1.0: INTRODUCTION

INTENTION

The intention of the course is: (1) to sensitize the student to the multiple levels at which the built environment is able to convey cultural significance; (2) to forge or link between our understanding of the cultural past as embodied in built form and our potential for creativity in the process; and (3) to cultivate our capacity to interpret the built environment in the light of a particular mode of beholding as this is set out below; namely, that built-form is to be seen not only as a <u>representation</u> of the human condition and of our capacity to constitute our being in terms of human institutions but also, at the same time, as being a literal <u>embodiment</u> of these implicit values.

This course is not only referential to architecture, but also to the condition that it senses. In this regard it is directly indebted to a seminal disquisition written by the distinguished philosopher Hannah Arendt, published under the title <u>The Human Condition</u> in 1958. This book discusses three existential/political paradigms; labor, work and action. Arendt's definitions of these terms at the beginning of The Human Condition are as follows:

Labor is the activity which corresponds to the biological process of the human body, whose spontaneous growth, metabolism, and eventual decay are bound to the vital necessities produced and fed into the life process by labor. The human condition of labor is life itself.

Work is the activity that corresponds to the unnaturalness of human existence, which is not embedded in and whose morality is not compensated by, the species' ever recurring life cycle. Work provides an artificial world of things, distinctly different from all the natural surroundings. Within its borders each individual life is housed, while the world itself is meant to outlast and transcend them all. The human condition of work is worldliness.

Action, the only activity that goes on directly between men without the intermediary of things or matter, corresponds to the human condition of plurality, to the fact that all men, not Man, live on the earth and inhabit the world. While all aspects of the human condition are somehow related to politics, this plurality is specifically the condition—not only the condition sine qua non, but the condition per quam—of all political life. Thus the language of the Romans, perhaps the most political people we have known, used the words "to live" and "to be among men" (inter hominess esse) or "to die" and "to cease to be among men" (inter hominess esse desinere) as synonyms.

It is clear that Arendt's political model derives from that of ancient Greek city state, the <u>polis</u> as much as from the Roman forum. From the <u>polis</u> she evolves the notion of a kind of cantonal government of which she writes:

The only indispensable material factor in the generation of power is the living together of people. Only where men live so close together that the potentialities of action are always present can power remain with them, and the foundation of cities, which as city-states have remained paradigmatic for all Western political organization, is therefore indeed the most important material prerequisite for power.

Arendt proceeds to link this idea of the *polis* to her wider cultural concept of the "space of public appearance".

Power preserves the public realm and the space of appearance, and as such it is also the life-blood of the human artifice, which, unless it is the scene of action and speech, of the web of human affairs and relationships and the stories engendered by them, lacks its ultimate raison d'être. Without being talked about by men and without housing them, the world would not be a human artifice but a heap of unrelated things to which each isolated individual was at liberty to add one more object; without the human artifice to house them, human affairs would be as floating, as futile and vain, as the wanderings of nomad tribes.

ARCHITECTURE/BUILDING

An architect could hardly fail to remark on the correspondence between these distinctions and the fundamental ambiguity of the term 'architecture'; an ambiguity that finds reflection in the Oxford English Dictionary in two significantly different definitions—first, 'the art or science of construction edifices for human use' and second, 'the action and process of building'. These definitions with their potential hierarchy latent even in the etymology of the Greek term architekton – meaning chief constructor – proffer themselves as paralleling the distinction that Arendt draws between work and labour.

The designation 'for human use' imparts a specifically human, if not humanist, connotation to the whole of the first definition, alluding to the creation of a specifically human world, whereas the phrase 'the action and process of building' in the second definition clearly implies a continuous act of building forever incomplete, comparable to the unending process of biological labour. The fact that the dictionary asserts that the word 'edifice' may be used to refer to a 'large and stately building such as a church, a palace, or a fortress serves to support the work connotation of the first definition, since these building types, as the 'representations' of spiritual and temporal power, have always been, at least until recent times, both public and permanent. Furthermore, the word 'edifice' relates directly to the verb 'to edify', which not only carries within itself the meaning 'to build' but also 'to educate', 'to strengthen' and 'to instruct' – connotations that allude directly to the didactic character of the public realm. Again the Latin root of this verb – aedificare, from aedes, a 'building', or even more originally, a 'hearth', and fiacre, 'to make' – has latent within it the public connotation of the hearth as the aboriginal 'public' space of appearance. This aspect persists even today in the domestic realm, where surely no place is more of a forum in the contemporary home than the hearth or its surrogate, the television set, which as an illusory public substitute tends to inhibit or usurp the spontaneous emergence of 'public' discourse within the private domain.

CLASSICAL/VERNACULAR

The related symbiotic opposition between the classical tradition in architecture and vernacular building culture would seem to follow directly from this dyadic dictionary definition of architecture as being divided between the institutional concept of the edifice and the processal idea of building, as this appears universally in all forms of agrarian construction world-wide, the term vernacular deriving from the Latin word verna meaning rustic and thus pertaining to the countryside.

Both the classical and the vernacular modes of building are to be found within the evolution of modern architectural culture during the twentieth century where their intrinsic, symbiotic opposition finds reflection in the self-conscious opposition between closed and open forms with closed forms tending to favor some kind of institutional definition and open forms being left open on a processal additive basis.

TRADITION/INNOVATION

The controversial persistence of tradition in the midst of modernity recalls a rather enigmatic aphorism attributed to the Catalan philosopher Eugenio d'Ors when he said something to the effect that 'all that is tradition is plagiarism'. Amongst other issues, this rather cryptic statement

immediately raised the difficult question as to what do we mean by originality and how this concept relates to the idea of origin. We make it that what d'Ors has in mind is the thesis that all true creativity is in fact a simultaneous re-working of tradition and/or of more than one tradition at once. This corresponds to Zygmunt Bauman's formulation of inevitable, ambiguous interplay between <u>tradition</u> and <u>innovation</u> as this was first clearly articulated by him in his book <u>Culture as Praxis</u> (1999) wherein he wrote:

The ambiguity which truly matters, the sense-giving ambivalence, the genuine foundation on which the cognitive usefulness of conceiving human habit as the "world of culture" rests in the ambivalence between "creativity" and "normative regulation". The two ideas could not be further apart, yet both are—and must remain—present in the composite idea of culture. "Culture" is as much about inventing as it is about preserving; about discontinuity as much as about continuation; about novelty as much as about tradition; about routine as much as about pattern-breaking; about norm-following as much as about the transcendence of norm; about the unique as much as about the regular; about change as much as about monotony of reproduction; about the unexpected as much as about the predictable.

The ambiguity of the idea of tradition in relation to modernity is suggested by the recurrence of the concept of "the new tradition" as we find this, first in 1929, in Henry Russell Hitchcock's <u>Romanticism and Reintegration</u> or Siegfried Giedion's <u>Space, Time & Architecture</u>, subtitled at the time of its first appearance in 1939, as <u>The Growth of a New Tradition</u>. It should also be mentioned, in this context, Christian Norberg Schulz's essay "Jørn Utzon and the New Tradition" that appeared in the monograph <u>Utzon and the New Tradition</u> edited by KimDirckinck-Holmfeld.

ETHNOGRAPHY

Irrespective of whether the vernacular forms happen to be open or closed, and they can at times be either, pre-industrial, even pre-agrarian, nomadic building culture may at times assume a particularly cosmogonic nature, in which a total world-view, is subtly incorporated and encoded into the domestic fabric. This seems to have been particularly the case with regard to the traditional Berber House, as documented by Pierre Bourdieu in his 1969 essay "The Berber House or the World Reversed" in which he demonstrates how the entire domain is organized in terms of sectional displacement and material finish in such a way as to distinguish the *upper/dry/human* from the *lower/wet/animal* parts of the dwelling. On the opposing transverse axis the same space is ordered about the main entrance, invariably oriented toward the east, and a weaving loom that, in being set opposite the open door and the rising sun, is analogously seen as the sun of the interior. On the basis of this cosmic cross axis the house and its surroundings are divided into a homological hierarchy in which every value is counterbalanced by its opposite. Thus, the attributes of the external world are reversed on the interior; the southern exterior wall becomes the "northern" interior wall, and so on. Associated with dawn, spring, fertility, and birth, the loom, before the "eastern" interior wall, is regarded as the female place of honor and is seen as the spiritual nexus of the dwelling. It is balanced by the male object of honor, namely the rifle that is stacked close to the loom. That this symbolic system is reinforced by the construction itself is confirmed by Bourdieu's testimony.

In front of the wall opposite the door stands the weaving loom. This wall is unusually called by the same name as the outside front wall giving onto the courtyard (tasga), or else the wall of the weaving-loom or opposite wall, since one is opposite it when one enters. The wall opposite this is called the wall of darkness, or of sleep, or of the maiden, or of the tomb…One might be tempted to give a strictly technical explanation to these oppositions since the wall of the weaving-loom…receives the most light and the stone-flagged stable is, in fact, situated at a lower level than the rest. The reason given for the last is that the house is most often built perpendicularly with the contour lines in order to facilitate the flow of liquid-manure and dirty water. A number of signs suggest, however, that these oppositions are the center of a whole cluster of parallel oppositions, the necessity of which is never completely due to technical imperatives or functional requirements. In addition to all this, at the center of the dividing wall, between "the house of

human beings" stands the main pillar, supporting the governing beam which connects the gables and spreads the protection of the male part of the house to the female part…is identified explicitly with the master of the house, whilst the main pillar on which it rests, which is the trunk of a forked tree…is identified with the wife…and their interlocking represents the act of physical union.

Bourdieu proceeds to show how this same symbolic system differentiates in a categorical way between the lower and upper parts of the house, that is between the sunken, stone-flagged stable regarded as a space of fertility, and sexual intercourse and the upper dry, light space of human appearance, finished in polished cow dung.

Among other more general ethnographic phenomena that are of wider pertinence to our understanding of building culture, we also need to take note of Gottfried Semper's seminal essay of 1852 given under the title "The Four Elements of Architecture", derived more or less directly from his analysis of the primitive hut. These four elements are characterized by Semper in the following manner: (1) The <u>tectonic</u> framework plus roof pertaining to carpentry (<u>light</u>) otherwise to be known as the <u>roof work</u>, (2) the stereotomic earthwork pertaining to masonry (<u>heavy</u>) and to the construction of the podium and thus to the marginal elevation of the building out of the ground, otherwise to be known as the earthwork, (3) the infill membrane (<u>light</u>) related to weaving otherwise to be known as the cladding (Bekleidung), and (4) the <u>hearth</u> pertaining to ceramics and metalwork, to be associated with public and/or spiritual values even within the domestic realm.

INTENTIONALITY

Like all other manifestations of human creativity, built-form possesses a capacity for signification, although the levels on which a particular environment may be interpreted will vary according to the cultivation of the user or recipient. Hans Sedylmayr once said: "the appreciation of a work of art presupposes adequate intentions". That is to say the reception of a work is as much a manifestation of an intention as its conception. This means that the appreciation of a work of architecture or any other art, for that matter, is open to different levels of interpretation depending upon the formation of the experiencing subject. One should also note that works acquire their full signification with a given cultural context and that once this context is totally transformed their intrinsic capacity to carry meaning must also be qualified.

Two fundamental factors distinguish architecture from any other art form: (1) it is inextricably mixed with the life world and (2) it is a construction anchored to the ground. The unique status of architecture among the arts has been succinctly characterized by Charles Morris in his remarkable essay, "Science, Art and Technology," which appeared in *The Kenyon Review* in 1939. In this text Morris distinguishes between three domains: between *science* as a cognitive discourse concerned with knowledge and predictability, *art* as an aesthetic discourse concerned with value as mediated by physical objects and *technology* as an instrumental discourse concerned with the realization of the human world in all its aspects. The inherently synthetic nature of architecture is also touched on in Morris' in essay, "Esthetics and the Theory of Signs," wherein he writes:

There is no medium which art cannot utilize – not even the process of living. And when life itself becomes a work of art, the opposition between art and life (between aesthetically indicated values and an activity aiming to control and directly possess values) is overcome.

Morris proceeds to elaborate on this thesis in the following terms:

Since the work of art is an icon and not a statement, aesthetic discourse is not restricted to signs whose truth is confirmable… Since the aim is not prediction it is only necessary that the component signs in the total sign structure be such as to build up the total icon with the value in question (in architecture the relation of the part to the whole) and such consistency in the

presentation of a value may even involve sign combinations which the logician of scientific discourse would class as contradictory (such conditions arise in architecture by virtue of its inherently synthetic nature). Since the aesthetic sign itself embodies the values it designates in an aesthetic discourse the perceptual properties of the sign vehicles themselves (their formal properties, for example) become of great importance, and the artist constantly experiments with special syntactical combinations of these signs to obtain desired value effects… The presentation of value is not to be confused with making statements about values; presenting values for direct experience is not a language about values but the language of value.

2.0: SELECTION PROCEEDURE

The criteria governing the selection of the buildings given below for comparison are as follows: (1) that they are of the same institutional/programmatic status; i.e. house vs. house, offices vs. offices and so on, (2) that they are coherently organized from a spatial standpoint, (3) that they are of a sufficient cultural density as to merit comparison and (4) that they are relatively close in terms of their date.

3.0: ANALYTICAL PROCEDURE

After the first three introductory sessions given by the tutor the seminar will be led by pairs of students presenting their analyses of the two works on two screens. The analytical subsets listed below should be entered into after initially establishing images of each building (general views plus rudimentary plans and sections) so as to convey the general character of the works under consideration. The presentations should be designed to last 1.5 hours, thereby leaving time for discussion in the space of the 2 hour seminar.

4.0: SITE ANALYSIS

This analysis addresses itself to the relationship of the two buildings to their respective sites. The verbal comparison should be complemented by graphic analysis showing the principal means of access in each case, so as to reveal the difference, where applicable, between public, private and service access and subsets thereof distinguishing where necessary between vehicular and pedestrian movement patterns.

4.1 SPATIAL ANALYSIS (PUBLIC/PRIVATE)

All structures, with the exception of production structures, such as factories or farms, etc., may be broadly analyzed by inspection into two classes of space; *public* versus *private*. This dualism may be mediated on occasion by transitional space between them, which one has to designate as *semi-public*. There remains the category of service space. Broadly speaking this is a space which either serves corporeal needs (bathrooms, lavatories, etc.) or serves the building itself, along the lines of Louis Kahn's distinction between *servant* and *served* space. One may regard such spaces as intrinsically *processal* following the Arendtian distinction between *process* and *stasis*; i.e. such spaces as store rooms, cloakrooms, mechanical rooms, parking spaces, escape stairs, etc. Inasmuch as they are *honorific* and *signifying*, main stairs are not service spaces and the same applies to escalators. Elevators have a more problematic character in this regard which prompts one to suggest that elevators which do not have a service character should be coded as *semi-public* or *public*. Public space is inherently collective and discursive that is to say it is a space for public discourse. Arendt would categorize such space as *the space of public appearance*; a category implying an inherently political notion of space. In this regard the main living room in a family residence may be said to be *relatively* public in relation to the bedrooms. By a similar token in institutional structures committee rooms should be regarded as *public*. Small offices on the other hand may be said to have a *private* character. Of course such differentiation leads one to question the character and status of open office space since such space has an inherently *processal* aspect even though it is not, strictly speaking*, public* or *private*. As a result

such a space should be considered as semi-public. What is at stake in all this is the status of the human subject in the space in question.

The discrimination between public and private, derived in large measure from Hannah Arendt's 1958 study The Human Condition, turns on a polarity running from *intimacy* and *privacy* of small spaces such as bedrooms and small offices to auditoria, council chambers, galleries or the naves of churches and other religious structures. In this last instance one should note that the word *Ecclesia* means house of assembly as does the word *Knesset* in Hebrew. As Arendt points out there is a discursive aspect in this regard irrespective of whether this space is given a spiritual inflection.

4.2: GOAL/ROUTE ANALYSIS

This category of necessity addresses itself to the route that the subject takes through a given architectural space, irrespective of whether that space is internal or external. Integral to this opposition between goal and route (derived in art from Dagobert Frey's distinctions between Weg and Ort) is the concept that all buildings are structured about a promenade through the space in which the significance of the total work unfolds in time via one's passage through the space or structure. Integral to this notion is the realization that in almost every work there is one or more major space of arrival or goal, these are usually the primary public spaces in the complex. In a dwelling it is primarily the main living room or dining space or living terrace/patio, just as in a town hall it is the council chamber. One may readily extend this notion in a fairly obvious way, thus in a school it is the assembly hall, in a concert complex the main auditorium and so on. The tracing of this pattern simply indicates how the spatial hierarchy (public vs. private), etc. is experienced in each instance.

4.3: PLAN/SECTION ANALYSIS

The graphic aspect of this analysis should code the plans and sections of the buildings so as to reveal the distribution of: (1) public; (2) semi-public; (3) private; (4) service spaces together with a route/goal overlay indicating the basic pattern of movement through the volume of the two works. See section 6.0 for graphic standards.

By inspection the verbal analysis should comment on the correspondences and differences between the two works according to the way in which they each organize the hierarchical movement through the space.

4.4: MEMBRANE/STRUCTURAL ANALYSIS

What is at stake in this analysis is to determine the degree to which the external membrane of the building does or does not express the basic volumetric and/or structural order of the work. Among the qualities to be looked for in membrane analysis is the way in which the surface of a building, including its fenestration, does or does not adequately expresses the primary components of an institution and/or discriminate between load bearing and non-load bearing elements in a work. With regard to this there is no one method that may be universally applied to examine this issue. Obviously a rationalistic structure with classical antecedents may be mathematically analyzed in terms of an evident modular order and/or proportion; the attributes of a structure that as in the work of an architect like Le Corbusier may be determined in terms of regulating lines. One might note that this is a cultural value in itself and it is value that is significantly absent in works having a more organic character.

4.5: CONNOTATIONAL ANALYSIS AND MICRO-SPATIAL DETAILING

This aspect of the analysis has multiple focal points varying from the nature of the predominant materials employed to the detailing of various components such as doors, windows, balustrades,

staircases, handrails, furniture, etc. It should also deal with synthetic micro-spatial as may be formed say in particular treatment of a major living space or a point of entry or a system of beaming, etc. This analysis should not only compare parallel aspects of the buildings under consideration, but also relate particular treatments to other buildings and the values that are implicit in the way these buildings have been detailed and so on. The analytical reading should be backed up by photographic illustrations and/or detailed drawings.

Irrespective of whether they happen to be used as cladding or as structural form, traditional materials such as brick, stone and wood are cultural constructs in which their implicit significance may be readily associated with a particular landscape, national character or ethical value. As the architectural historian Akos Moravansky instructs:

Materials are appreciated for the qualities they represent…rather than their inherent physical qualities. Thus a roughly hewn stone plinth, juxtaposed with a smooth façade, suggests a primitive, more 'earthly' state, for it represents a subordinate element of the composition.

Throughout the history of architecture buildings have become loaded with meaning. Today we are no longer aware of such meanings, and their conscious "reading" has been replaced by a more direct appreciation of the sensuality of material surfaces both natural and industrial. The semantics of materials in art and architecture is rarely discussed by historians, and there exists no systematic approach to the study of this subject. Yet it is clear from the positions which have been adopted by architects and artists that materials carry an important part of the meaning of the work.

5.0: ANALYTICAL TEAMS, BRIEFINGS AND SUPERVISORY TUTORIALS

The eleven comparative analytical sessions scheduled below provide for the analysis of twenty-two buildings. Each analysis will be carried out by two students, who will consult with me on three occasions, i.e. a *briefing* (BT), an *interim* (IT), and a *final* (FT) tutorial. The formation of the study teams and the allocation of the study subjects will be completed during the first seminar session so that the initial briefing tutorials can be scheduled for the same week. Students are expected to form teams after the first seminar and identify their first, second and third preferences for a possible study topic. Students will also be required to have a follow up tutorial regarding their final submission (ST). These will take place during the last 3 weeks of class; however, students are encouraged to begin formatting their final submissions as soon as possible after presentation.

6.0: GRAPHIC STANDARDS

It is absolutely crucial that students redraw the plans, sections and elevations of the buildings they are analyzing.

7.0 FINAL PRESENTATION

The study teams will be expected to submit their comparative analysis in terms of digitally color-coded plans, elevations, and sections as detailed above in the Graphic Standards section. The findings of the analysis must be written up under each category: 4.0 - 4.4.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

In addition to the class reader each student is expected to purchase from Labyrinth Books the Phaidon anthology of my essays on which this course is based, *Labour Work and Architecture; Collected Essays on Architecture and Design*, Phaidon Press, New York, 2002.
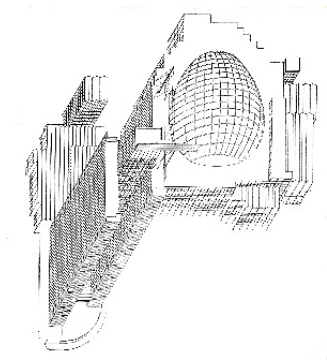
8.0 CLASS AND TUTORIAL SCHEDULE
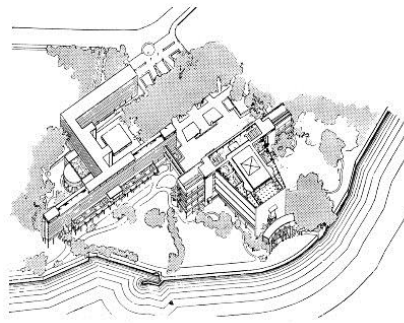
Sep. 6	Presentation 1

Comparative Critical Analysis
Intentions & Methods
Selection of Pairs & Allocation of Analyses
(BT 1 & 2)

Sep. 13	Presentation 2

SdN Competition: Hannes Meyer, 1927
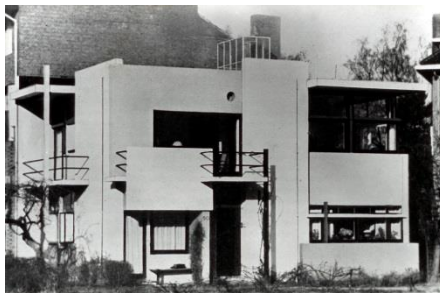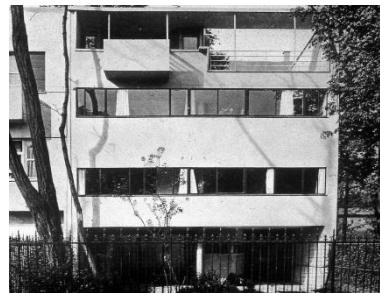Le Corbusier Humanist & the Utilitarian Ideal
(BT 3 & 4, IT 1 & 2)

vs.

Sep. 20	Presentation 3

G. Rietveld Schröder House, 1924 vs Le Corbusier, Maison Cook, 1926
Alvar Aalto, Finnish Pavilion, 1937 vs Le Corbusier, Pavillon des Temps,
Norweaux, 1937
(BT 5, IT 3, FT 1)

vs.

Sep. 27   Comparative Analysis 1

Japan Pavilion: Junzo Sakakura, 1937
Spanish Pavilion: Josep Lluís Sert, 1937
(BT 6, IT 4, FT 2)
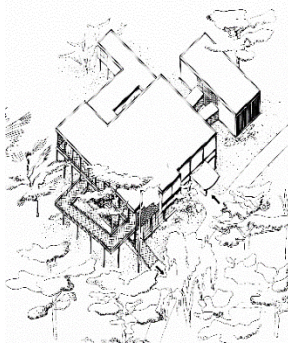
 vs.
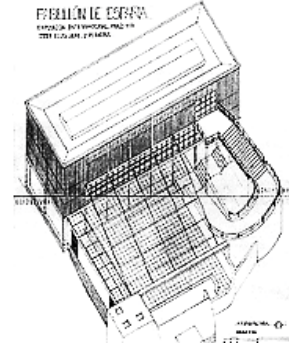
Oct. 4   Comparative Analysis 2

Kings Road House, LA, USA: Rudolf Schindler, 1922
E1027 House, France: Eileen Gray, 1929
(BT 7, IT 5, FT 3)
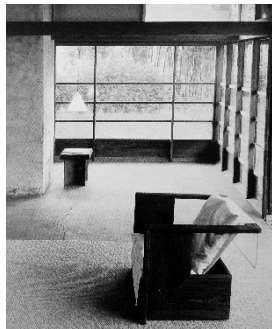
 vs.

Oct. 11   Comparative Analysis 3

Halland House, Sussex, UK: Serge Chermayeff, 1922
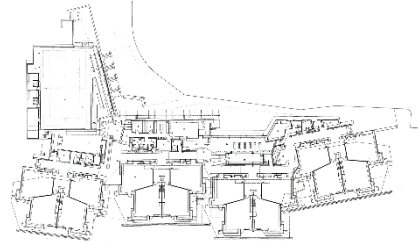Mendelsohn House, Berlin, Germany: Erich Mendelsohn, 1930
(BT 8, IT 6, FT 4)
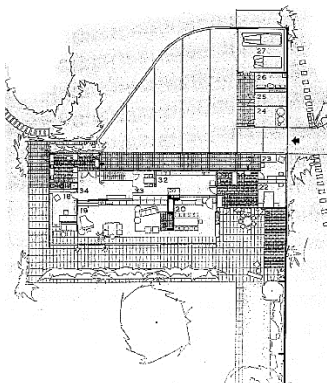
 vs.
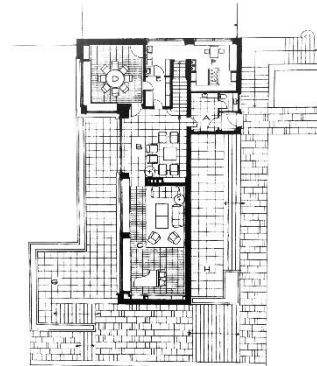
Oct. 18   Comparative Analysis 4

Montessori School, Delft, The Netherlands: Herman Hertzberger, 1981
Strawberry Vale School, Victoria, Vancouver: Patkau Architects, 1996
(BT 9, IT 7, FT 5)

 vs.

Oct. 25   Comparative Analysis 5

Kouvola Town Hall, Finland: Juha Leiviskä, 1968
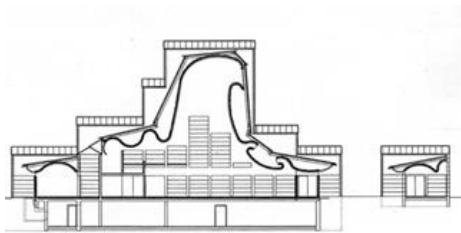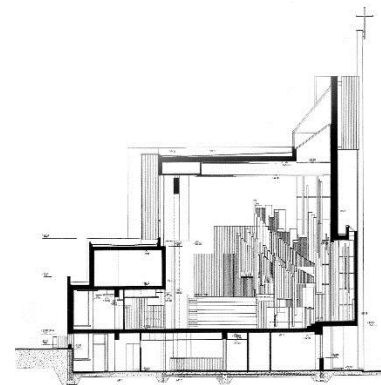Gobierno Civil, Tarragona, Spain: Alejandro de la Sota, 1963
(BT 10, IT 8, FT 6)

 vs.

Nov. 1   Comparative Analysis 6

Bagsværd Church, Copenhagen, Denmark: Jørn Utzon, 1976
Myyrmaki Church, Vantaa, Finland: Juha Leiviskä, 1984
(BT 11, IT 10, FT 8)

 vs .

Nov. 8   Comparative Analysis 7

Puchenau Siedling, Linz, Austria: Roland Rainer, 1963-2000
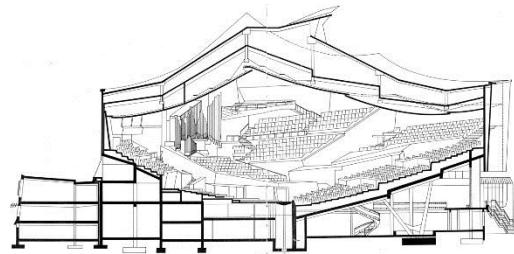Terni Housing, near Rome, Italy: Giancarlo di Carlo, 1969-1975
(FT 9)

 vs.

Nov. 15   Comparative Analysis 8

Royal Festival Hall, London, UK: Martin/Moro, 1951
Philharmonie, Berlin, Germany: Hans Scharoun,, 1963
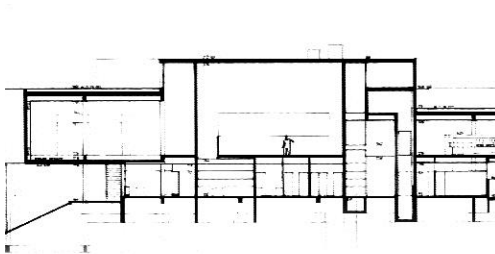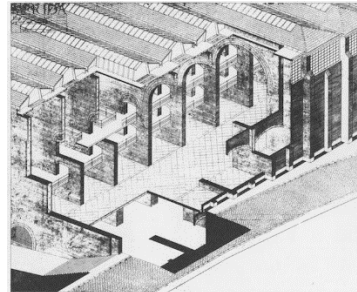(IT 11, FT 10)

 vs.

Nov. 22   No Class

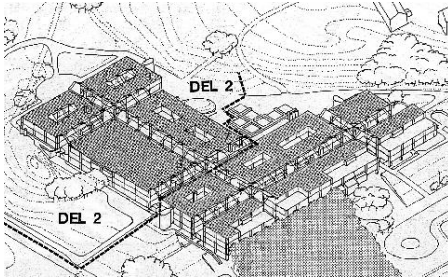Nov. 18   Comparative Analysis 9 (Make-up Class)

Museum of the First World War, Péronne, France: Henri Cirani, 1994
Roman Museum, Merida, Spain: Rafael Moneo, 1986
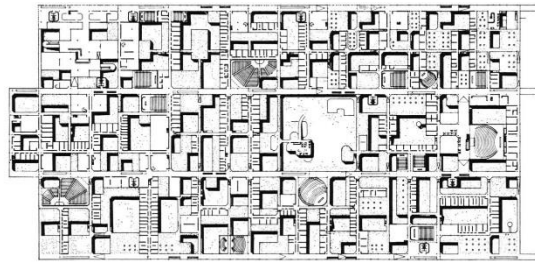(ST, as needed)

 vs.

Trondheim University, Dragvoll, Norway: Henning Larsen, 1978
Free University, Berlin, Germany: Candilis, Josic and Woods, 1963
(FT 11, ST, as needed)

vs.

Bibliography

In addition to my book <u>Genealogy of Modern Architecture</u>, published by Lars Muller, Zurich in 2015, which I recommend that every student should purchase from Book Culture, the following texts are required readings:

Ellis, Tom, "Discipline of the Route," *Architecture Design*, Vol. 36, October 1966, p. 516-517.

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