Spring 2018 Graduate Electives

ARCH 684_001 – Modern Vernacular: Resources of Architectural Language
Tracey Winton
DAY/TIME - TBD

In 1950 historian Bruno Zevi wrote a polemic, provocative, and personal book, later translated into English as The Modern Language of Architecture, which condemned architects imitating classical parameters and features for design, and outlined a 'method' for designing in a modern language that displaced design emphasis from form toward content and new kinds of expression. Zevi didn't propose a style: he was very interested in the potentials of organic architecture, and in the primacy of space. He acclaimed Frank Lloyd Wright's Fallingwater (1937) as a new Divine Comedy for architecture. Wright's inventive, unique way of building did not come out of nowhere, but like Carlo Scarpa two decades later, drew on local traditions as well as the vernacular building practices of remote Japan.

How can our built environment communicate as a poetic medium while also performing in its other dimensions? Work will focus on study and analysis of the deep background of buildings and artworks dating mainly from the 1950s to the 1970s. Dissatisfied with the International Style but not yet immersed in imitative Postmodernism, architects explored the poetics of space through language and narrative. We inquire into strategies of research, communication and legibility that, while not unique to modern architecture, can be seen as the essential components that make certain contextual works endure and overflow with meaning.

This interactive graduate seminar digs into the cultural and historical foundations of projects to learn about how modern architectural language developed in the postwar era. It considers the influences of vernacular building (site-specificity, program, primitivism, sustainable design), popular culture, art (Spatialism, Process Art, Arte Povera), architectural representation, photography, and film in late modernism. Note that this course is not: a review of architectural theory; a history of modern architecture, a design methodology.

Field Trip to visit buildings (course requirement) all students must have a valid passport.

Course description and content is subject to change.

ARCH 684 -002 - Design Build Elective Course

John McMinn and Paul Dowling

Despite our shared history and common geography, reconciliation and direct connections with First Nations culture remains elusive from everyday experience for many of us. The Waterloo Architecture Design Build program offers a form of collective experiential learning linked to the idea of embodied knowledge, intrinsic to First Nations culture and the means of passing on knowledge and skills from generation to generation. Design Build allows us to explore the possibilities of architectural design and community infrastructure building, in the Grand River Basin where the School of Architecture is situated.

The Spring semester design build elective is focused on hands on making, for the construction of the new Pow Wow Arbor in a sacred oak grove at the heart of the Mississaugas of the New Credit First Nation, near Hagersville Ontario, south-east of Cambridge. The pow wow ceremony is the largest celebration of culture and communal gathering held in many First Nations communities each year, and is part of a renewal of First Nations culture in the last few decades, after the profound traumas faced by Indigenous peoples in Canada through government policies of colonization and assimilation.

First Nations communities in southern Ontario hold their pow wow celebrations in sequence, making for what known as the pow wow trail that involves community members, performers and vendors travelling from community to community each week throughout the summer, enabling diverse cultural exchanges across the region, as well as throughout the larger regions of Turtle Island (North America). The Mississaugas of the New Credit have held their Three Fires Homecoming Pow Wow for two days in late August, on same site for the last 32 years.

The Spring semester design build elective involves the prototyping and fabrication of structural elements of the pow wow arbor in the School of Architecture workshop, followed by on-site construction and assembly of the full-scale permanent structure, for the New Credit pow wow grounds at the heart of their community. The course provides students an opportunity to work directly with First Nations community members, by engaging with the cultural history of the Grand River valley and the relationships to land, natural habitat
and heritage of the Anishinaabe people whose territory this was traditionally. The Design Build program allows us to explore what role the process of architectural design and building can play in understanding and enhancing the growth and goals of First Nations communities and culture.

ARCH 685 – Independent Research on Special Topics in Architecture

This course is intended allow students to cover materials not otherwise available in a graduate course offered in this, or nearby universities. These courses will usually consist of a program of directed reading, complemented with the writing of papers or participation in research. The research question and course content should be negotiated on an individual basis with a faculty member, whose research interests cover closely related material. A specific outline for the course of study must be developed by the student, in consultation with the professor in charge, and approved by the Graduate Officer in advance of the term in which a student wishes to take the course.

ARCH 686 – Competitions in Architecture
Terri Meyer Boake

This course provides an opportunity for the student to independently engage in the respected tradition of the Architectural Competition. The competition entry and accompanying research paper must focus on the use of architectural precedents as the basis for the creation of typologically based propositions. Submission to the external competition is mandatory, the timing and detailed requirements of which will determine one part of the academic requirements for this course. A student must develop a course outline, consisting of an outline for the research paper (including a preliminary bibliography), and the competition brief. Both the professor in charge, and the Graduate Officer, must approve the outline in advance of the term in which a student plans to take the course.