

COLLEGE OF ARCHITECTURE + PLANNING, UNIVERSITY OF UTAH
ARCH 6239-001, SPECIAL TOPICS IN HISTORY: POST 1945

Course Syllabus

Spring Semester 2009

10:45 am to 12:40 pm, MW, Arch 228

William Miller, FAIA, Professor

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By the time workers began clearing the rubble from the cities bombed during the war, modernism had emerged as the architectural language symbolizing democratic aspirations, becoming the common datum from which many postwar practitioners and theorists began their search for an architectural identity”

**Sarah Williams Goldhagen
and Réjean Legault**



Course Overview

Within the context of post World War II architecture, this course will focus upon the major developments in architectural and urban design which have occurred on the international and American scene over the past 60 years. Coverage will include the design and intellectual themes that mark the recent past and present, and the interrelationships between them. The course will engage in discussions of issues in contemporary architectural design and theory, and investigate contemporary architectural paradigms and concepts from a critical approach.

Course Premises

As architecture is both a discipline and a profession, this course will examine architectural ideas in relation to the practice or doing of architecture. For lurking beneath almost any writing or pronouncement on architecture, especially those aspiring to theory, is frequently a quest for some overarching construct of the world that will guide and be reflected in the architecture that one produces.

Most significant architects say they have a foot in both the world of ideas and the world of making; or, with principles guiding action and the more practical “knowing how”, to the more theoretical “knowing that”. In use from the end of the fifteenth century, the English word “practice” is adopted from the Latin *practicus* and from the Greek *praktikos*, meaning “record, action”, and from *prattein*, meaning to “do, act”. Today, practice also means the habitual doing or carrying on of something, or a customary or constant action.

From Le Corbusier’s “5 points of a new architecture,” and Wright’s “organic architecture.” and Aalto’s pronouncement that, “I don’t write, I draw,” and Mies’ “Almost nothing,” and Kahn’s “Order is,” to the writings of Robert Venturi and Peter Eisenman, as well as deconstructivist propositions of Mary McLeod, Mark Wrigley, and Jeffrey Kipnis, theoretical and intellectual constructs have been used to inform the making of architecture over the past 60 years. Beginning on the eve of the Second World War, this course will focus on the diversity of directions occurring for the past six decades.



“No account of recent developments in architecture can fail to mention the ambivalent role that the profession has played since the mid-1960s – ambivalent not only in the sense that while professing to act in the public interest it has sometimes assisted uncritically in furthering the domain of an optimized technology, but also in the sense that many of its more intelligent members have abandoned traditional practice, either to resort to direct social action or to indulge in the projection of architecture as a form of art.”

Kenneth Frampton



Course Text and Readings

There is one required text for the course:

Kenneth Frampton, *Modern Architecture: A Critical History*.
New York: Thames and Hudson, Fourth edition.

Along with this text, there will be a series of readings associated with discussion topics. The readings address larger issues related to the content of the course, as well as the practice of architecture. With the exception of the text, the syllabus and all reading assignments can be found on the instructor’s web site.

Course Requirements and Grading

In order to examine various aspects of contemporary architectural practice and the ideas associated with it, there will be two assignments for the semester.

The first assignment will be done in teams (of 3). Each team will conduct a seminar discussion session on one of the topic areas found in the “Semester Schedule” below. Each of the topics will have a reading package found on the instructor’s website, which the entire class will also read prior to the presentation. Each team will organize the material and coordinate the presentation and discussion of the topic. Approximately one-third of the class period should be used to present the ideas, and architectural implications found in the content of the assigned material. This time will include an open class discussion and examination of the material presented. Teams are free to develop their presentation in any manner that reinforces the ideas found in the readings. The topic areas of the readings include modernism, post-modernism, and deconstruction.

The second assignment, which will be done individually, will be to develop a case study analysis of a significant building, urban or landscape design. To assist you in understanding the content of the individual case study, the instructor has placed on his website three examples from Peter Blundell Jones’s *Modern Architecture Through Case Studies* (Hans Scharoun, National Theater project, Mannheim; Sigurd Lewerentz, St. Peter’s Church, Klippan; and Louis Kahn, Kimbell Art Museum, Fort Worth). The case study each student develops should be a minimum 3,000 word text, include appropriate diagrams and illustrations, and have end notes and a bibliography. You should feel free to consult me at any time about the content or writing of the paper.

The value of the course assignments are as follows:

- Team Discussion Session 20%
- Case Study Paper 80%

Instructor Absence and Communication

Faculty members are involved in scholarly and creative endeavors, professional and theoretical practice, professional service, and other



“Eisenman’s work, the experience of that work, the philosophy demanded by it, opens up the need to think philosophically beyond the recuperative and nihilistic unfolding of tradition. Tradition is housed – since there is no pure beyond – but the housing of tradition takes place within a plurality of possibilities that can no longer be foreclosed by function, by teleology of by the aesthetics of form. Works with open doors must be what are henceforth demanded by philosophy and architecture.”

Andrew Benjamin



activities. As such, the instructor may be absent from time to time during the semester.

Email is an official means of notification for both the university, college, and this course. Please make sure you regularly check your college account, or have email forwarded from that account to your regular address, to ensure you receive all information concerning the conduct, meetings, and assignments for the course.

Semester Schedule

	Monday	Wednesday
January		
Week 1	12. Introduction	14. Modern Masters Team sign-ups
Readings:	<i>Modern Architecture</i> , Part II, Chapters 17, 18, 20, 25, 26. <i>Anxious Modernism</i> , “Introduction”. Web readings: “Modernism”.	
Week 2	19 – Holiday	21. Modern Masters
Week 3	22. Modern Masters	28. Situated Modernism Paper Topic & Bibliography Due
Readings:	<i>Modern Architecture</i> , Part II, Chapters 21, 22, 27.	
February		
Week 4	2. Situated Modernism	4. Post War Themes
Readings:	<i>Modern Architecture</i> , Part III, Chapters 1, 2, 3. <i>Anxious Modernism</i> , “Coda”.	
Week 5	9. Post War Themes	11. Post War Themes
Week 6	16 – Holiday	18. Modernism Discussion
Week 7	23. Modernism Discussion	25. Post Modernism
Readings:	<i>Modern Architecture</i> , Part III, Chapters 4, 5. Web readings: “Post Modernism”.	
March		
Week 8	2. Post Modernism	4. Post Modernism
Week 9	9. PoMo Discussion	11. PoMo Discussions
Week 10	Spring Break – No Classes	
Week 11	23. Current Directions	25. Current Directions
Readings:	<i>Modern Architecture</i> , Part III, Chapters 6, 7. Web readings: “Deconstruction”.	



“Architecture tends to make an absolute separation between theory and practice, between analysis and synthesis. This difference, however, could be better expressed in the difference between discourses: an analytical, exploratory, critical discourse and a normative discourse. Most theories are developed within the first category, while practice falls into the latter.”

Diana Agrest



Schedule continued

	Monday	Wednesday
April		
Week 12	30. Bill out (UI visit)	1. Bill out (UI visit)
Week 13	6. Current directions	8. Current directions
Week 14	13. Decon Discussion	15. Decon Discussion
Week 15	20. Masters reviews	22. Current directions
Week 16	27. Current directions	29. Current directions
May		
Finals	4. Paper Due at 4:00pm	

Team Discussion Topics (from the readings on the web page)

Team 1 – Modernism – Summerson and Goldhagen/Legault article
Boam, Lane and Fife

Team 2 – Modernism – Frank Lloyd and Le Corbusier 1 & 2
Hokanson, Sinner and Bracken

Team 3 – Modernism – Goldhagen, “Coda”
Luo. Kim and Narayanamurthy

Team 4 – Post Modern – Modern & Post Modern Architecture
Felt, Hansen and Tritchler

Team 5 – Post Modern – Venturi and Gray Architecture
Beecher, Brown and White

Team 6 – Post Modern – Post Functionalism and 5 Architects
Parkinson, Vaughn and Yribar

Team 7 – Post Modern – Post Modern Architecture
Wallis, Schill and Lee

Team 8 – Deconstruction – Architecture and Politics
Brinton, Zarek and Campbell

Team 9 – Deconstruction – End of the Classical and Translation of
Architecture
Woodbury, Butler and Smith

Team 10 – Deconstruction – Twisting the Separatix 1 & 2
Davis, Sommer and Larsen

