalities appear to be ubiquitous across different geopolitical conditions. This course presents students with a range of theories that attempt to make sense of the variegated and intersecting conditions that define contemporary urban localities. Building on the understanding offered by these theories, we conclude with an exploration of emerging positions, concepts, and

propositions that enable new ways of understanding the centrality of urbanism within a world dominated by uncertainty, speculation, and dystopia. 3 Course cr

[ARCH 3315, Challenging the Classical]

This course examines the problem of “the classical” in its contemporary context—not only as an exercise in the study of architectural history, but also as an attempt to come to terms with the claims of history upon the present, and of the present upon history. Recognizing that the unusually vivid architectural images that have impressed themselves upon the public imagination of America over the past few months are only the most recent evidence in a longer list of charges, the course examines accusations of Eurocentrism and elitism, of obsolescence, irrelevance, and historical naivete, and associations with totalitarianism and whiteness, along with questions of language, tectonics, and sustainability—aiming to introduce a range of new voices into a conversation that is, today, more critical than ever. 3 Course cr

ARCH 3318a, The Media of Architecture and the Architecture of Media Craig

Buckley

3 Course cr

[ARCH 3319, Architecture, the State, and Racial Formation]

This seminar investigates the many architectures that participate in state and racial formation. That is, how spatial constructions—including infrastructure, housing, borders, segregation, taxation, and policing—supported by the state are integral to processes of racial hierarchization and how racialized subjects are managed and controlled. The seminar focuses on the American context, but the definition of American boundaries is open to interpretation and contestation. We look at American expansion and political history to see how inequalities have been historically constructed and how they continue to persist. We analyze American internal and external imperialism, militarism, and securitization to better understand how the nation’s myriad spatial entanglements structure life and social relations. The seminar reads a broad set of texts including Madison, Locke, Aimé Césaire, Frantz Fanon, Cedric J. Robinson, Katherine McKittrick, Sylvia Wynter, Michael Omi and Howard Winant, Cheryl I. Harris, Aileen Moreton-Robinson, and others. We engage with current discourses on race and architecture and link them to discussions on media, politics, and the contested project of the American nation. Students develop a semester-long research project locating a state-backed spatial strategy of their choosing and unpack the social, political, and racial histories and futures of their chosen subject.

3 Course cr

ARCH 3322a, Mutualism: Spatial Activism and Planetary Political Solidarity Keller

Easterling

3 Course cr

[ARCH 3323, Architecture and Machine Intelligence in Theory & Practice]

3 Course cr

[ARCH 3328, Latin American Modernity: Architecture, Art, and Utopia]

Throughout the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, architects, planners, landscape architects, artists, and designers understood and reacted to the specific conditions of their historical and geographical place within Latin America. In this way, they developed new yet fluid relationships with those and which each other that produced work ranging from the individual work of art, to buildings, cities, and possible

utopias. How this production was made, theorized, and developed expresses alternate conceptions of and reactions to the specific forms of modernity developed there. The goal of this course is to engage in broad dialogues with historical case studies throughout Latin America during this period that show how the creation of ideas, works, space, and place was part of a critical practice with/in “alternative modernities;” self-conscious and original, yet operating under a progressive spirit. We look at the self-reflexive practices and negotiations within/through modern art, architecture, and utopias in Latin America – as operations of vernacularization, transculturation or creolization, denaturalization, and deterritorialization – as fundamental works, problems, and didactic exercises intent on producing new knowledge and directions central to its socio-cultural development and to its architectural and artistic expressions.

3 Course cr

[ARCH 3329, Writing and Criticism: Architect as Author, Architect as Subject]

This course examines the relationship between practice and publication in architecture. Its foundation is a survey of architecture criticism over the last century. It also considers how a select number of architects have written about their own work and that of other practitioners; the focus in this section is on those architects who use writing not for its descriptive or promotional value but as a critic or historian might, which is to say as a means of sharpening or expanding their own architecture or of reframing or even unsettling their place in the profession or larger culture. Class discussions focus to a large degree on the intersection of these two tracks: the process by which the architect moves from subject to author and back again, and what is gained (and perhaps sometimes lost) by that traffic. 3 Course cr

Electives outside of School of Architecture

Courses offered elsewhere in the University may be taken for credit with permission of the instructor. Unless otherwise indicated, at the School of Architecture full-term courses are typically assigned 3 credits; half-term courses are assigned 1.5 credits. Students must have the permission of the History and Theory Study Area coordinators in order for a course to count as a history/theory elective.