

f o c u s e d i n q u i r y

catalog description_

Architectural Theory (3). Examines contemporary architectural theory, criticism, and practice through the presentation and study of significant texts and built form.

Prerequisite: graduate standing or permission of the program director.

the•o•ry.

noun (pl. -ries.)

a supposition or a system of ideas intended to explain something, esp. one based on general principles independent of the thing to be explained:

Darwin's theory of evolution.

- a set of principles on which the practice of an activity is based: *a theory of education / music theory.*

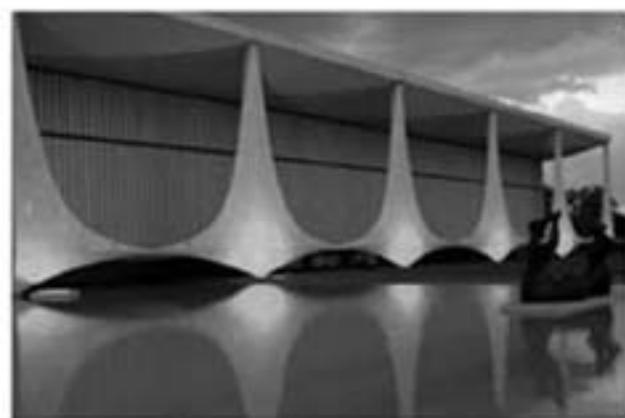
- an idea used to account for a situation or justify a course of action: *my theory would be that the place has been seriously mismanaged.*

- Mathematics a collection of propositions to illustrate the principles of a subject.

temporary work. contemporary thoughts. contemporary interpretations. contemporary reflections. contemporary discussions. contemporary technology. contemporary writings. contem

in architecture and design

ORIGIN late 16th cen. (denoting a mental scheme of something to be done): via late Latin from Greek *theoria* 'contemplation, speculation,' from *theoros* 'spectator.'



course objectives_

This course is a study in depth requiring **focused inquiry** into topical areas of architectural theory, criticism and practice, leading to a more complex perspective of the discipline of architecture. Extensive review of videos, DVDs, books, articles, published academic papers and conference proceedings are used to ground this exploration. Specific active learning assignments are given to enable students to internalize understandings and develop abilities for organizing this complexity in service to the **process of design**. This capstone graduate experience is tied to both student's concentration areas and design studio. It is designed to complement the creative project in ARCH 602 and will therefore allow the student to celebrate the full range of skills, knowledge and attitudes acquired in their graduate studies of architecture while encouraging **creative inquiry, critical analysis and broad synthesis**.

course requirements_

Course content activities include: readings, viewings, field trips, seminar discussion, team-based informational presentations, exercises, papers and projects. A broad inventory of contemporary writings in the topical areas will be identified. Students will be required to maintain a **blog** to log their thinking about the materials reviewed, discussion ensuing during class, and for recording notes as they prepare presentations for the class. A fundamental aspect of this course is a writing component that requires the student to reflect on what they have learned in their professional degree graduate program and the value they have gained from that knowledge.



...What is the state of architecture at the beginning of the twenty-first century? What is the value of asking such an immoderate, overreaching question?

It might be argued that those of us engaged in the practice of architecture today find ourselves in unusually blissful circumstances. Never has the field been more celebrated. Titanium temples of culture and translucent masterpieces appear ubiquitous; while architects have become successful media demigods, busy revitalizing the image of cities in a global economy.

Or is the situation the opposite? In the twenty-first century, will we come to criticize buildings that are famous more for what they look like than for what they do, and architects concerned more with constructing their autobiographies than with developing the art of construction? Will we mourn the death of public space and the disappearance of progressive social programs?

Bernard Tschumi and Irene Cheng, *The State of Architecture at the Beginning of the Twenty-First Century*, Columbia University Press, 2003

What is the field of architecture today, then, especially as perceived by those at its front lines -architects, architectural writers, and theorists? Have the modes of self-analysis and expression changed? What is the role of theory? What is the value of theory?

recommended texts:

Rafael Moneo, *Theoretical Anxiety and Design Strategies in the Work of Eight Contemporary Architects* (London, The Mit Press, 2004)

Critical Architecture, edited by Jane Rendell, Jonathan Hill, Murray Fraser and Mark Dorrian (London and New York, Routledge, 2007)

Hunch, ed. The Berlage Institute report No.6/7 (Rotterdam, Berlage Institute, 2003)

Lists of recommended readings will be issued during the course.

Readings placed on electronic reserve or blackboard.

PROVISIONAL
ATTEMPTS
TO ADDRESS
SIX SIMPLE AND HARD
QUESTIONS
ABOUT
WHAT ARCHITECTS DO
TODAY
AND WHERE
THEIR PROFESSION
MIGHT GO
TOMORROW

The class, in combination with the other courses of the program, is organized to prepare students for a broader view of the missions, processes, and participants in architecture.

I would like to help you maintain or improve important learning and communication skills, including your ability to read, write, and think critically, use new technology, make oral presentations, and work as part of a team.

As an educator of architecture I agree with Heman Hertzberger when he states that the objective of architectural training must ultimately be nurture the growth of the students' own sense of what constitutes quality, so that they may become aware of who they are, where they stand, what they have to say, and which formal means are the most appropriate in their specific cases.



"The laboratory is where experimental knowledge is devised and build up. The laboratory is the place where experiments are performed and repeated; operations and exercises are carried out, where new knowledge is generated by way of the production of original data. Formulating hypotheses, establishing a series of operations, setting a common sequence of actions, reflecting on the conditions in which the experiment has been carried out, comparing results from different cases, recognizing recurrence as opposed to exceptions: these are the characteristics of a laboratory."

THE DESIGN OF THE GATTOPARDO _ PAOLA VIGANO _ BERLAGE CAHIERS 1, 1992

This course will take a discussion format and be based on weekly readings and class discussions. Each class will include presentations of readings, interviews, films, discussions, and slide shows.

The group discussions and critical thinking demand serious engagement and active participation.

Students are expected to demonstrate scholarship and leadership in their work within the course, and a strong attitude towards knowledge.

Attitudes and expectations_

The individual and collective work in the class environment will aim at fostering values that are important in an academic setting as well as in the student's future professional life. These attitudes include:

- Collaboration, acceptance of diversity, collegiality
- Emphasis on learning from others, process of discovery where individual initiative and sharing information and findings is valued.
- Participation and efforts to maximize the effectiveness of communications.
- Critical thinking: ability to analyze, abstract, classify, compare, evaluate.

Students are encouraged to communicate openly and honestly with the instructor.

Each student is responsible to sign up for 15 min presentations based on the student selected reading and assignments. Three to five images or models are required to illustrate the issues inherent within the readings. Presentations will alternate weekly.

Students are expected to complete the assigned readings by the beginning of each class and discuss them in class. In addition to class presentations and discussions, students are required to complete a series of writing assignments.

Attendance and active participation are extremely important. One excused absence is allowed with a letter of excuse or prior agreement of the professor. Following unexcused absences will lower the final grade or result in a failing grade. The required work must be submitted by the due date. No late work will be considered unless justified by exceptional circumstances.

Each student will give a formal presentation of the final paper/project at the end of the semester.

remember: the new knowledge is based on the questions you ask but also on the questions you don't.

Grading and Evaluation Criteria:

Reading Assignments and Participation	30%
Presentation, analysis, writing assignments	35%
Term Paper/Project and Presentation	35%

A- to A+ recognizes superior work.

A- to B+ recognizes above average work.

B- to C+ meets course requirements.

C- to D+ indicates deficiencies.

F indicates a failure to meet the course requirements.

TO REMEMBER:

Course Description:

Architectural Theory: Examines contemporary architectural theory, criticism, and practice through the presentation and study of significant texts and built form.

This course is a study in depth requiring focused inquiry into topical areas of architectural theory, criticism and practice, leading to a more complex perspective of the discipline of architecture. Extensive review of videos, books, articles, published academic papers and conference proceedings are used to ground this exploration. Specific active learning assignments are given to enable students to internalize understandings and develop abilities for organizing this complexity in service to the process of design. This capstone graduate experience is tied to both student's concentration areas and design studio. It is designed to complement the creative project in Arch 602 and will therefore allow the student to celebrate the full range of skills, knowledge and attitudes acquired in their graduate studies of architecture while encouraging creative inquiry, critical analysis, and broad synthesis.

One of the outstanding parts of the course is a writing component that requires the students to reflect on the value of contrasting theory and practice in the field not only through analyzing crucial texts and built work of the present and recent past (= contemporary) but also through the students' interpretations of their own work in studio.

 In this course students are required to create a blog:

- What is a blog? Why a blog? What to blog?
- Editing information: what is important? Why is important? What is less important? What it is not important at all.
- A blog representing a personal website/webpage which records each student's interpretations as well as links chosen to fuel the process of thinking on a regular basis throughout the semester.
- The blog must allow the interaction with other professionals –national or international, as well as the communication and feedback with the general public.
- A blog-roll displayed in the students' personal web page lists references and papers each student submits for the class.
- This blog also must be considered an extension of each student's personal portfolio; able to be visited by any reader (academic/professional).
- The blog must show essentially the thoughts and interpretations (theoretical views) behind the projects students develop in their studio classes or practical approaches outside the classroom.
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The main assignment for the semester (final submission drafted and evaluated throughout the class) is composed by a written + physical “architectural manifesto” based/extracted/elaborated on the topical discussions occurred in class as well as the conceptualization that students could developed in their thesis/studio projects as well as in other classes. Both pieces –the writing and physical components of the manifesto, could complement each other but essentially they both communicate how the student interprets and looks at/analyze architecture.

A series of dynamic assignments created for the class allows students to elaborate clear and precise synthesis of their own points of view as well as of those of the selected architectural thinkers reviewed throughout the semester.

Calling for intellectual curiosity, intelligent perseverance, ability to questioning, and self-discipline the course develops different types of explorations focusing on meanings, similarities, and contrasts within the current theoretical approaches and notions of “contemporary” and “modern,” as well as on how those approaches become influential to the creation of new hypotheses and/or interpretations of architecture, and the architect’s role and responsibilities in today’s society.

As students elaborate the process for the manifesto during the whole semester they are required to produce a series of physical and digital diagrams and models analyzing what are the questions they ask but also the ones they do not ask as well as how they can be represented in more than one dimension (in writing, in models, etcetera). Also, the blog encourages students to explore a totally different type of communication as the blog does represent a more graphic expression while the piece of writing developed in the course –a manifesto, intends to be more focused on a more academic manner the blog asks for a contrastive mode of communication where the texts is treated as it were a drawing or an image.

Participation in class discussions is mandatory as well as the level of intellectual curiosity that each student brings to those class discussions. The class does not take this point as a passive topic [“the magic formula”] but as the absolutely opposed angle of observation: students bring an important part of the discussion and in that scenario they by themselves must continuously work on improving their capacity of examination, comprehension, analysis and synthesis as part of their academic and professional work (theory and practice).

As an example and among others central theoretical and practical work examined in the course are the diverse, socio-political positions of architects –professionals and academics, such as the Chilean Alejandro Aravena – *Pritzker Prize* 2016, and the work done with Elemental playing a significant role of emphasizing the need of a deeper disciplinary attention to new models of communities; declarations like “Architecture is a Verb” as Rafael Iglesias would state considering the discipline a tool capable to be a qualifier in the contemporary world, as well as texts like “Less-More” by Rafael Gomez Moriana –architect, writer, and photographer interested in mass- and pop-cultural aspects of architecture, or the views and vicissitudes that the Office of Metropolitan Architecture led by Rem Koolhaas expresses in its published and/or built architecture-work.

In this class cultural diversity and social equity are discussed in some way in every session. As an example, at the beginning of the semester, and based on the presentation of different contemporary-events students are asked to discuss and question in class the precise context and framework for those (national or international) events. From that point students would analyze the type of implications –if any, regarding the world of architecture. This type of initial conversations openly brings to the table of discussion the meaning of “language,” “function,” “responsibilities,” “ethics,” in the design-discipline as well as it referrals in particular the one that relates to the “architect” and his/her role in society at distinct scales of observations.

During the semester I will meet you individually to talk about your grade. If at any time of the semester you feel the need to talk about your performance in class, please do not hesitate to come and see me.

Please refer to the University policy on plagiarism. Be aware that anything taken from the internet also falls under the purview of this policy.

IMPORTANT

IF YOU NEED COURSE ADAPTATIONS OR ACCOMMODATIONS BECAUSE OF A DISABILITY, IF YOU HAVE EMERGENCY MEDICAL INFORMATION TO SHARE WITH ME, OR IF YOU NEED SPECIAL ARRANGEMENTS IN CASE THE BUILDING MUST BE EVACUATED, PLEASE MAKE AN APPOINTMENT WITH ME AS SOON AS POSSIBLE.



This class will also require:

- intellectual curiosity.
- intelligent perseverance.
- ability to questioning.
- self-discipline.

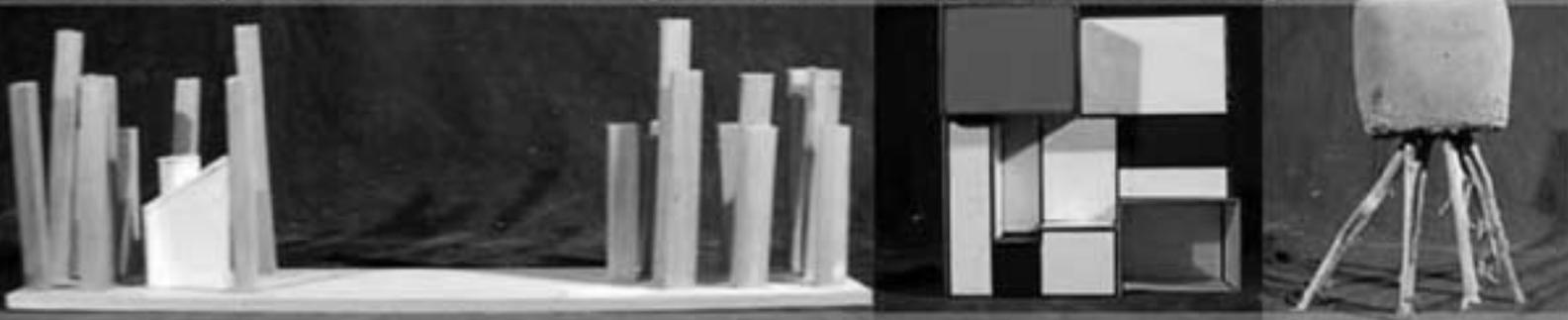
"Do the research you're interested in -typology of cities, houses, buildings, constructions or



infraestructure- but always in close contact with your observations (and their interpretation



and structure) on the uses and meanings of space. This will motivate design as the



development of concepts and their optimization, elaboration, and articulation.



Develop your Inspiration!



RUDY UYTENHAAK, HUNCH 2003

Examples of research models done by students as a result of this seminar classes.

Is an architect more than just somebody who gets buildings built?

"Any architect who has a sense of self-worth derived from something other than money or the satisfaction of getting a job done must answer this question. That means that she or he must believe that there is either an artistic role (making beauty) or a critical one for the architect. Both are profoundly difficult notions to maintain."

steps

important steps of this seminar:

FIRST FORMAL REVIEW

first graphic + visual documents that conceptualize your [individual, final] theoretical architectural-manifesto

SECOND FORMAL REVIEW

first graphic + visual documents that materialize your [individual, final] theoretical architectural-manifesto

THIRD FORMAL REVIEW

dates for these presentations will be agreed with students to not interfere with other classes' reviews

presentation of your theoretical architectural-manifesto

LAST MEETING DAY

individual exit-interviews