ARCH A4349 Questions in Architectural History 2
Faculty: Mark Wigley

Teaching Fellows (TFs): Charlette Michelle Caldwell (cmc2385@columbia.edu) and Ultan Byrne (ub2134@columbia.edu)

Wednesday 11AM-1PM, Ware Lounge, 600 level

This two-semester introductory course is organized around selected questions and problems that have, over the course of the past two centuries, helped to define architecture’s modernity. Following Questions in Architectural History 1, the Spring semester similarly treats the history of architectural modernity throughout the twentieth century as a contested, geographically and culturally uncertain category, for which periodization is both necessary and contingent. Organized thematically more than chronologically, the Spring semester also situates developments in Europe and North America in relation to worldwide processes including trade, imperialism, nationalism, and industrialization. These historical forces are transformed and complicated by new forms of internationalism, post-nationalism and globalization as they encounter the impact of new generations of technology and new social, scientific, institutional, and subjective formations. As with QAH1, the course considers specific questions and problems that form around differences that are also connections, antitheses that are also interdependencies, and conflicts that are also alliances. The resulting tensions animated architectural discourse and practice throughout the period, and continue to shape our present.

Objects, ideas, and events will move in and out of the European and North American frame, with a strong emphasis on relational thinking and contextualization. This includes a historical, relational understanding of architecture itself. Although the Western tradition recognized diverse building practices as “architecture” for some time, an understanding of architecture as an academic discipline and as a profession, which still prevails today, was only institutionalized in the European nineteenth century. Thus, what we now call architecture was born not long ago, as a discourse and a practice conceived in relation to others variously described as ancient, vernacular, native, or pre-modern.

Addressed to the twentieth century legacy and transformation of this institutionalization of architecture as a discipline, a discourse and a profession, this course also treats categories like modernity, modernization, and modernism in a relational manner. Rather than presuppose the equation of modernity with rationality, for example, the course asks: How did such an equation arise? Where? Under what conditions? In response to what? Why? To what ends? Similar questions pertain to the idea of a “national” architecture, or even a “modern” one. To explore these and other questions, the course stresses contact with primary sources. Many of the buildings, projects, and
texts we will encounter have long been incorporated into well-developed historical narratives, mostly centered on Europe. Others have not. Our aim, however, is not simply to replace those narratives with a more inclusive, “global” one. It is to explore questions that arise, at certain times and in certain places, when architecture is said to possess a history.

The course therefore prioritizes discussion and critical reflection. Students will be assigned to one of three seminar-style classes, each led by a different faculty member in collaboration with two PhD Teaching Fellows (TFs) who will conduct smaller weekly sessions intended to support and elaborate upon the main class. Faculty members may present examples of relevant buildings and projects from among those listed at their discretion.

Overall, the aim is a semester-long dialogue, with active student participation, that unfolds, explores, and contextualizes questions and problems that inform and challenge the historical imagination and ultimately, enhance historical consciousness.

**Course Requirements**

Each week there will be required primary and secondary readings. In addition to completing the required readings for each week and participating actively in class discussions, at the end of the semester students will be required to submit a research paper on a topic related to one or more of those covered in the course. All assignments should be uploaded to turnitin.com as MSWord-compatible files (each student will be emailed a link for this at the beginning of the semester).

This semester-long project will be developed as follows in consultation with your discussion section TF:

20 February: A one-paragraph abstract describing the paper topic and a one-page working bibliography

27 March: A three-page annotated outline of the paper, with bibliography

8 May (5:00PM): Final paper, fifteen-pages minimum, double-spaced in 12-point font (about 3,500-4,000 words); plus illustrations.

All assignments will be submitted through Turnitin. Instructions will be provided by TFs.

**Grading**

Grades for the class will be determined as follows:

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Requirement</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Class participation</td>
<td>20%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Paper abstract</td>
<td>10%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Paper outline</td>
<td>10%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Final paper</td>
<td>60%</td>
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Students with limited experience in writing research papers or writing in academic English are strongly encouraged to seek support at the Columbia College Writing Center:
http://www.college.columbia.edu/core/uwp/writing-center

Links to an external site.

Students should adhere to standard guidelines regarding academic honesty, such as those described in the GSAS Statement on Academic Honesty, available at:

Links to an external site.

Readings

All required course materials are available on Courseworks, or elsewhere online if indicated below.

Three types of readings are listed each week: primary source material (required), secondary literature (required), and further reading (not required). At times, additional primary materials or background reading are recommended along with the required texts, again as a guide for research or further reading.

Students with less background in histories of twentieth century architecture are also advised to consult additional literature available in Avery Library, including:


**SELECTIONS**

01/22  **Week 1. Introduction: Architecture and Modernity**

No required reading

01/29  **Week 2. Internationalisms and Wars**

**Primary Source Material**

Secondary Literature


Further Reading (not required)


Primary Source Material


Secondary Literature


Further Reading (not required)

02/12 Week 4. Genders and Metropolitanisms

Primary Source Material

• Archigram, “The Metropolis,” Archigram 5 [Autumn 1964] (You can find this online)

Secondary Literature

• Sophie Hochhäusl, “From Vienna to Frankfurt Inside Core-House Type 7: A History of Scarcity through the Modern Kitchen,” *Architectural Histories* 1(1) 2013: 24, pp. 1-19, DOI: [http://dx.doi.org/10.5334/ah.aq](http://dx.doi.org/10.5334/ah.aq) (Links to an external site.)


Further Reading (not required)


02/19 Week 5. Types and Functions

Primary Source Material

• Alison Smithson, “Mat-Building: How to Recognize and Read It,” Architectural Design XLIV, no. 9 (September 1974): 573-590.

Secondary Literature


Further Reading (not required)

• Kathryn E. O’Rourke, “Guardians of Their Own Health: Tuberculosis, Rationalism, and Reform in Modern Mexico,” Journal of the Society of Architectural Historians 71, no. 1 (March 2012): 60-77.

02/26 Week 6. Colonies and Corporations

Primary Source Material

Secondary Literature


Further Reading (not required)

03/04  Week 7. Medias and Domesticities

Primary Source Material


Secondary Literature


Further Reading (not required)


**03/11 Week 8. Institutions and Experimentations**

**Primary Source Material**


**Secondary Literature**


Further Reading (not required)


03/18  Spring Break (no class)

03/25  Week 9. Technologies and Environments

Primary Source Material
• Frederick Kiesler, “On Correalism and Biotechnique: A Definition and Test of a New Approach to Building Design,” *Architectural Record* 86, no. 3 (September 1939): 60-75.
• Joan Littlewood [with Cedric Price], “A Laboratory of Fun,” *New Scientist* 38 (May 14, 1964): 432-433.

**Secondary Literature**


**Further Reading (not required)**


04/01 Week 10. Vernaculars and Nationalisms

Primary Source Material


Secondary Literature

• Ayala Levin, « Beyond Global vs. Local: Tipping the Scales of Architectural Historiography », *ABE Journal* [Online], 8 | 2015, Online since 15 December 2015, connection on 13 January 2017. URL : http://abe.revues.org/2751 ; DOI : 10.4000/abe.2751


**Further Reading (not required)**


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**Week 11. Information and Forms**

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**Primary Source Material**

Secondary Literature


Further Reading (not required)

• Reinhold Martin, Utopia’s Ghost: Architecture and Postmodernism, Again (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2010).
04/15  Week 12. Exhibitions and Revolutions

Primary Source Material


Secondary Literature


Further Reading (not required)


**04/22 Week 13. Globalizations and Climates**

**Primary Source Material**


Secondary Literature


Further Reading (not required)