

Spring 2018

**ARCHA4408 Critical Theory and Environmental Design: Philosophy and the Predicament of Architecture in the Age of Consumption**

Instructor: Kenneth Frampton

Teaching Assistant: Taylor Zhai Williams (tzw2111)

Class Meeting: Tuesdays 11:00am-1:00pm, AVH 412

This seminar is based on a series of readings which over the years have directly influenced my own critical state of architecture. In this regard, 20<sup>th</sup> century German philosophy has had a decisive impact on my own understanding of the dilemma which environmental design faces in an age which is overwhelmed by consumerism. After the introductory lecture, one text will be covered in each successive session. Participating students will be expected to read relatively short salient extracts from the texts under consideration. During the introductory session each student will be allocated a particular seminar in which they will be expected to present the material and initiate discussion. For this reason the course will be restricted to around 16 students. This will entail students working in pairs to present seminars 5-12, I will present the first 4 and the final seminar. Students will be expected to write up their presentations as a final requirement with footnotes, etc.

Students wishing to participate must submit a short text (max 500 words) indicating something of their background and the rationale for their wishing to attend the course.

**Schedule of Seminar Topics**

**Seminar 1: (Jan 16) Introduction – Architecture & the Human Condition (KF)**

The first text to have a lasting impact on my mode of beholding was Hannah Arendt's *magnum opus*, *The Human Condition*, first published in 1958. This text would have a lasting impact on my writing beginning with my essay "Labor, Work and Architecture" as this appeared in 1968 in Charles Jencks and George Baird's anthology *Meaning in Architecture*. The second reflection on the work of Hannah Arendt came with my essay "The Status of Man and the Status of his Objects", published in *Architectural Design* 1982.

Bibliography: Hannah Arendt, *The Human Condition*, Second Edition, 1998, pp. 79-174  
Kenneth Frampton, "The Status of Man and the Status of his Objects" in *Modern Architecture and the Critical Present* – AD Profile, pp. 1964

**Seminar 2: (Jan 23) German Thought and the Impact of Modernization. Oswald Spengler, Ernst + Junger and Martin Heidegger (KF)**

Bibliography: Michael Zimmerman, *Heidegger's Confrontation with Modernity, Technology, Politics and Art*, 1990, pp. 49-133

**Seminar 3: (Jan 30) Walter Benjamin & the Frankfurt School (KF)**

Bibliography: Walter Benjamin, *Illuminations*, 2007, "Introduction" pp. 1-51, "Works of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction", pp. 217-51, "Theses of the Philosophy of History", pp. 253-64  
Walter Benjamin, *Arcades Project*, 1999, pp. 3-26 & pp. 32-61  
Walter Benjamin, *Aesthetics & Politics*, 1977, pp. 9-86

**Seminar 4: (Feb 6) Pre & Postwar Heidegger, 1935-1951 (KF)**

Bibliography: Martin Heidegger, "The Origin of the Work of Art", pp. 17-87, "Building, Dwelling, Thinking", pp. 143-61, in *Poetry, Language and Thought*

**Seminar 5: (Feb 13) Herbert Marcuse & the Frankfurt School (Ramos + Kennedy)**

Bibliography: Herbert Marcuse, *Eros & Civilization*, 1964, pp. 127-43 & pp. 157-79

**Seminar 6: (Feb 20) The Aestheticization of Politics / The Critique of Lacoue-Labarthe (Zhou + Yu)**

Bibliography: Philippe Lacoue-Labarthe, *Heidegger: Art & Politics*, 1990, pp. 9-29 & 62-91

**Seminar 7: (Feb 27) Hans-Georg Gadamer: Rationality and Tradition (Deng + Huang)**

Bibliography: Hans-Georg Gadamer, *Truth and Method*, pp. 106-78  
Georgia Warnke, *Gadamer, Hermeneutics, Tradition & Reason*, 1987, pp. 34-41 & 108-38

**Seminar 8: (March 6) Merleau Ponty / Phenomenology (1) (Jaurgui + Hong)**

Bibliography: Jonathan Hale, *Merleau Ponty for Architects*, 2017, pp. 87-115  
Juhani Pallasmaa, *The Eyes of the Skin*, 2005  
Gary Brent Madison, *The Phenomenology of Merleau Ponty*, 1981, pp. 146-203 & pp. 204-65

**Seminar 9: (Mar 20) Merleau Ponty / Phenomenology (2) (Shi + Odom)**

Bibliography: Paul Ferdinand Schilder, *Image & Appearance of the Human Body*, 1935, pp. TBA  
*Merleau Ponty Reader*, NW University Press, 1993, pp. 192-255  
Jonathon Hale, *Merleau Ponty for Architects*, 2017, pp. TBA

**Seminar 10: (Mar 27) Jurgen Habermas & the Unfinished Modern Project: Critique & Counter Critique (Torres + Moya)**

Bibliography: Jurgen Habermas, *Towards a Rational Society*, 1970, pp. 81-122  
Jurgen Habermas, "Modernity – An Incomplete Project" in *The Anti-Aesthetic: Essays in Postmodern Culture*, edited by Hal Foster, 1983, pp. 3-15  
Jean Francois Lyotard, *The Postmodern Condition*, 1979, pp. TBA

**Seminar 11: (Apr 3) Critical Regionalism & the Case for the Tectonic (Kantarelis + Hartig)**

Bibliography: Kenneth Frampton, "Towards a Critical Regionalism: Six Points for an Architecture of Resistance" in *The Anti-Aesthetic* (Foster), pp. 3-15  
Kenneth Frampton, "The Case for the Tectonic"  
Eric Schumacher, *Small is Beautiful: Economics as if People Mattered*, 1973, pp. ix-xxiii, pp. 1-55  
Frederic Jameson, *The Seeds of Time*, 1996, pp. 189-205

**Seminar 12: (Apr 10) Gianni Vattimo & Weak Thought (Gardner + Wang)**

Bibliography: Gianni Vattimo, *The End of Modernity*, 1988, pp. 51-64, pp. 79-89, pp. 130-44  
Giovanna Borradori, "The Italian Heidegger: Philosophy, Architecture and Weak Thought" in *Columbia Documents of Architecture and Theory*, 1992, Vol. 1, pp. 123-33

**Seminar 13: (Apr 17) Agnostics & the Society of Spectacle (Minaretzis + Xu)**

Bibliography: Chantal Mouffe, *Agnostics Thinking the World Politically*, 2013, pp. 85-127  
Guy Debord, *Commentary on the Society of Spectacle*, 1988, pp. TBA