

Course Syllabus

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## OLD BUILDINGS – NEW FORMS

*Survey And Analysis Of Contemporary Work*

### Syllabus

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### INTRODUCTION

Preservationists preserve old buildings and architects build new buildings, which, in time, preservationists may

argue to be significant and want to preserve. In this view of the world preservationists are only concerned with the significance of old buildings and architects are only concerned with the new, absent considerations for the old.

The picture becomes fortunately less diagrammatic when one considers the vast number of provocative projects, worldwide, which involve transformations of old buildings. In these cases, preservationists are called upon to evaluate the effect of the new on the significance of the old and architects are called upon to work with old buildings – some modest, some monumental many in-between – to create “new forms” which do not undermine the value of the old.

There is very little scholarship on the subject; consequently, preservation professionals and architects neither have a set of historical references nor a set of, thoroughly examined, contemporary references to guide them.

How can we gain perspective on this activity? What projects can we learn from, and, what can we learn from them? How can interventions be classified, so that they may be compared? What works, what does not and how do we know? These questions become pressing as urban centers run out of available land and a new awareness of “embodied” cultural and material energy gives new urgency to the need to work with our existing building stock.

### COURSE DESCRIPTION

***Old Buildings – New Forms*** examines the subject of additions and transformations, from a design perspective, from the Renaissance to the present time, **with an emphasis on international contemporary work**. The course will start with an overview of additions and transformations from a

historical and typological perspective and move to the study of contemporary built projects in New York and worldwide.

## **PURPOSE**

The course is intended to introduce preservation, architecture and planning students to the architectural questions posed by additions and transformations to [significant] old buildings and to help them develop a method and an intellectual framework for evaluating the effect of the *New Form* on our built heritage. The emphasis is on the physical reality of the works and their relationship to the architectural and artistic culture of their time. The

subject is rich and fascinating and the body of work to be studied and learned from is extraordinary.

## **METHOD**

The format is that of a seminar, enriched by site visits, and by students' original research. The course progresses through three periods: first, Prof. Bollack will give three introductory **lectures** about the history of additions, about various conceptual approaches and about the contemporary notion of appropriateness, followed by discussions. The second period will consist of "on the ground" **site visits** and discussion of recent works with the buildings' architects. The third period will start with a lecture and discussion on "New International Directions".

In the semester's first half students will be assigned a study and comparison of two projects, which they will present and debate in small groups; in the second half of the semester, each student will research and analyze one project of his/her choice and pursue an independent study of it: a couple of sessions will be devoted to one on one "desk critiques". At the end of the semester, students will present their **study and analysis** to the class for

discussion.

## **REQUIRED READING**

Byard, Paul Spencer, *The Architecture Of Additions Design And Regulation*. New-York: W.W. Norton & Company,

1998.

Astorg Bollack, Françoise, *Old Buildings – New Forms: New Directions In Architectural Transformations*. New-York: The

Monacelli Press, 2013.

Also useful:

Scott, Fred, *On Altering Architecture*. London and New York: Routledge, 2008