



**UNIVERSITY OF WATERLOO**  
**2020/21 ROME PROGRAMME - FALL 2020**

**ARCH 540 - MODERN ITALIAN ARCHITECTURE**  
PROF. LORENZO PIGNATTI  
ONLINE LECTURES ON TEAMS: FRIDAYS 10.00 am – 12.00 noon

***STRUCTURE***

Given the specific case of the 2020/21 Rome Program, this course will be offered online during Fall 2020 while the Rome Program will take place in Spring 2021. While in Italy and in Rome there will be some visits to buildings and sites addressed in this course as part of the Design Studio.

***INTRODUCTION***

The course addresses modern and contemporary architecture in Italy, its developments and its theoretical and tangible aspects from 1750 to 1960. The course intends to expand the architectural knowledge of Italy, not only related to Classical, Renaissance and Baroque periods, but also to Modernism.

The course is organized in a chronological sequence and has some specific moments and issues of further investigation. The intention of the course is to offer a broad view of Italian modern architecture, also in relationship with the development of the International Modern Movement. The Italian situation will be paralleled with some of the most significant episodes of architecture and urbanism in the rest of Europe. The work of Le Corbusier, Mies van der Rohe, Gropius, Mendelshon and others will be discussed in class in order to better frame the development of modernism in Italy. The course will also address political and social events of the period considered, to better understand the development of Italian modernism.

The course begins with the cultural phenomena during the mid XVIIIth century that has characterized the entire European culture and anticipated the modern era, called the Enlightenment. The cultural role of Italy was very significant at the moment, due to a renewed interest towards classical culture and antiquity, seen as the most valid and true expression of rationality, order and necessity. Italy became the place where the most cultured foreign architects, artists and scholars would travel in search of direct references and lessons for their work; this was the tradition of the Grand Tour.

The following years were characterized by the affirmation of a neo-classical spirit that, if it did not bring any significant buildings and projects, it helped in the definition of a new cultural position that was certainly more theoretical than practical. In the same years, new concepts of urban design and "*embellishment de la ville*" were imported to Italy from other European cultures, mainly France, representing the first attempts of improvement and transformation of the traditional urban fabric of Italian towns into XIXth century cities.

It is only with the Twentieth century that modernism clearly becomes evident in artistic and architectural work. The European avantagardes were represented in Italy by Futurism, an artistic and intellectual movement that helped to defeat the middle-class culture and introduce, through its vigour and its polemical nature, a completely new vision of the world. The new futuristic concept of beauty, speed, was certainly an innovative position compared to the conservative notion of aesthetical qualities deriving from nature, proportions and rhythm.

Futurism was certainly innovative but it did not have an immediate impact on the architectural production. It was then followed by a generation that searched for an Italian modernism as a synthesis of both foreign and Italian models. The conceptual and visual references were already the great European masters, Le Corbusier, Gropius and Mies van der Rohe. However the intention was to create an Italian route towards modernism where the tradition and the culture of the country would have played a significant role for its development. This is what will be known as Italian Rationalism, a movement of great interest in the architectural discourse during the entire XXth century. Architects like Terragni, Libera, Moretti, Figini and Pollini and many others defined a language where tradition, place and history had a specific role in the theoretical discourse. This period also corresponds to the controversial and difficult era of the Fascist Regime; an historical moment where architecture and politics were strictly linked together and architects were instrumental in the political propaganda. This was true up to the moment when Italian culture realized that the ideals it believed were innovative became repressive, unacceptable and dramatic.

The post-war period has then been characterized by a cultural movement, the Neorealism, that is best expressed in films and writings. The desire of normality after the turbulent and ideological years of Fascism brought to a sort of vernacular simplicity through an intellectual revision of traditional values and references. This corresponded to the end of Italian Monarchy and to the political and social reconstruction of the country after the War. It took until the mid Fifties for Italy to enter into a period of economical prosperity and into a more conscious culture of modernity, or better into a critical modernism where the symbols of the International Style were started to be put into question. In fact, some very influential works of the Fifties were anticipating a critique that will become manifest in the book "*The Architecture of the City*" by Aldo Rossi or in "*Complexity and Contradiction in Architecture*" by Robert Venturi, a text clearly inspired by Rome, its history and its culture.

### **TOURS**

While in Rome, and as part of the Design Studio, there will be:

Tour 1. Residential developments of the early post war period

Tour 2. The "Palazzine" of the '50 and '60

Tour 3. Auditorium by Renzo Piano and MAXXI Museum by Zaha Hadid

### **COURSE REQUIREMENTS**

The requirement will consist on:

- A critical research essay on a selected topic out of 3 suggested. The essay will be approx. 10.000/15.000 characters and should include images, drawings, etc. More information will be given during the course. The essay will be due by December 10<sup>th</sup>, 2020.

### **COURSE TEXTS**

1. Doordan, D. *Building Modern Italy—Italian Architecture 1914-1936*, (pdf)
2. Kostoff, S. *The Third Rome* (pdf)

3. G.Ciucci, *The Claccisism of the E 42. Between modernity and tradition* (article - pdf)
  4. Casciato, M. *Neorealism in Italian Architecture* (article - pdf)
- Suggested reading
4. Goethe, J.W. *Travels in Italy*.

### **OTHER TEXTS**

Texts on modern Italian history of architecture

Tafuri, M. *History of Italian Architecture between 1940 and 1970*, MIT Press

Frampton, K. *Modern Architecture, a critical history*. Part II

Etlin, R. *Modernism in Italian Architecture*, MIT Press

Two books on the historic and urban evolution of the city

Hibbert, C. *Rome: The Biography of a City*, Penguin Books.

Insolera, I. *Roma*, Laterza (in Italian)

Modern architectural guides of Rome and Italy

Muratore, G., et al, *Italia- Gli ultimi trent'anni*, Zanichelli.

Polano, S. *Architettura Italiana. Il Novecento* . Electa

De Guttry, I *Roma dal 1870 ad oggi*. De Luca Editore.

Rossi, P.O. *Roma. 1904-1980* . Laterza

### **LECTURES**

#### INTRODUCTION

Rome and Italy today

#### FIRST PART

Rome in 1750. Nolli and Piranesi

The city between reality and imagination

Nolli and Piranesi

The vision of the city

Winckelmann and Neoclassicism in Italy

The beginning of the museum as a type

Winckelmann and the revival of antiquity

Gardens as sites of memory

Rome Capital of Italy. The Master Plans of 1873 and 1883

The Master Plans of 1873 and 1883.

The great public competitions

The search of a new "style"

Rome at the turn of the century

The Master Plan of 1909

The role of public housing

The early development of modernism

#### SECOND PART

New Tendencies in Italy at the beginning of the century

Futurism

Pittura Metafisica

Novecento

The Fascist Regime 1

The years of the consensus

The "Gruppo 7"

The main public exhibitions

The Fascist Regime 2

The large projects of the Regime

"Architecture: Art of State"

Libera and Moretti  
The Fascist Regime 3  
Terragni

The Fascist Regime 4  
The creation of the Fascist City  
The crisis of an ideal  
The victory of rethoric

### THIRD PART

Italy after the war 1  
Neorealism  
The economical boom  
The "Autostrada del Sole"

Italy after the war 2  
Post war housing developments  
La "Palazzina"  
Superstudio