

# Course Syllabus

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COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY

GRADUATE SCHOOL OF ARCHITECTURE, PLANNING, AND PRESERVATION

Questions in Architectural History I

Fall 2018

Instructor: Mary McLeod, Teaching Fellows: Alireza Karbasion and Elliot Sturtevant

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Class Meetings: Wednesday 11:00 am -1:00 pm

Sections: t.b.a.

Office Hours: Wednesday, 1:30-3:00 (or by appointment), 300 level Buell Hall

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General course description (Reinhold Martin):

Note about this class of QAH1 (Mary McLeod)

This class of QAH1 seeks to provide a basic critical understanding of architecture (largely European and North American) during the modern period, focusing on the late eighteen and nineteenth centuries. Although the course does not purport to be global, it examines the cultural and political exchanges between the so-called “West” and other regions of the world, whether as inspiration, diffusion, or translation. It is also the hope that the teaching fellows and students in the discussion sections will further broaden the geographic arena of cultural inquiry by making causal connections and comparisons to developments in other regions of the world.

Each class focuses on a theme, such as structural rationalism, enlightenment urban planning, new public institutions, historicism, social utopianism, technology and new materials, etc., with the intention of investigating a series of broader questions that arise from these topical investigations. In general, the emphasis is on beginnings of new developments or directions in architecture that have expanded the boundaries of the field itself, whether in terms of program, scale, client, user, or even the formation of the architect himself or herself (the latter, rare in this period). The topics sometimes involve changes generated by developments internal to architecture itself, other times by events external to the discipline, at least as it was conceived at that moment in time. The course proposes some general transformations across the time frame of the class—for example, the shift from idealism to historicism, from character to representation (i.e., legibility); from craft and masonry construction to industrial production and new materials, from an aristocratic and ecclesiastical clientele to a broader middle-class public (in other words, in terms of program, from palaces and churches to public institutions). However, the intention is not to provide a teleological model of the history of modern architecture or of modernism more generally but rather to show the diversity of efforts to challenge, expand, and create new arenas of architectural practice. In other words, modernity itself is seen as a historically complex and changing phenomenon, one in which architecture sometimes plays a generative role, other times a secondary one, with regard to broader political, social and economic transformations.

## Schedule

### 1. Architecture and the History of Modernity (9/5)

Two early challenges to Renaissance canons: Theories of Beauty and Rococo, the *style moderne*

How do we periodize in architecture history? What are the beginnings of architectural modernity? Does the history of modern architecture necessarily start with the Enlightenment and the Industrial Revolution? What is the role of causality? How does Perrault challenge Renaissance canons? What does he mean by arbitrary versus positive beauty? How does the Rococo challenge classicism? gender? the hierarchy of the arts? the Greco-Roman heritage? To what extent is modernity a challenge to foundations or a search for new ones?

### 2. Origins and Archaeology (9/12)

Reason versus aesthetic freedom, Laugier and the Greco-Gothic ideal, Le Roy, Stuart and Revett, Piranesi, the Greco-Roman controversy, aesthetic license

On what grounds should design be based? Can design be rational? On what foundation should architecture be based? What are the tensions and contradictions between reason and sensationalism in mid-eighteenth century architectural theory? How does archeology challenge classicism as a common language? Does Piranesi represent a critique to reason? To what extent does he open the door to eclecticism? How does archeology extend aesthetic concerns and stylistic imagery beyond Europe?

Note: Thursday afternoon (9/13) there will be a special session in Avery Library looking at Piranesi's books and etchings.

### 3. Nature, Landscape, and the Picturesque (9/19)

William Kent, Edmund Burke, Capability Brown, Richard Payne Knight, Uvedale Price

How do attitudes toward nature change in the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries? What role does the degradation of the landscape and environmental concerns play? How do changing attitudes toward nature challenge notions of beauty? What are the class implications of picturesque theory? What are the political connotations of the English garden? To what extent are the changes in aesthetics related to discoveries of Chinese gardens and another aesthetic outside of European tradition?

Note: Thursday afternoon (9/20) there will be a special session in Avery Library looking at an array of rare books relevant to the class.

### 4. City and Territory in the Enlightenment (9/26), film about the Salines de Chaux

Laugier, Pierre Patte, Ledoux, L'Enfant

What are the beginnings of modern city planning? What is the role of the police (Delamare) in the formation of theories of urban order? To what extent are notions of urban organization and order motivated by function, aesthetics, symbolic representation (images of government power)? What is the role of nature in new urban visions?

### 5. New Public Institutions: Expression and Classification (10/3)

Boullée, Ledoux, Lequeu, and Durand: Theories of Character and Type

What new building types emerge in the late eighteenth- and nineteenth centuries? How does the audience of architecture change in the late eighteenth and nineteenth century? How do changes in program and audience change the very nature of the discipline? What are the differences between character and type?

### 6.. Fragmentation, New Spatial Concepts, and Personal Style (10/10)

Adam, Dance, and Soane

How do landscape ideas enter into architecture? How does this change the nature of space and composition? What allows the notion of personal style to develop in England? How is related to the institutional framework and economy? How does this challenge and even undermine traditional notions of classicism? What is the meaning of spatial fragmentation and its implications for future architecture?

## 7. National Identity and Race (10/17)

Jefferson, Latrobe, Mills

How did Jefferson see classicism as an embodiment of political ideals? of pedagogical principles? What are the contradictions in his vision? How are race and a slave economy an unspoken factor in discussions of his architecture, especially Monticello? What were the contributions of slaves to plantation architecture? To what extent is early nineteenth-century American architecture a departure from European architecture and to what extent a continuity?

## 8. Historicism and Style (10/24)

Goethe, Gilly, Schinkel

How does historicism challenge the idealism of the eighteenth-century architecture? To what extent is it a rejection of rationalism? or does it propose a new kind of rationalism as a basis of style? What is the relationship between historicism and eclecticism? How does historicism admit to other cultures or influences? To what extent does it also inform the notion of a “modern style” or a “style for each age”?

## 9. Utopian Socialism and the Architecture of Social Control (10/31)

Bentham, Fourier, Saint-Simon, Marx and Engels, prisons, workers' towns, diffusion of utopian principles

To what extent can architecture shape behavior? What is the role of discipline in architecture? Can architecture reform society and individuals? To what extent does utopia serve as a positive model of social change? To what extent is it a hindrance? How do the colonies and Americas become grounds for social experimentation, sometimes relying on architecture?

## 10. Moral Reform and Industry (11/7)

The Gothic Revival: Pugin, Ruskin, Imperial Gothic

To what extent is the Gothic Revival in the nineteenth-century a response to the industrial revolution and the problems that it has engendered? Is it only an escape or retreat from conditions or does it also embody principles that will be fundamental to what might be seen as “modern” architecture, such as functionalism, structural expression, improvement of labor and social conditions? How does the meaning of Gothic Revival architecture change across time?

#### 11. Meaning and New Technology (11/14)

Labrouste, Rondelet, Viollet-le-Duc, Iron in Public and Commercial Architecture

How does the notion of architectural communication change from the eighteenth century to the nineteenth century? What is the difference between character and representation (or legibility)? How does the role of iron change in the nineteenth-century? How might Labrouste’s architecture be seen as an answer to Victor Hugo’s “This Will Kill That”?

#### 12. The Metropolis and Colonial Planning (11/28)

Paris and Algiers

How does the nature of the metropolis change in the nineteenth century? How does infrastructure change? What is the role of public parks? To what extent are colonial cities “laboratories” for European cities? How does imperial architecture change indigenous settlements?

### Course Requirements

Sections: There are section meetings every week, led by teaching fellows, to discuss themes relevant to readings or lectures. These sections will also broaden the scope of investigation, often introducing related issues and buildings in other regions. All readings must be finished before class meetings. Attendance is required, and if for some reason you cannot attend, the instructor should be informed before class. Participation in sections will be considered in grading (the equivalent of one of the essays, approximately 25 percent). Besides the three essays or longer research essay, students may be given other smaller assignments including preparing questions for discussion and seminar presentations.

Written assignments: Students have the option of writing three essays or one longer research paper. These papers, like all written assignments, are to be done independently and must be footnoted properly, following Chicago Manual of Style.

See A Pocket Guide to Writing History(available at Book Culture) if you have any questions you might have about style. The papers should be typed and double-spaced.

See general course description for dates of assignments. All students writing a research paper must consult with Professor McLeod and have the topic and bibliography approved before proceeding.

Plagiarism: Unfortunately, we have had several cases of plagiarism at the GSAPP in the past few years. This is unacceptable and is grounds for dismissal from the university. A concise description of plagiarism is provided in A Pocket Guide to Writing History (available at Book Culture). If you have any questions about what constitutes plagiarism, please consult your section leader or Mary McLeod.

Note: Any students whose English skills are weak are strongly encouraged to enroll in Columbia University's American Language Program before the beginning of the semester. Classes are free, and most students who take them find them useful. Please see Danielle Smoller, the Dean of Admissions, for further information. Classes fill up quickly. Good English ability is especially essential for QAH 1, as this lecture course demands considerable skills in reading and writing. Another useful resource for all students is the Writing Center in Philosophy Hall. If you have any question about this, please talk to your section leader or Mary McLeod.

## Readings

Students are expected to read the required readings before each lecture. Additional readings are also listed to enable those students who wish to pursue a topic further to do so. Students who have already read some of the required readings in previous courses should substitute those readings with suggestions from the supplemental list. In general, those readings listed first in the Additional Readings section are considered most relevant to the lectures. The list, however, is quite extensive in order to help students who wish to pursue themes in their short essays in further depth. If students have not had a previous survey in 18th- and 19th-century architecture, they should consult regularly and read the relevant sections in Alan Braham, *The Architecture of the French Enlightenment* (Berkeley: University of California, 1980), \*Barry Bergdoll, *European Architecture 1750-1890* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), and Robin Middleton and David Watkin, *Neoclassical and Nineteenth Century Architecture* (New York: Rizzoli, 1983), now titled *Architecture of the Nineteenth Century, History of World Architecture* (Phaidon, 2003). Students may also find the two volumes on eighteenth- and nineteenth-century architecture, *Companions to the History*

*of Architecture* (London: Wiley-Blackwell, 2017). Useful sources for primary documents are \*Liane Lefaivre and Alexander Tzonis, ed., *The Emergence of Modern Architecture* (London and New York: Routledge, 2004) and \*Harry Francis Mallgrave, ed., *Architectural Theory, Vol. 1: An Anthology from Vitruvius to 1870* (Malden, Mass. and Oxford: Blackwell, 2006), although the excerpts in both books are frustratingly short. All books marked with an \* on the reading list have been ordered for purchase at Book Culture on 112th St. between Broadway and Amsterdam, though availability for some books is unclear. (Amazon.com, abebooks.com, and bookfinder.com are good options especially for books that are out of print, such as Allan Brahm's excellent book on eighteenth-century French architecture, Claude Perrault's *Ordonnance*, and Kenneth Clark's *The Gothic Revival*.) Students who have never had a lecture course on nineteenth-century European architecture will find reading Bergdoll's book extremely useful as a supplement to the lectures and should consider buying it. The bibliography at the back is also very helpful and should be consulted by students electing to write a final paper. Besides Bergdoll's survey book, it might be helpful to purchase Marc Antoine Laugier, *Essay on Architecture*, as a large section of this book will be assigned. Store books are returned at mid-semester. Therefore, students should purchase books for the last half of the class early in the semester.

Most required readings and some recommended texts are posted on Columbia's Canvas. Most required readings are also on reserve at Avery Library.