

**University of Waterloo  
Department of Architecture**

**ARCH 246 Pre-Renaissance to  
Reformation**

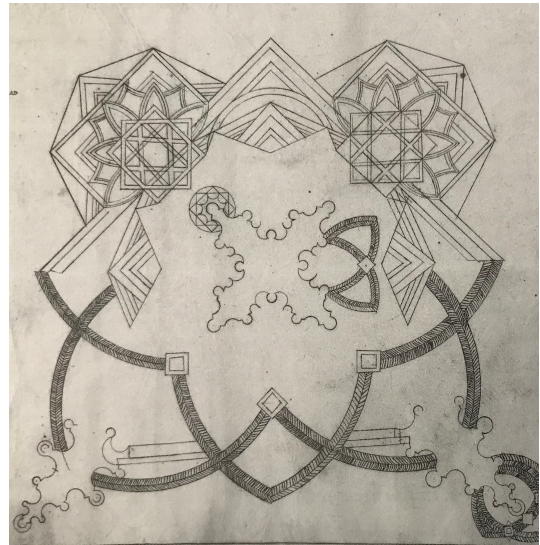
**Fall 2018**

**Tuesday 2- 5 pm**

**Room Arc 1101 (e-classroom)**

**Wednesday 2- 5**

**Room ARC 1001 (Main lecture hall)**



**Instructor and T.A. Information**

**Instructor: Dr. Tara Bissett**

**Office: Room 3008**

**Office Hours: Tue/ Wed after class**

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**Office Hours: TBA**

This course explores the cultural history of the early modern world (1300-1650) by tracing the significant moments and shifts in thought, habit, and material culture from the period. We will glimpse the early modern era and its material world through an unearthing of its dreams and nightmares, affect and logic, limits and transgressions, and generation of work and play. The course will investigate how time and space are inflected by modes of communication and ritual practices, by way of oral narratives and pilgrimage in the medieval period, and through the invention of the printing press and the phenomenon of the carnival in the later Renaissance. We will discover and analyse major shifts in architectural design habits that produced a transformation from oral to written to pictorial modes of communication throughout the period. And we will examine relationships between architecture and other media such as craft, music, and painting. The course will end by bringing into question the nature of storytelling, the role and importance of the storyteller, and the persistence of myth, not only in early modern art and architecture, but in the problematic perpetuation of Western history itself. Throughout the course, we will examine the past not as a lifeless artefact but as a live current that continues to shape the ideas informing our contemporary material culture.

## Course Requirements and Assessment

The course grade is based on assignments prepared in advance, assignments undertaken during class workshops, group work, and participation in class discussion, in-class reading and analysis, and informal writing.

Assessment	Date of Evaluation	Weighting
Descent Narrative:	October 12	15%
Portrait:	November 20	15%
Utopia Project:	December 18	30%
Class Attendance		10%
Readings/Lecture Journal		15%
Participation		5%
Workshops		
In-Class: Oct 17		5%
In-Class: Nov 28		5%

## Course Outline and Weekly Reading Calendar

### Books Required:

Dante Alighieri, *The Divine Comedy: Part I. The Inferno*, trans. Mark Musa, Penguin Classics, 2002. ISBN- 978-0142437223

Thomas More, *Utopia*, trans. Dominic Baker-Smith. Penguin Classics. ISBN: 978-0141442327 [NOTE: It's a short book, so feel free to read it all, but the most important part to read is part 2].

All other readings will be available on LEARN unless otherwise noted.

### Week 1 Sept 11      Introduction: Time, Space, and History

#### Reading

Walter Benjamin, "Thesis on the Philosophy of History" in *Illuminations*, ed. Hannah Arendt, New York: Schocken Books, 278p, 1969. Page 253-264.

**Week 1 Sept 12 Pilgrimage: The Medieval Self**

Time and the material world: Book of Hours, pilgrim's path, relics, the Crusades

Reading

Geoffrey Chaucer, "Prologue" and "The Wife of Bath" *The Canterbury Tales*, Penguin Classics, 2003. (19-42 & 276-310)

Film

*The Seventh Seal* (Ingmar Bergman, 1957) OR *Milky Way* (Luis Bunuel, 1969)

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**Week 2 Sept 18 The Descent: Fear and Hell**

Themes: Katabasis, the Spectre of hell, Transgression, Monastic life

Reading

Dante Alighieri, *The Divine Comedy: Part 1. The Inferno*, trans. Mark Musa, Penguin Classics, 2002.

**Week 2 Sept 19**

Film

*After Hours* (Martin Scorsese, 1985)

Discussion

Descent Narratives (in preparation for A1)

Supplementary Reading

JL Borges: The Dream Tiger: <https://thefloatinglibrary.com/2008/09/02/dreamtigers/>  
JL Borges: Inferno I: 32: <https://thefloatinglibrary.com/2008/07/28/inferno-i-32/>

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**Week 3 Sept 25 Geometry and Sacred Narratives**

Gothic and Divine Math, Pictures of Geometry, Neo-Platonism, Secretive Masonry

Reading

Saint Augustine, "Excerpts from Book Two" *On Order*. South Bend, Ind. : St. Augustine's Press, 2007.

Peruse

Excerpt from Villard de Honnecourt's Sketchbook  
Excerpt from Mathes Roritzer, *The Rectitude of Pinnacles*, Regensburg, 1486.

Listen in class

Polyphonic Music

**Week 3 Sept 26**

Brief introductory lecture: Icons

Film

Andrei Rublev (Andrei Tarkovsky, 1966)

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**Part II: Renaissance Ideals**

**Week 4 Oct 2 Utopia**

Humanism, Perspective, Ideal Cities, Vanishing Point, Science (fiction) Inventions

Reading

Thomas More, *Utopia*, trans. Dominic Baker-Smith. Penguin Classics (Mandatory to read Part II)

**Week 4 Oct 3**

Workshop: Class time to discuss and work on the Utopia Project

**Oct 9 no class**

**Oct 10 no class**

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**Week 5 Oct 11 No Class**

**Week 5 Oct 12 The Word and the Letter**

Invention of the Printing Press, Moveable Type, Literacy, the Reformation

Readings

Martin Luther, "95 Theses," in *Martin Luther's 95 Theses": with pertinent documents from the history of the Reformation*. Ed. Kurt Aland. St. Louis, Concordia Pub. House: 1967.

Johanna Drucker & Emily McVarish, "Renaissance Design: Standardization and Modularization in Print, 1450-1660." *Graphic Design History. A Critical Guide*. Pearson Education. 2013.

Peruse

Geofroy Tory, Selections from *Champfleury* (Originally published in 1533). New York, Dover: 1967.

**Oct 3: A 1: Descent Narrative Project**

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**Week 6 Oct 16 Rule, Limit, License**

Making and breaking rules, limit and license, the human body as impetus for design

### Readings

Alberti, Leone Battista. "Selections" *Ten Books on Architecture*. Edited by Joseph Rykwert. London: A. Tiani, 1955.

Short Selections, "Book IV intro" "and "The origins of the three orders" from Vitruvius, *On Architecture*, Penguin Classics. 2009.( 89 & 90-104).

### Peruse

Sebastiano Serlio, "The Extraordinary Book of Doors" in *On Architecture*. ed. Vaughan Hart and Peter Hicks. (New Haven, Conn: Yale University Press, 1996-2001

Cesare Cesariano. *Di Lucio Vitruvio Pollione de architectura libri dece...* Como, G. da Ponte, 1521. [Vitruvius]

## **Week 6 Oct 17**

### Workshop: In-Class Assignment

In-Class Assignment on Architectural Communication

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## **Part III: The Practice of Everyday Life**

### **Week 7 Oct 23            Love, Desire, Capitalism**

Engravings and woodblocks for the masses, carnal/matrimonial/courtly love, capitalism

### Readings

Selections from Erasmus' *Adages III to IV*, trans, Dennis Drysdale. U of T Press, Toronto, 2005. (Originally 1536).

Selections from Michel de Montaigne, "On three good wives" Page 194-201. "On some lines of Virgil", Page 260-288. *The Essays: A Selection*. Penguin Classics. 1991.

Selections from Baldesar Castiglione, *The Book of the Courtier*, "Changes in Fashion" "Gentlemanly Behaviour" "The Search for Honour" "The Common People" "Playing a Part" (Pages 111-122) and "Being in Love" "Longing for Beauty" "Sensual Love" (323-328)

Extra: <https://www.newyorker.com/magazine/2009/09/07/me-myself-and-i>

## **Week 7 Oct 24**

### Workshop

Week 6 & 7 on the concepts of limits, rules, and breaking rules

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### **Week 8 Oct 30            Labour and Craft**

Guild systems, Ornament, Microarchitecture

### Readings

Alina Payne. "Materiality, Crafting and Scale in Renaissance Architecture." *Oxford Art Journal*. Vol. 32.3, (2009).

Selections from Francesco Colonna. *Hypnerotomachia Poliphili*... Venice: A. Manuce, 1499.

"Contents" and "The origins of the orders: From wood to stone," from Vitruvius, *On Architecture*, Penguin Classics. 2009, (v-ix, 95-98).

### Suggested

Rozsika Parker, "The Domestication of Embroidery" in *The Subversive Stitch*. 60-81

## **Week 8 Oct 31**

### Workshop

- 1- Making Knowledge: Tacit versus explicit learning
  - 2-Labour and the Utopia Project
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## **Week 9 Nov 6                    Carnival**

World-Upside-Down, the grotesque/ gigantic/miniature, the carnival

### Readings

Selections from Rabelais, *Gargantua and Pantagruel*. Trans. MA Screech, Penguin. 319-331 & 268-290 & 707-710.

Susan Stewart, "The Grotesque Body", And "Exteriority: The City". In "The Gigantic" 78-86. *On Longing: Narratives of the miniature, the gigantic, the souvenir, the collection*. Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press 1984.

### In-Class watch

Jan Svankmajer- Lunch Food (1992)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0yM3uxZjdf0>

Jan Svankmajer- Darkness, Light, Darkness (1989)

<https://vimeo.com/212875761>

Extra short reading on Rabelais:

<https://www.theguardian.com/books/2006/dec/23/featuresreviews.guardianreview1>

## **Week 9 Nov 7**

### Workshop

The Grotesque

### Film

1- Dance excerpt: Kazuo Ohno and Butoh dance

## 2- Film

*Satyricon* (Federico Fellini, 1969)

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### **Week 10 Nov 13      Memory, Affect, Storytelling**

Affective storytelling, the Baroque, Passions of the soul

#### Readings

Selections from The Bible, Authorized King James Version, Oxford World's Classics, (2008)  
[Temple of Solomon; Descent from the Cross]

“Daedalus and Icarus” in Ovid’s *Metamorphosis*, Trans. A.S. Kline. Book VIII, 183-235.

René Descartes, Excerpts from Part II: The Number and Order of the Passions, *Passions of the Soul*{....}, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015.

### **Week 10 Nov 14**

#### Film

1- Kate Tempest *Icarus* and *The New Ancients* (Spoken word)

2- *Caravaggio* (Derek Jarman, 1986)

#### Discussion

Read: <https://www.newyorker.com/magazine/2013/01/14/rich-man-poor-man>

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## **Part IV: Mapping, Costuming, and Being ‘Other’**

### **Week 11 Nov 20      Mapping the World: Inventing Europe**

The concept of Europe, Depicting the East (Constantinople, Asia), Costume and Colonialism

#### Readings

Anthony Cutler, “The Pathos of Distance....” in *Reframing the Renaissance*, ed. Claire Farago. New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1995, 25-45.

Gülru Necipoğlu, “Early Modern Crosscurrents. Early Modern Floral: The Agency of Ornament in Ottoman and Safavid Visual Cultures,” *Histories of Ornament from Global to Local*. Princeton; Oxford : Princeton University Press, 2016.

#### Peruse images

*L’Entrée de Henri II à Rouen 1550*. Introduction by Margaret M. McGowan. Amsterdam and New York: Theatrum Orbis terrarum and Johnson Reprint Corporation, 1974.

**Nov 20: Portrait Assignment Due**

**Week 11 Nov 21**

Film

Embrace of the Serpent, 2016 (Ciro Guerra)

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**Week 12 Nov 27      Time, Space, and First Nations**

Cyclical versus linear time, Storytelling in conquest and resistance, The Ethics of “wonder”

Reading

Deborah Doxtator, “Inclusive and Exclusive Perceptions of Difference: Native and Euro-Based Concepts of Time, History, and Change,” *Decentering the Renaissance: Canada and Europe in multidisciplinary perspective, 1500-1700*. (33-47)

Cecelia F. Klein, “Wild Woman in Colonial Mexico: An Encounter of European and Aztec Concepts of Order,” in *Reframing the Renaissance*, ed. Claire Farago. New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1995, 246-264.

Stephen Greenblatt, “Introduction,” *Marvelous Possessions: The Wonder of the New World*. Chicago: University Press (1991), 1-25.

**Week 12 Nov 28**

Film

Kent Monkman Films: *Group of Seven Inches, A Nation is Coming & Casualties of Modernity*

Workshop: In-Class Assignment

**Final Utopia Assignment: December 18**

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## Assignments:

### **A1: Descent Narrative      October 3      15%**

The object of this assignment is to create a ‘descent narrative’ based on Dante’s *Inferno* but which takes place in our current time. Dante’s descent into the inferno of hell is based on the concept of katabasis, which refers to a descent of some kind, whether literally moving down into the depths of the earth, or metaphorically retreating into a personal hell from which it is difficult to become extricated. According to Raymond Clark, katabasis is a “journey of the dead made by a living person in the flesh who returns to our world to tell the tale.”

Sometimes the katabatic experience presents like an initiation, whereby its negative experience can nonetheless have the result of changing the self through adversity. Dante describes his descent into hell as an event, taking place in the “dark wood” of his life. These “dark woods” of contemporary life are easily allegorized in terms of personal crises, illness, break ups, or major life changes that bring about first despair and, perhaps later, understanding and change. Or katabasis may even refer to the revelation of “coming to know the self” that occurs in the process of Freudian psychoanalysis, with the event of the dream and its subsequent analysis acting as agents of descent, leading to self-awareness

Other times katabasis in our modern time is perceived as a living hell, often circumscribed by social concerns such as poverty, systemic racism, mental illness, or violence. This experience is one where the survivor of a social injustice would describe the world as a “living hell,” as was the case with Holocaust survivor, Primo Levi, who characterized Auschwitz as an infernal black hole in European civilization. Another example of hell-on-earth presents itself in the film, *Dheepan*, by Jacques Audiard, where a family of Sri-Lankan refugees seeking a better life in Paris instead find themselves trapped in a terrifying alienating and systemically racist underworld from which it is impossible to escape. We will look at the film, *After Hours*, by Martin Scorsese, as an example of a descent narrative.

#### Assignment instructions

1. Read Dante’s *Inferno*. Attend class workshop where we analyse the structure and content.
2. Loosely based on the structure of Dante’s *Inferno*, and with katabasis as the central motif, identify a theme that reflects a descent narrative in our modern time. You may either use the first type whereby the descent is a temporary experience or ritual that leads to self-knowledge, or you may draw upon the hell-on-earth model as depicted in the films *Dheepan* or *After Hours*.

The theme you choose may be real or fictional, but it must be plausible in contemporary society.

3. Part I: Words

In roughly 500-750 words (1 page single spaced), describe the conditions of your modern-day descent narrative. You may write about the descent from whichever style suits your purpose: as a description, a first person POV explanation, or even as a fictional narrative. Please note that you are not expected to imitate Dante's prose or structure. We are merely exploring how descent narratives are manifest in our time.

4. Part II: Illustrations, Imagery, Material Evidence

Develop a design, an illustration, or a crafted form that best exemplifies the material and/or spatial conditions of the descent you are narrating. These examples will vary considerably as they will depend on what you decide to choose as the katabatic story.

For instance, if you choose to invent a teenage rite of initiation, you might create a ceramic pendant and a book of rites that are meant to accompany the ritual. If your descent story centres on a tenant who can no longer afford rent in a rapidly gentrifying community, whether fictional or based on news stories, illustrate the neighbourhood or building. Or if your story is about migrant detention centres or homes for the elderly you can draw upon actual or imagined examples.

5. Citations:

They are not absolutely required for this assignment. But as a general rule, cite anything that you've taken from the web, a book, or any other source.

**A2: Portrait Project**

**Due November 20**

Choose a medieval or renaissance Portrait for analysis. As we get closer to the project I will provide some databases on which to draw.

(1) Describe its content, subject and composition.

(2) Inspired by the symbolic composition of the portrait you have selected produce your self-portrait.

Required format:

Your descriptive study of the chosen medieval or renaissance portrait should be roughly 1000 words and must include at least one illustration. Your self-portrait should measure 30cm x 30cm. You will need to scan your project and keep a digital file before you hand it in.

**A3: Utopia Project**

**Final Due December 18**

In groups of five people, develop a Utopic community based on a singular theme (feminism, garden city, green, community-oriented, socialist, leisure, labour, elderly, children etc). We will discuss the potential themes in class. You will work with your group to develop a

consistent theme on which you will elaborate and explain in an introductory text for the project. Each person in the group will be responsible for one element as discussed below.

The final project will consist of illustrations and text.

#### Part I: Introduction

The combined introduction to the project should be at least two pages single-spaced (1000 words). It should draw upon some of the features from Thomas More's *Utopia*, which we will discuss in class workshops.

#### Part II: Utopia Elements

Each person will be responsible for one of the following aspects of the group-designed Utopia. Each of these elements should have at least 500 words of explanatory text as well as corresponding images (necessary details, diagrams, illustrations, renderings or whatever illustrative mode you choose).

- 1- Map or Plan
- 2- Sketch up of housing
- 3- Infrastructure
- 4- Public Office/ Legal Buildings
- 5- Specific urban elements relevant to your theme (leisure, greenspace, etc)

#### Instructions:

- 1- Read Thomas More's *Utopia*. What are the constituents of his Utopia? Which are similar for your current-day version?
- 2- Develop your theme.
- 3- Assign responsibilities to each member.
- 4- As a group, write the introduction
- 5- Decide on a format for your entire presentation. Be sure each member of the group respects the group format so that there is consistency.
- 6- Several workshops in class will be devoted to the project. Questions may be raised at that time.