

**University of Waterloo  
Department of Architecture**

**ARCH 442  
Contemporary Architectural Theory  
Spring 2017  
Tuesdays 10:00- 1:00 pm  
Room ARC1101**

#### **Instructor and T.A. Information**

Instructor: Dr. Tara Bissett  
Office: Room 3008  
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#### **Course Description**

This course is an analysis of contemporary architecture and theory from 1950 to the present. Focusing on important figures, themes, texts, and events, it establishes a critical field with which to review the last decades of the previous century. While the course opens with an examination of the varied reactions and responses over the globe to canonical modernism, it does so by considering the political contexts of avant garde movements and the value of critical thinking or so-called criticality. We will explore different perspectives on issues such as the role of the posthuman, the genesis of the ecological preservationism, postcolonial architectural situations, and in-flux concepts of “public”. The course is structured thematically so as to reflect discourses of our contemporary period: Fabrication: ornament/form/craft, Time and Space: history/identity/globalization, The Anthropocene: landscape/environmentalism/deep space; Organization: cities/habitat, housing/home; The Social: politics/economy/humanity; Future (the History of Futures): information/datascape/posthumanism.



## Course Goals and Learning Outcomes

The weekly course format consists of interactive lectures, discussion, group work, and student-peer feedback.

Upon completion of this course, students should be able to:

- A. Understand, recognize, and critique the major frameworks undergirding contemporary culture
  - Ability to identify and describe key issues and concepts
  - Ability to evaluate a building or project based on theoretical, historical, and critical texts
- B. Plan and complete a research paper focused on a key course concept
  - Ability to evaluate and develop research topics and questions
  - Knowledge of how to find relevant materials in libraries and online
  - Knowledge of how to assess and use primary and secondary sources
  - Ability to conduct a formal analysis to generate questions and support arguments
  - Ability to revise for clarity
- C. Understand how to use images as critical and effective visual communication
  - Ability to construct an argument or perspective through the selection, organization, and presentation of images
- D. Work cooperatively in a small group environment
  - Ability to provide constructive feedback on assignments
  - Ability to engage in debates about significant theoretical issues in contemporary architecture and urbanism.

## Course Requirements and Assessment

The course grade is based on assignments prepared in advance, assignments undertaken during class workshops, significant revisions of the research paper based on peer and instructor feedback, and participation in class discussion, in-class reading and analysis, and informal writing.

Assessment	Date of Evaluation	Weighting
Concept Diagram/ Bibliography	May 18 (LEARN)	10%
Paper Structural Outline	Rough draft: June 12 Final due June 19	15%
Paper Final Draft	Aug 3	35%
Workshop	weekly	40%

All written assignments must follow the Chicago Manual of Style. A reference guide is available at [http://www.chicagomanualofstyle.org/tools\\_citationguide.html](http://www.chicagomanualofstyle.org/tools_citationguide.html)

More detailed course assignment descriptions will be distributed in class and made available on LEARN

## **Course Requirements and Grading**

### **1. Theoretical Essay about Contemporary Architecture: 60%**

- I. Concept Diagram and annotated bibliography- 10 %
- II. Structural outline- 15%
- III. Final Paper- 2000 words (excluding notes and images)- 35%

### **2. Workshops: 40%**

- I. Developing and Presenting a question about a reading- 15% (weeks 2-5)
- II. Participation in a Debate- 15% (weeks 6-12)
- III. In-class Participation- 10%

### **Workshops: 40%**

Please attend all workshops as their culminated value counts for 40% of your grade. The workshops are always held in the last hour of class. In each week's workshop you will receive a different assignment that consists of asking you to engage with the material in class in a thoughtful manner. Each workshop will include a small writing response component.

### **Debates:**

The final six workshops will be constituted of formal debates of which the details are posted on LEARN.

### **May 18—Concept Diagram/ Annotated Bibliography Total: 10% (Due on LEARN)**

Part 1: Due in class: Bibliography containing ten sources that are considered essential for your research paper. Five of these sources will be annotated.

Part 2: Create a diagram that illustrates your connected concepts at play in the progress towards your paper.

### **Paper Structural Outline/ Introduction 15%**

#### **June 12 in-class peer review**

#### **June 19 Final hand-in**

The structural outline/introduction of your final paper consists of two parts: an introduction and a map of a paper-in-process in the form of an outline.

The introduction should be 500-700 words in length. It should end with your 'working' thesis statement. Note that your ideas may change as you continue working on the paper.

The structural outline should highlight your main thematic points that you wish to address in your essay. The purpose of the assignment is to clarify and strengthen the paper's argument by creating topic sentences that flow logically and persuasively. Full in-text citations are required for any material that is drawn from a source. Include relevant illustrations.

### **August 3--Paper Final 35%**

The essay should engage at least one theoretical framework AND one example of contemporary architecture. The essay should include illustrations, captions, full Chicago-style citations, and a

bibliography. The final draft of the paper is due electronically on LEARN by midnight, Aug. 3. The word count of the essay (not including citations and bibliography) should be about 2000 words or eight pages double-spaced.

## **Course Outline and Weekly Calendar**

All readings will be available on LEARN unless otherwise noted.

### **May 1 Week 1 Introduction: History and Theory**

Mary McCleod, "Architecture and Politics in the Reagan Era: From Postmodernism to Deconstructivism," *Assemblage* No. 8 (Feb. 1989), 22-59.

Michael Speaks. "Design Intelligence and the New Economy," *Architectural Record* (January 2002): 72-79.

Baird, George. "Criticality and its Discontents." *Harvard Design Magazine*. No. 21 [Rising Ambitions, Expanding Terrain: Realism and Utopianism.] (Fall 2004/ Winter 2005), 1-6.

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### **May 8 Week 2 Architecture and Language**

Roland Barthes "Semiology and Urbanism", *Architecture Culture 1943-1968*. (Rizzoli, NY: 1993) 412-418.

Robert Venturi, Denise Scott Brown, and Steven Izenour. "Theory of Ugly and Ordinary and Related and Contrary Theories." In *Learning from Las Vegas: The Forgotten Symbolism of Architectural Form*. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1977, 1972. \*\*\*NOTE you only have to read page 87-102.

Charles Jencks "The Death of Modern Architecture", *The Language of Post-Modern Architecture*, Rizzoli, New York, 1977, 9-37.

In-Class Workshop: Reading Groups and Discussion/ Introduce Paper topics and Research Methods

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### **May 15 / Week 3      Ornament and Form**

Jeffrey Kipnis. "The Cunning of Cosmetics." *Constructing a New Agenda: Architectural Theory 1993-2009* (Sykes, Krista). New York: Princeton Architectural, 2010.

Greg Lynn, "Architectural Curvilinearity: The Folded, the Pliant, the Supple," *Architectural Design Profile* 102 in *Architectural Design* 63, nos. 3-4 (1993), pp. 8-15.

Llewellyn, Nigrl "Ornament and the Feminine". *Feminist Theory*. 2006.

#### *Supplementary*

Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari, "Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari, "Introduction: Rhizome," in *A Thousand Plateaus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia*, trans. Brian Massumi (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1987), 3-25. Note that we will read this together in class.

Robert Levit, "Contemporary Ornament: The Return of the Symbolic Repressed," *Harvard Design Magazine* no. 28 (Spring/Summer 2008), pp. 1-8.

#### [In-Class Workshop: Reading Groups and Discussion](#)

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### **May 22 / Week 4      Place and Phenomenology**

Kenneth Frampton, "Critical Regionalism: modern architecture and cultural identity," in *Modern Architecture*, (London: Thames & Hudson, 2007).

Christian Norberg-Schulz. "The Phenomenon of Place." In *Architecture Association Quarterly* 8, no. 4 (1976). Reprinted in *Theorizing a New Agenda for Architecture*. Edited by Kate Nesbitt. New York: Princeton Architectural Press, 1996.

Joshua Meyerowitz, "The Rise of Glocality. New Senses of Place and Identity in the Global Village," *The Global and the Local in Mobile Communication*. 2005.

#### [In-Class Workshop: Library Research Skills \(Effie Patelos\)](#). Note this may be alternated with week 5.

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### **May 29 / Week 5      Dwelling and Habitat**

Martin Heidegger, "Building, Dwelling, Thinking, (1971)" in *Basic Writings*, ed. David Farrel Krell (New York: Harper and Rowe, 1977), 323-339.

Michael Hardt and Antonio Negri, "Of Love Possessed," in *Commonwealth* (Cambridge Mass.: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2009), 179-188.

Bernard Rudofsky, *Architecture Without Architects: A Short Introduction to Non-Pedigreed Architecture*. [Original Pub. 1965]. Albuquerque, NM: The University of New Mexico Press, 1988. [Selections. NOTE: This is very short- just gloss over it.]

Felicity Scott, "Bernard Rudofsky: Allegories of Nomadism and Dwelling," *Anxious Modernisms*. in *Anxious Modernisms: Experimentations in Postwar Architectural Culture* Sarah Williams Goldhagen and Réjean Legault, eds. (Cambridge, Mass.: The MIT Press, 2001), 215-259.

[In-Class Workshop: Reading Groups/ Discussion of Paper Topics. Note: this may be alternated with Week 4.](#)

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## **June 5 / Week 6            The Right to the City**

Kevin Lynch, excerpts from *The Image of the City* (Cambridge, Mass.: The MIT Press, 1960), 1-12, 160-80.

Giorgio Agamben, "The Camp as the 'Nomos' of the Modern," in *Homo Sacer: Sovereign Power and Bare Life*, trans. Daniel Heller-Roazen (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1998), 166-180.

David Harvey, "The Right to the City," *From the Right to the City to the Urban Revolution*, (Verso, London, 2012), 3-25.

### *Supplementary*

Rem Koolhaas, "Atlanta," from *Rem Koolhaas and Bruce Mau, S, M, L, XL* (1995), 833-58.

Colin Rowe and Fred Koetter, "Collage City," (1975) in K. Michael Hays, ed. *Architecture Theory Since 1968* (Cambridge, Mass.: The MIT Press, 1998), 88-111.

### [Debate One](#)

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## **June 12 / Week 7            The Production of Space**

### **Rough draft of Paper Structural Outline due in class**

Henri Lefebvre, Excerpts from "The Production of Space" (1974), reprinted in K. Michael Hays, ed., *Architecture Theory Since 1968* (Cambridge, Mass.: The MIT Press, 1998), 178-88.

Sherry Ahrentzen, "The F Word in Architecture: Feminist Analysis in/of/for Architecture," in Thomas Dutton and Lian Hurst Man, *Reconstructing Architecture: Critical Discourses and Social Practices* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1996), pp. 71-118.

Esther de Costa Meyer, "La Donna e Mobile: Agoraphobia, Women and Urban Space," in *The Sex of Architecture*, ed. Diana Agrest, Patricia Conway, Leslie Kanés Weisman (New York: Harry N. Abrams Inc., 1996), 141-156.

### *Supplementary*

Denise Scott Brown, "Room at the Top? Sexism and the Star System in Architecture," from Ellen Perry Berkeley, ed., *Architecture: A Place for Women* (Smithsonian Institution Press, 1989).

### [Workshop: Peer review of Structural Outline](#)

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## **June 19 / Week 8      Cybernetic Theory: Autonomies**

Gordon Pask, "The Architectural Relevance of Cybernetics," *Architectural Design*, Sept 1969.

Reyner Banham, "Alternative Networks for the Alternative Culture?" *Design Participation. Proceedings of the Design Research Society's Conference* ed. Nigel Cross (London: Academy Editions, 1971), pp. 15-18.

Felicity D. Scott, "Involuntary Prisoners of Architecture," *October* 106 (Fall 2003): 75-101

### *Supplementary*

Mary Louise Lobsinger, "Cybernetic Theory and the Architecture of Performance: Cedric Price's Fun Palace," in *Anxious Modernisms: Experimentations in Postwar Architectural Culture* Sarah Williams Goldhagen and Réjean Legault, eds. (Cambridge, Mass.: The MIT Press, 2001), 119-35.

**Final draft of Structural Outline Due in class      20%**

### [Debate Two](#)

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**June 26 / Week 9      Environment/Ecology**

Gyorgy Kepes “Art and Ecological Consciousness” (1972), *Public Space? Lost & Found*. edited by Gediminas Urbonas, Ann Lui, and Lucas Freeman. Cambridge, MIT: 2017.

Papanek, Victor. “Environment Design: Pollution, Crowding, Ecology,” 248-284, in *Design for the Real World*. Academy Chicago Publishers, 1984. Or “What is Design? A Definition of the Function Complex.” (In the same book), 3-27.

Esther da Costa Meyer, “Architectural History in the Anthropocene: Towards Methodology.” In *The Journal of Architecture*. Vol. 21. No. 8.

*Supplementary*

Reinhart Martin. “Environment, c. 1971.” *Grey Room 14* (Winter 2004)\*\* please try to skim this important article. If you are writing on this topic, read it carefully.

Debate Three

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**July 03 / Week 10      Public/Private and Mediated Space**

Moore, Charles. “You have to pay for the Public Life”. *Perspecta*. Vol. 9/10 (1965), 57-65; 68-106.

Paul Virilio, “The Overexposed City,” in *Lost Dimension*, trans. Daniel Moshenberg (Semiotext(e), 1991), 9–27.

Nancy Fraser, “Rethinking the Public Sphere: A Contribution to the Critique of Actually Existing Democracy,” *Social Text* 25/26 (1990): 56-80.

*Supplementary*

Alison & Peter Smithson, “But Today We Collect Ads,” rpt., In *The Independent Group: Postwar Britain and the Aesthetics of Plenty* ed. D. Robbins, (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1990), p. 185. OR

Alison & Peter Smithson, “The New Brutalism,” rpt. in *Architecture Culture 1943-1968. A Documentary Anthology* ed. J. Ockman, E. Eigen, (New York: Columbia Books of Architecture/Rizzoli, 1993), pp. 240-241.

Debate Four

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## July 10 / Week 11      Post-colonial Discourses

Hasson Fathy “Architecture for the Poor” Architectural Theory. 1973.

Miyoshi, Masao. “A Borderless World? From Colonialism to Transnationalism over the Decline of the Nation State.” Politics. Poetics. *Documenta X*, Lantz, 1997. [Select pages].

Eve Tuck, K. Wayne Yang, “Decolonization is Not a Metaphor,” Decolonization: Indigeneity, Education & Society, 1 no. 1 (2012): 1-40.

Recommended Film: Gillo Pontecorvo, *Battle of Algiers* (1966)

### Debate Five

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## July 17 / Week 12      Posthumanism

Mitchell, William J. “Pulling Glass”, “Cyborg Citizens.” *City of Bits. Space, Place and the Infobahn*. (Cambridge, MIT Press. 1998). Pp. 3-5; 27-44.

OR

Mitchell, William J. “Against Program” in *Architectural theories of the Environment. Posthuman Territory*. Routledge, NY: 2013.

Donna Haraway, “A Cyborg Manifesto: Science, Technology, and Socialist- Feminism in the late-twentieth century.” *Simians, Cyborgs and Women: The Reinvention of Nature* (New York; Routledge, 1991), 149-181.

Rosi Braidotti, “Posthuman, All Too Human: Towards a New Process Ontology,” in *Theory Culture Society* 23 no. 7–8 (2006): 197-208.

### Debate Six

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August 3

Research Paper Final Draft DUE

(35%) Roughly 2000 Words

PLUS illustrations, in-text citations (footnotes or parenthetical), and bibliography.

## Late Work

Assignments are due at the specified date and time listed in the syllabus. Unless you have contacted me in advance, 2% will be deducted from the grade per day not including weekends. Late assignments will not be accepted beyond 14 days past the due date. Late assignments must be submitted electronically as a DOC or PDF attachment.

Late or incomplete assignments due to medical or personal emergencies must be communicated to the instructor in a timely fashion in order to be considered for late submission.

## Information on Plagiarism Detection

Any concerns about plagiarism, improper citations, or academic dishonesty will result in a meeting with the instructor before further action is taken.

## Electronic Device Policy

Electronics for only note-taking allowed.

Institutional-required statements for undergraduate course outlines approved by Senate Undergraduate Council, April 14, 2009

## 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. See the [UWaterloo Academic Integrity Webpage \(https://uwaterloo.ca/academic-integrity/\)](https://uwaterloo.ca/academic-integrity/) and the [Arts Academic Integrity Office Webpage \(http://arts.uwaterloo.ca/current-undergraduates/academic-responsibility\)](http://arts.uwaterloo.ca/current-undergraduates/academic-responsibility) for more information.

## Discipline

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

## 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 \(https://uwaterloo.ca/secretariat/policies-procedures-guidelines/policy-70\)](https://uwaterloo.ca/secretariat/policies-procedures-guidelines/policy-70). When in

doubt please be certain to contact the department's administrative assistant who will provide further assistance.

### **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](http://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.