

Fall 2019  
Arch 6872

A Building of One's Own: Feminist Perspectives on Architectural Practice, History, and Criticism

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Thursday 11 AM - 1 PM  
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This course focuses on a feminist critique as a locus of multiple avenues of inquiry. What does it mean to take a feminist approach to the history of modern and contemporary architecture? Can we apply a feminist lens to theoretical, ethical, and historiographic issues? What is the value, intellectual and historical, of a feminist approach to the study of architecture? This class will undertake various modes of close reading: of buildings, works of criticism, theoretical manifestos, archival documents, and scholarship. Our goal will be to explore whether there can be an explicitly feminist reading of architectural practice and history, and to begin to articulate what that feminist reading might feel like. Affect is welcome. Skills taught will be the formal, phenomenological, historical, and theoretical analysis of individual buildings of various types; archival research; contextual analysis; and writing at both an academic and critical level.

Writing assignments are to be emailed to instructor by 5pm the Wednesday before class.

WEEK 1, September 5

how did we get here || interviews || introductions || what does it mean to be an architectural thinker || what does it mean to be a feminist thinker || what is this seminar really about?

WEEK 2, September 12

Reading:

Lucas Cassidy Crawford "Breaking Ground on a Theory of Transgender Architecture," *Seattle Journal for Social Justice*, Volume 8 Issue 2, Spring/Summer 2010, <https://digitalcommons.law.seattleu.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1094&context=sjsj>

Tim O'Brien, excerpts from *The Things They Carried* (New York: Penguin, 1990), [https://pages.uoregon.edu/eherman/teaching/texts/OBrien\\_TheThingsTheyCarried.pdf](https://pages.uoregon.edu/eherman/teaching/texts/OBrien_TheThingsTheyCarried.pdf)

Writing:

Position Paper on the two readings - 500 words

WEEK 3, September 19

Reading:

Choose three articles from here - <https://www.nowwhat-architexx.org/articlesall> - and prepare a five-minute presentation outlining:

- the arguments
- the methods
- the methodologies
- possible counter-arguments / counter-texts

Writing:

Choose a building that you can visit in person. Describe it the best way you can. Your approach may be critical, historical, social, cultural, visual, phenomenological, or other. 500-750 words

WEEK 4, September 26

Reading:

Karen Burns, "Feminist Theory and Practice, Questions from the Archive," in Hélène Frichot, Catharina Gabrielsson, Helen Runting (eds.), *Architecture and Feminisms: Ecologies, Economies, Technologies*. (New York / London: Routledge, 2017).

Igea Troiani, "Academic Capitalism in Architecture Schools," *ibid.*

Writing:

Argue against one of the texts from this week. You may use any available material. 750 words

WEEK 5, October 3

Reading:

Alice T. Friedman, *Women and the Making of the Modern House: A Social and Architectural History* (New York, Abrams, 1998). Introduction, Chapters 3, 4.

Sarah Dreller, The Vanishing Porch in Perspective, <https://curtainedwallstimeline.hcommons.org>

Nora Wendl, "Uncompromising Reasons for Nora Going West: A Story of Sex and Real Estate," *Thresholds* 43, MIT Press, 2015 20-33, 346-361.

Writing:

Position paper analyzing the historical position of the readings. 500 words

WEEK 6, October 10

Reading:

Despina Stratigakos, *Where Are the Women Architects?* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2016).

Linda Nochlin, "Why have there been No Great Women Artists?" *Art News* No. 69 (January 1971): 22-39, 67-71.

Henry Urbach, "Closets, Clothes, Disclosure," *Assemblage* 30 (1996): 62-73.

Partner Presentations: each person read one of the texts in dialogue with a partner (selected in class the week before). You may interpret the word "read" however you like.

WEEK 7, October 17

Reading:

Stratigakos, Despina. "What I Learned from Architect Barbie." *Places Journal* (2011) <https://placesjournal.org/article/what-i-learned-from-architect-barbie/?gclid=CNLjhlqvnc4CFUiTfgodZBgIZw>

Tipton, Gemma. "I Don't Want to Be Educated; I Want to Be Drowned in Beauty..." *Circa* (2003): 62-68. (JSTOR)

Writing:

Position Paper: Outline the mechanics aka "how does this work" of each of the assigned readings. 500-1000 words

WEEK 8: October 24

Reading:

Joanna Walters, "Zaha Hadid Suing New York Review of Books," *The Guardian*, August 24, 2014 <https://www.theguardian.com/artanddesign/2014/aug/25/zaha-hadid-suing-qatar-article-2022-world-cup>

Filler, Martin. "An Apology To Zaha Hadid." *New York Review Of Books* 61, No. 14 (2014): 88-88.

Gurel, Meltem and Anthony, Kathryn H.. "The Canon and the Void: Gender, Race, and Architectural History Texts," *Journal of Architectural Education*. 59:3 (February 2006), 66-76.

Writing:

FINAL PAPER TOPIC DUE - write 250 words about what you would like to write for your final paper. List 5-10 texts that you imagine will assist you as you write.

WEEK 9: October 31

Reading:

feminist architecture collaborative, "The Women, Young Men and Other Buildings," *Positions*, 2019, <https://www.e-flux.com/architecture/positions/280219/the-women-young-men-and-other-buildings/>

adrienne maree brown, *Pleasure Activism: The Politics of Feeling Good* (New York: AK Press, 2019), introduction, "Love as Political Resistance," "The Pleasure of Living at the Same Time as Beyonce Giselle Knowles-Carter."

adrienne maree brown, "The Inches," *Harvard Design Magazine* No. 46, F/W 2018, <http://www.harvarddesignmagazine.org/issues/46/the-inches>

Writing:

Argue for or against the inclusion of these texts in this syllabus. Provide evidence grounded in the texts, and in the world. 500-750 words.

WEEK 10: November 7

Reading:

Adjustments Agency, "Refusal After Refusal," *Harvard Design Magazine* No. 46, F/W 2018, <http://www.harvarddesignmagazine.org/issues/46/refusal-after-refusal>

Cassius Adair and Lisa Nakamura. "The Digital Afterlives of This Bridge Called My Back: Woman of Color Feminism, Digital Labor, and Networked Pedagogy," *American Literature* (2017) 89 (2): 255-278, <https://doi.org/10.1215/00029831-3861505>

Sherry Ahrentzen, "The Space between the Studs: Feminism and Architecture," *Signs* Vol. 29, no. 1 (2003): 179-206.

Writing:

Choose a collection from the Archives of American Art, digitized by the Smithsonian and available here: <https://siarchives.si.edu>, and write a brief analysis, historical or theoretical, of two to five individual elements from the archive. 750 words.

WEEK 11: November 14th

Reading:

Editor's Letter; Margrit Kennedy, "Seven Hypotheses on Male and Female Architecture;" Dolores Hayden "The Feminist Paradise Palace," in *Making Room: Women and Architecture*, Heresies 11 (volume 3, issue 3) (1981), in [https://archive.org/details/heresies\\_11/page/n1](https://archive.org/details/heresies_11/page/n1)

Denise Scott Brown, "Room At The Top, Sexism and the Star System in Architecture." *Architectural Design* 60, no. 1-2 (1990): U1-U2.

Despina Stratigakos, "Why Architects Need Feminism," *Places Journal*, September 2012, <https://placesjournal.org/article/why-architects-need-feminism/>

Writing:

Have things changed or have things stayed the same? 500 words.

WEEK 12: November 21

Reading:

TBD as a collective

Writing:

TBD as a collective

how did we get here || interviews || introductions || what does it mean to be an architectural thinker || what does it mean to be a feminist thinker || what is this seminar really about?

WEEK 13: NO CLASS / THANKSGIVING BREAK

FINAL PAPER DUE December 3. 20 page research paper, details tbd.