

# Arch 248 : Creating Modernity

Selected Topics in Early Modernism developed through the 17<sup>th</sup> 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> Centuries  
Class is scheduled Tuesdays and Wednesdays, 2-5 pm in the Cummings Lecture Hall, and occasionally elsewhere. Please check the schedule below for exceptions, and check your email the evening before every class to learn of unforeseen changes to the schedule.

Course Co-ordinator

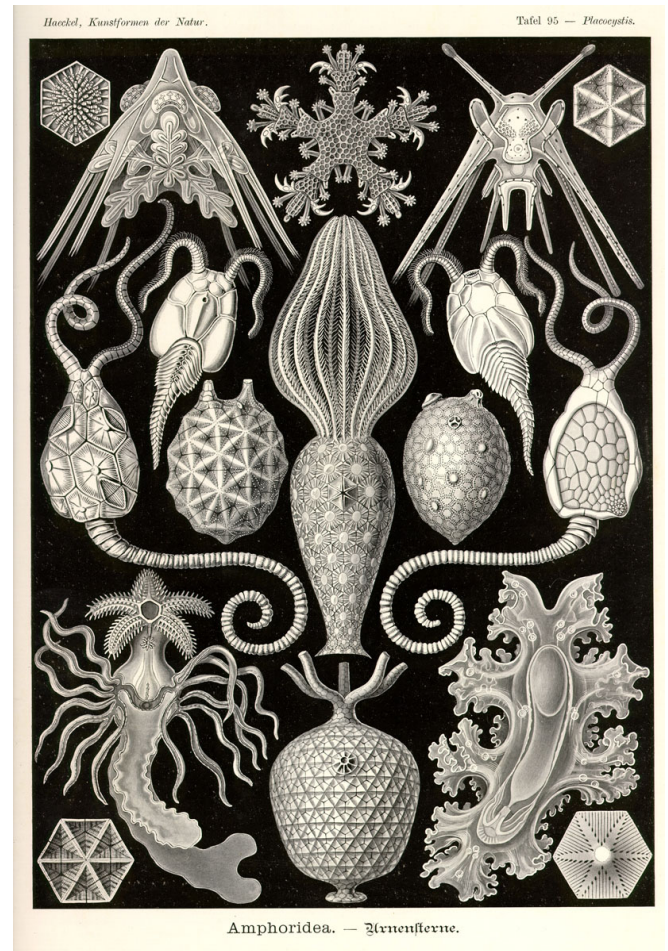
**Dr. Tracey Eve Winton** traceywinton@yahoo.ca

Graduate Teaching Assistants

**Omar Ferwati** M. Arch. student  
oferwati@uwaterloo.ca

**Nicholas Frayne**, M. Arch. student  
nffrayne@uwaterloo.ca

If you need to speak to one of us outside of class, please request an appointment in advance via email, using the subject line ARCH 248.



## Preface

In 1916, in one of his *Introductory Lectures on Psychoanalysis*, Sigmund Freud outlined the major paradigm shifts of cultural history.

“... in thus emphasizing the unconscious in mental life we have conjured up the most evil spirits of criticism against psycho-analysis. Do not be surprised at this, and do not suppose that the resistance to us rests only on the understandable difficulty of the unconscious or the relative inaccessibility of the experiences which provide evidence of it. Its source, I think, lies deeper. In the course of centuries the naive self-love of men has had to submit to two major blows at the hands of science. The first was when they learnt that our earth was not the center of the universe but only a tiny fragment of a cosmic system of scarcely imaginable vastness. This is associated in our minds with the name of Copernicus, though something similar had already been asserted by Alexandrian science. The second blow fell when biological research destroyed man’s supposedly privileged place in creation and proved his descent from the animal kingdom and his ineradicable animal nature. This revaluation has been accomplished in our days by Darwin, Wallace and their predecessors, though not without the most violent contemporary opposition. But human megalomania will have suffered its third and most wounding blow from the psychological research of the present time which seeks to prove to the ego that it is not even master in its own house, but must be content itself with scanty information of what is going on unconsciously in its mind.”

## Introduction

In the 16<sup>th</sup> century, astronomy established a new world order: the earth was not the centre of a finite world but at an eccentric or peripheral position within a solar system, and, by the 17<sup>th</sup> century, adrift in an infinite universe; by the 18<sup>th</sup> century with a disinterested deity, and by the 19<sup>th</sup>, without any higher power to intervene in human affairs. This trajectory is the beginning of a shift in the metaphors and imagery that govern culture and civilization. No longer having a 'panopticon' view of the world in all directions from a stable, central, privileged (humanist) position, we have only partial views and thus partial knowledge, always in flux, like someone going about in the dark with a flashlight, able to see only local phenomena a part at a time, but not 'the bigger picture.' The traditional correspondence between the finite corporeal world, and the infinite and eternal realm of the divine or of the ideas, became ruptured, and the relationship between concrete reality and the spiritual realm: unclear and unknowable. Ideas based on mimetic resemblance, like the proportional relation of microcosm and macrocosm, and the idea of proportion, lost their meaning and began to fall out of use. It was a problem to establish personal or collective identity without being able to know your place in the world, because the world was unknowable, and even you yourself were not fully knowable or rational.

Scientific thinking fostered collecting objects as a new way to represent the world, and forming collections, for comparison and contrast, like museums both of natural history and of human artifacts. While many objects were reproduced in book plates, the original things had travelled through time and space to arrive, 'filtered', into the rooms and halls of the museum or cabinet of curiosity. This was a new mode of representation, and it differed from the cosmological diagrams of the traditional world, like painted symbols, and truth as correspondence. Now, a material object communicated through its physical reality, standing in for its originating context but also as a piece of evidence, a new kind of truth. Early museums were intended for hands-on learning through the senses and direct, unmediated, experience. Interpretation of the world remained open.

In 1730, Giambattista Vico summed up his influential theory of human culture by redefining what we know as truth: God alone can fathom Nature entirely. Mankind can only know fully that which we make ourselves: the human world. His slogan, *Verum Ipsum Factum* was the antithesis of René Descartes' *Cogito Ergo Sum*. Against scientific rationalism, restricting knowledge to that which (like geometry) could be proved empirically, which Vico saw as impoverishing knowledge's myriad possible forms, he proposed a richer model of knowledge through making: rich in probability, storytelling, mythologies, and poetics, elaborated through tropes and metaphors.

The discipline of Architecture suffered its own paradigm shift into modernity in 1753, when the Abbé Laugier theorized the "primitive hut" in the origins of architecture, revising architecture's frame of reference, from culture at large, to its own 'natural' and 'noble' history, even seeing architecture as participating in a kind of genealogy.

Modernism is a world of paradoxes. Modernity differs from earlier ways of making architecture and vernacular building in that, as moderns we are fundamentally self-aware, that this self-consciousness results from, and in, "seeing yourself as an-other would see you" and thus, metaphorically creating two non-identical perspectives or viewpoints in any work. This modern double-coding of argument and counter-argument coexisting in a book, a painting, a garden, or a building, could also be understood as a kind of 'binocular vision' creating depth. Into that complex space of experience the reader, viewer, or

visitor may insert herself or himself to actively engage with ideas and problems which are foregrounded by the composition and vocabulary, and ultimately so that the encounter with the artifact becomes the occasion for reflection and even philosophical thought. Modernity thus builds around uncertainty, conflict, and paradox, around partial knowledge, incompleteness, and fragmentation, around the primacy of experience and material encounter, around engaged processes rather than isolated objects, around emotion, imagination, and dreams, and a suppression of the cerebral and the logical.

## Objectives

In this class you should acquire an understanding of history, research, and critical thinking, as well as collaborative working and collective intelligence, both of which privilege how diversity in point of view, thus in knowledge, interests, and talents, ultimately contributes to the greater creative success of the community. Today, architects struggle with how best to express values and shared meanings in the built environment and the cultivated landscape. There never has been a formula for design, but in our present world, with growing awareness of natural and human crises, we need to reinvent architecture anew: our solutions need to be sensitive, inclusive, active, and positive models, which acknowledge histories and channel them into possibilities for living well, rather than simply manipulations of forms. In this course, our goals are to cultivate critical thinking and collaborative skills by making, to practice enrichment of knowledge through making, reconnecting the fragments across borders and disciplinary boundaries.

This is not a regular survey course, but a multi-pronged and heterogenous investigation into meaning in the world, through cultural history, and with a view to thinking and making architecturally and critically. Our goal is to explore a variety of perspectives to stimulate thinking. Lectures will introduce you to a few key ideas, practices, and artifacts, and the films will resonate those historical ideas through to the last hundred years of new artistic forms and architectural modernisms. However, ultimately the goal is for you to discover conceptual tools to develop your own practices, one of which is the relationship between history, interpretation, and the creative imagination. Readings and lectures will help you to expand your vocabulary and hone your nuanced thinking through concepts, such as abstraction vs. naturalism, realism, nature vs. reason, primitive vs. civilized, creation vs. evolution, the sublime, the picturesque, individual vs. society, invention vs. tradition, different systems of order, Romanticism, and Orientalism.

## Course Material

Arch 248 covers the period in which, in the cultures of the West, loosely considered to be North America and Europe and colonies, modernity began to emerge in the form of related cultural patterns which can be noticed in different mediums. Rather than a historical survey of political events, we invest our time in investigating selected places, people, ideas, and processes that shed light on what modernity is today, and which can offer clues to best practices of design and execution of architectural and urban projects.

Three centuries covers the Baroque era (1600s) Enlightenment (1700s) and Romanticism (1800s leading into the early 20<sup>th</sup> century) so we can look into a limited number of topics. Despite this Western chronology, we include other countries and continents with non-western peoples and cultures. Lectures are thus subject-based or topic-based and not strictly in chronological order.

As architecture has always expressed its complex reality (situation within a world picture) through form, materials and the resulting spatial character, this course (though not a history of architecture) will

continuously return to the guiding metaphors and governing principles that changed the character of architecture over this time, which is generally called for convenience the “early modern era.”

A major split in culture divides the logical side of human affairs, concerned conceptually with science, reason and proof, from the irrational and instinctual side, concerned with emotions, the body, and the material world. Nearly all the cultural materials we will look at from this era dramatize a battleground between these two impulses.

## Focus points

With relevant exceptions, our course material is organized by themes, metaphors, and motifs, and the concept of a transformative “process” (whether understood cyclically, or in a linear way as progress or decay) is connected to the image of a journey. Travel is a way of gaining knowledge by means of the physical world directly, a corporeal knowledge, and complements ‘transferred’ book (or media) knowledge. We look at travel as a metaphor, as well as the narrative structure of what is known in mythology as “the hero’s journey.” The journey is a symbol for knowledge, for the processes of gaining information which will be organized and interpreted, and is complemented by another symbol, for the memory, a bounded space in which knowledge from the spatial outside world as well as from voyages into the depths of history are collected, stored and organized into an inventory or display: the Victorian room, the museum, the Wunderkammer or chamber of curiosities.

## Required Course Work

You are expected to arrive on time and prepared for class, to attend all lectures and films, even if you have already seen them, to participate in all class activities and projects, and to do all required readings. The play requires all participants to collaborate constructively within groups and between groups, on a schedule devised by those concerned, and attend all performances. Portfolio refers to process work and documentation. The workshop mark is for participation. There will be 3 short assignments.

|                             |                                       |
|-----------------------------|---------------------------------------|
| Design Assignment           | 10%                                   |
| Workshop Participation      | 10% Guest instructor DATE TBA         |
| Reading Assignment 1        | 10%                                   |
| Reading Assignment 2        | 10%                                   |
| Play — August 2-4           | 50% (same grade for all participants) |
| Portfolio & Self-Assessment | 10%                                   |

## Course Books

Herman Melville, *Moby Dick, or, The Whale*.

Reading Moby-Dick — Identify a meaningful theme (on your own or through research) or motif, and as you read, follow it through the book, marking passages and making notes.

Other readings listed to complement class topics, stories or excerpts will be distributed in .pdf format.

## Week 1

**May 07** — Introduction to course topics, materials and projects. Nomination and voting for co-ordinator positions in the play.

**May 08** — Traditional worlds and vernacular cultures — **Bali: Cosmology, Mythology, Ecology**

Homework for beginning of class: Write a paragraph outlining your personal growth goals for this course.

## Week 2

**May 14** — Apocalypse Now, Francis Ford Coppola,

**May 15** — Lecture by Nicholas Frayne. Tracey is away for this day.

## Week 3

**May 21** — The Belly of the Whale: **Alchemy and the Hero's Journey**

**May 22** — The Holy Mountain, Alejandro Jodorowsky. (This movie may go slightly over class time, so please plan in advance to stay to the end. The end is unexpected and worth watching.)

## Week 4

**May 28** — Blade Runner, **History and the Eyes**

**May 29** — **Psychoanalysis** - Freud's *Interpretation of Dreams* (1899), Art Theories, Jung's Archetypes

## Week 5

**June 04** — **Visionary Architects** (Boullée, Ledoux, Lequeu, Nolli and Piranesi)

Assignment 1 due

**June 05** — The Belly of an Architect, Peter Greenaway, 1987.

## Week 6

**June 11** — The Beach, Danny Boyle, 2000.

**June 12** — **The Primitive Hut, Ideal Spaces, and Utopias**

## Week 7

(Cambridge Co-op interviews June 18th-20th )

**June 18** — **Baroque World**: Seeing, Knowledge, Fragments, and Folds in Space

Assignment 2 due

**June 19** — Blow Up, Michelangelo Antonioni, 1966.

## Week 8

Reading: Arthur Conan Doyle, TBA

**June 25** — **Details, Clues, and Meanings**: From Giovanni Morelli to Sherlock Holmes.

**June 26** — Lecture by Omar Ferwati — Tracey is away on this date.

## Week 9

July 02 - no class (Monday Schedule today)

July 03 — Spellbound, Alfred Hitchcock, 1945, with dream sequences designed by Salvador Dali

## Week 10

Reading: Edgar Allan Poe, "The Fall of the House of Usher"

July 09 — **Romanticism, Sublime, and Gothic**

Assignment 3 due

July 10 — The Stalker, Andrej Tarkovsky, 1979, or Picnic at Hanging Rock, Peter Weir, 1975.

## Week 11

Reading: short excerpts from Charles Darwin, Voyage of the Beagle.

July 16 — **Darwin, Natural Selection, Evolution**

July 17 — 2001: A Space Odyssey, Stanley Kubrick, 1968

## Week 12

Reading: TBA

July 23 — **Archaeology and Egyptomania**

Workshop

July 24 — Work on the play in groups for critique

## Week 13

July 30 — Last day of Term, work during class time on play in groups for critique.

August 1<sup>st</sup> — Full Dress Rehearsal. Performances evenings of August 2<sup>nd</sup>, 3<sup>rd</sup>, 4<sup>th</sup>.

August 13 - Portfolio (in groups) & Self-Assessment (individual) due

End of Exam Period - Friday August 16.



## **University of Waterloo Policies on Academic Behavior**

### **Academic Integrity:**

In order to maintain a culture of academic integrity, members of the University of Waterloo community are expected to promote honesty, trust, fairness, respect and responsibility. [Check [www.uwaterloo.ca/academicintegrity/](http://www.uwaterloo.ca/academicintegrity/) for more information.]

### **Grievance:**

A student who believes that a decision affecting some aspect of his/her university life has been unfair or unreasonable may have grounds for initiating a grievance. Read Policy 70, Student Petitions and Grievances, Section 4, [www.adm.uwaterloo.ca/infosec/Policies/policy70.htm](http://www.adm.uwaterloo.ca/infosec/Policies/policy70.htm). When in doubt please be certain to contact the department's administrative assistant who will provide further assistance.

### **Discipline:**

A student is expected to know what constitutes academic integrity [check [www.uwaterloo.ca/academicintegrity/](http://www.uwaterloo.ca/academicintegrity/)] to avoid committing an academic offence, and to take responsibility for his/her actions. A student who is unsure whether an action constitutes an offence, or who needs help in learning how to avoid offences (e.g., plagiarism, cheating) or about "rules" for group work/collaboration should seek guidance from the course instructor, academic advisor, or the undergraduate Associate Dean. For information on categories of offences and types of penalties, students should refer to Policy 71, Student Discipline, [www.adm.uwaterloo.ca/infosec/Policies/policy71.htm](http://www.adm.uwaterloo.ca/infosec/Policies/policy71.htm). For typical penalties check Guidelines for the Assessment of Penalties, [www.adm.uwaterloo.ca/infosec/guidelines/penaltyguidelines.htm](http://www.adm.uwaterloo.ca/infosec/guidelines/penaltyguidelines.htm).

### **Appeals:**

A decision made or penalty imposed under Policy 70 (Student Petitions and Grievances) (other than a petition) or Policy 71 (Student Discipline) may be appealed if there is a ground. A student who believes he/she has a ground for an appeal should refer to Policy 72 (Student Appeals) [www.adm.uwaterloo.ca/infosec/Policies/policy72.htm](http://www.adm.uwaterloo.ca/infosec/Policies/policy72.htm).

### **Note for Students with Disabilities:**

The Office for Persons with Disabilities (OPD), located in Needles Hall, Room 1132, collaborates with all academic departments to arrange appropriate accommodations for students with disabilities without compromising the academic integrity of the curriculum. If you require academic accommodations to lessen the impact of your disability, please register with the OPD at the beginning of each academic term.