

TWELVE ARCHITECTURES

Aboriginal Culture and Architecture out of the Grand River Watershed

William Woodworth *Rawenokwas*, B.Arch., Ph.D.

ARCH 540 043 COURSE OUTLINE

Territorial Acknowledgment

We acknowledge that the School of Architecture is located on the traditional territory of the Neutral, Anishinaabeg and Haudenosaunee peoples. The University is situated on the Haldimand Tract, the land promised to the Six Nations that includes 10 kilometres on each side of the Grand River.

Course Description

We are all indigenous peoples of this Earth, and we need to come together in our original identities to nurture our relationships together in respectful and meaningful ways. Out of that encounter arises authentic and beautiful architectural expression.

For thousands of years the places/spaces of the Grand River watershed have hosted the occupations and cultures of native peoples. They are all still here in some identity [actual, adopted, or integrated]. The landscape surrounding Lake Ontario “the beautiful water” and Lake Erie are sacred to three aboriginal cultures – *Wendat*, *Haudenosaunee* and *Anishnabec*. In their continuing adjustments to settler encounters and migrations, the community surrounding the small village of *Ohsweken* on the Grand River has become the homeland of the Six Nations.

As Architects, it behooves us to understand the origins of place held in the land itself examined through the rituals of archaeological investigation and recording, and to respectfully confer with the memories of our aboriginal Elders for grounding and guidance. These are the ancient and necessary protocols out of which all design and use of materials spring most naturally and profoundly.

Here at Waterloo Architecture Cambridge the primary place in this search is located fifty kilometers south along the banks of the Grand River at Six Nations – the sanctuary of the Iroquois, or *Haudenosaunee*, culture today. *Haudenosaunee* translates “people who build the long house” imparting the culture with a uniquely architectonic identity and duty making it particularly relevant to architects. In the deepest sense, all true architecture is practiced as cultural “duty”, but to do this one must be conscious of what actually comprises one’s culture as an indigenous person

As an Architect and carrier of *Haudenosaunee* blood, it is my “duty” to share with you this fundamental knowledge. Mine will be an attempt to convey an architectonic teaching through the lens of Iroquoian culture at Six Nations of the Grand River Territory.

Learning Objectives

By the end of the course, students will be able to:

My hope is that you will be enabled to take up these teachings, adopt/adapt them, integrate/utilize them, deeply and understandingly, in your architectural practices. **This will require an attempt to help you in the recovery of your indigenous mind.**

Required Texts

Much of the material for this teaching has been carried out in research through the oral culture and recorded traditions of several indigenous cultures, but principally of Six Nations of the Grand River, and specifically from Jacob Ezra Thomas [1922-1998], arguably the leading native Iroquoian traditionalist and teacher of the twentieth century.

The literature on indigenous architecture and the cultural practices of the over 600 native nations which make up Canada is prodigious. For the purposes of this course, I have had to make a careful selection of books to support the goal of assisting us all in the radical decolonization of our minds and indeed our souls. You might wonder about the choice, but it comes after my own profound exposure to the growing conversations around decolonization

Required Texts

Cajete, Gregory, **Native Science: Natural Laws of Interdependence**, Clear Light Publishers, Santa Fe, New Mexico, 2000, [ISBN 1-57416-041-9](#) [paper]

This work is a rigorous statement of the most beautiful components of native cosmology and culture.

Nabokov, Peter and Robert Easton, **Native American Architecture**, Oxford University Press, 1990. [ISBN 0195066650](#)

No authors have been able to address native architecture with a level of comprehensiveness, compassion, and respect represented in this work. An invaluable reference for the rest of your life.

Saul, John Ralston, **A Fair Country: Telling Truths About Canada**, Viking Canada, 2008, [Part 1 - A Metis Civilization]. [ISBN 0413168428](#)

John Saul looks at our country like no one else has before him – a common ground for natives and settlers to come together to form perhaps the most uniquely consolidated country in the world. This is the philosophical underpinning of our legacy today - Canada.

Course Requirements and Assessment

The students will be evaluated on their understanding of the indigenous mind as demonstrated in a series of exercises designed to engage you on a journey of cultural recovery, respect and reflective expression. Most importantly attendance is required at all seminar session where the real "text" is the sharing in the oral tradition.

1] A virtual **field trip** to the longhouse reconstructions at Crawford Lake. A written [1000 word] experiential report will be required following the visit. **[20%]**

2] A **reflective paper**, for the mid-term, working with the assumption that we are all indigenous peoples now working together, will share the student's own **ancestral migration to this land** and its implications for the practice of architecture. [3000 words] [20%]
and

3] As a reflection of their understanding of the course, the students are required to produce a **conceptual design** for a contemporary **co-housing project** based on a deep indigenous understanding of the longhouse cultural and architectural traditions. [40%]

4] **Attendance** on WebX sessions with participation. [20%]

Topics and Schedule

Lecture 1 Introduction

Why study aboriginal culture and architecture?

Architecture of Creation

Skyworld, Sky Woman, the back of the Turtle, the Twins, and natural earth cataclysm and recovery.

Lecture 2 Architecture of ancient origins

The migration to Iroquoia conveyed through Maya, Toltec, Anazazi, and Cahokia.

Lecture 3 Architecture of the natural home

The archetypal landscape south of Lake Ontario.

Thanksgiving as ceremonial responsibility.

Lecture 4 Cultural devolution

Masculine ascendancy and the loss of relationship to the natural world and architecture.

Lecture 5 Architecture of the Great Law of Peace

The origins, journeys and instructions of the Peacemaker.

Condolence and the conduct of clear minded duties.

Apotheosis in matrilineal social confederation.

The longhouse as metaphor of culture and architecture.

Wampum as archetype and mnemonic.

Lecture 6 Natural architecture – the origins of the archetypal long house

Examining the archaeological evidence in indigenous mind.

Addressing the earth, sky field, winds, and water.

Measurement by the body, trees, and bush.

Accommodating clanology and matriarchal duties.

Architectural responsibilities, men, and form.

Protocols of integrating design.

Ceremonies of the constructional process.

Bio-sustainable surrender, and recovery.

Protocols, recording, and examination of exhumation.

Lecture 7 **Architecture of intentional long house settlement**

Aboriginal archaeology of the Eastern Woodlands surrounding Lake Ontario.

Ecology of friendship, relationship, and community within culture.

Spatial accommodation, adoption, and adaptation among cultures.

Forms of long house urban settlement practice.

Lecture 8 **Architecture of adaptation and adoption**

Architectural encounters with European culture, and the message of *Skandario*, Handsome Lake, the prophet, the Quakers, and the Masonic Order.

Lecture 9 **Architecture of dispersal and reconfiguration**

The aboriginal retreat to the Grand River watershed, the American rebellion, the consolidation of the War of 1812, and recovery of peace time native agrarian life and the southern Ontario settler farm archetypes.

Lecture 10 **Architecture of cultural assault and colonization**

The construction of the reservation system, the enforcement of the Indian Act of Canada, and the residential schools.

Lecture 11 **Architecture of ethnology**

Six Nations and the construction of Iroquoian culture and identity as ethnology, the Smithsonian, Cranbrook Academy and the romantic recovery.

Lecture 12 **Architecture of the unconscious streaming of indigeneity**

Traditional indigenous architectonic principles, aboriginal “parti”, bio-mimicry, “organic” architecture, Arts & Crafts movement, the work of Frank Lloyd Wright, and the recovered inheritance.

Remote Course Delivery Platforms and Communication

During remote learning, we will be using additional platforms to deliver, organize and share course content, learning and work. Here is a breakdown of tools we will use in this course:

WebX exclusively

Course Time Zone

All dates and times communicated in the document are expressed in Eastern Time (Local time in Waterloo Ontario, Canada). From September 8 – October 24 2020 times are indicated in Eastern Daylight Time (EDT, UTC—4:00) and from October 25 – December 31 2020, times are indicated in Eastern Standard Time (EST, UTC—5:00)

Fall 2020 COVID-19 Special Statement

Given the continuously evolving situation around COVID-19, students are to refer to the University of Waterloo's developing information resource page (<https://uwaterloo.ca/coronavirus/>) for up-to-date information on academic updates, health services, important dates, co-op, accommodation rules and other university level responses to COVID-19.

Student Notice of Recording

The course's official *Notice of Recording* document is found on the course's LEARN site. This document outlines shared responsibilities for instructors and students around issues of privacy and security. Each student is responsible for reviewing this document.

Late Work

Only in the case of a justified medical or personal reason will these penalties be waived, and only if these have been officially submitted to the Undergraduate Student Services Co-Ordinator and accepted by the Undergraduate Office.

Students seeking accommodations due to COVID-19, are to follow Covid-19-related accommodations as outlined by the university here: (<https://uwaterloo.ca/coronavirus/academic-information#accommodations>).

Mental Health Support

All of us need a support system. We encourage you to seek out mental health supports when they are needed. Please reach out to Campus Wellness (<https://uwaterloo.ca/campus-wellness/>) and Counselling Services (<https://uwaterloo.ca/campus-wellness/counselling-services>).

We understand that these circumstances can be troubling, and you may need to speak with someone for emotional support. Good2Talk (<https://good2talk.ca/>) is a post-secondary student helpline based in Ontario, Canada that is available to all students.

Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Commitment

At the School of Architecture, we are committed to foster and support equity, diversity and inclusion. We recognize however, that discrimination does occur, sometimes through an isolated act of discrimination, but also through practices and policies that must be rewritten. If you ever experience

discrimination and need to report on instances of micro-aggressions and other forms of racism, sexism, discrimination against LGBTQ2S+, or disability, please note that there are different pathways to report these instances:

A) if you feel comfortable bringing this up directly with the Faculty or person who has said or done something offensive, we invite you, or a friend, to speak directly with this person.

B) If you do not wish to bring this up with this person directly, you are invited to reach out to either the undergraduate ([Donna Woolcott](#) or [Maya Przybylski](#)) or graduate office ([Nicole Guenther](#), [Lola Sheppard](#), or [Jane Hutton](#)). If you contact any of these people in confidence, they are bound to preserve your anonymity and will be able to follow up on the report. Alternatively, you may always reach out to director [Anne Bordeleau](#) directly, and she will protect your identity and follow up on the report.

C) Finally, you may also choose to report centrally to the Equity Office. The Equity Office can be reached by emailing equity@uwaterloo.ca. More information on the functions and services of the equity office can be found here: <https://uwaterloo.ca/human-rights-equity-inclusion/about/equity-office>.

Academic Integrity, grievance, discipline, appeals, and note for students with disabilities

\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 [the Office of Academic Integrity](#) 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](#). 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 to avoid committing an academic offence, and to take responsibility for his/her actions. [Check [the Office of Academic Integrity](#) for more information.] 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](#). For typical penalties, check [Guidelines for the Assessment of Penalties](#).

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.

Note for students with disabilities: [AccessAbility Services](#), located in Needles Hall, Room 1401, 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 [AccessAbility Services](#) at the beginning of each academic term.

Turnitin.com: Text matching software (Turnitin®) may be used to screen assignments in this course. Turnitin® is used to verify that all materials and sources in assignments are documented. Students' submissions are stored on a U.S. server, therefore students must be given an alternative (e.g., scaffolded assignment or annotated bibliography), if they are concerned about their privacy and/or security. Students will be given due notice, in the first week of the term and/or at the time assignment details are provided, about arrangements and alternatives for the use of Turnitin in this course.

It is the responsibility of the student to notify the instructor if they, in the first week of term or at the time assignment details are provided, wish to submit the alternate assignment.