

## Cultural Encounters: 1000-1650 (Pre-Renaissance to Reformation)

**University of Waterloo**  
**Department of Architecture**

**Wednesday 10 am-1 pm (E-Classroom and Streaming)**  
**Friday 10 am-1 pm (Lecture Hall and Streaming)**

**Instructor: Dr. Tara Bissett**  
**Office Hours: Wednesday after Class and by Appointment**

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## **Cultural Encounters: 1000-1650**

The course explores the cultural history of the early modern world (1000-1650) and traces 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, cultural encounters, and ritual practices, by way of oral narratives and pilgrimage, and through the invention of the printing press. Students will analyse major shifts in architectural design habits that produced a transformation from oral to written to pictorial modes of communication throughout the period.

Students will also be asked to challenge and question histories and narratives that have dominated Western institutions. Through our collective analysis of early colonialism, we will 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 also in the perpetuation of Western history itself. We will analyze the changing role of the human body, both in concept and in the service of design, as we imagine the early modern world from the point-of-view of those who experience blindness and/or use assisted devices. The course will end with a study of Utopia, beginning with Thomas More's book in 1516. We will discover the spatio-political dimension of utopic space and trace its afterlife in contexts both hopeful (afro-futurism) and tragic (slavery). Throughout the course, we will examine the past as a live current that continues to shape the ideas informing our contemporary material culture.

## **Course Objectives**

By the end of this course, students will have achieved the following.

- 1) Knowledge of important discourses in early modern history.
- 2) The practice of close reading and providing analytical summaries of texts.
- 3) Critical thinking skills.
- 4) Successful management of group work for the purpose of discussion and assignments.
- 5) Engagement with reflective thinking processes by writing analytical and discursive responses to readings and lecture content.
- 6) A thorough introduction to selected buildings, readings, objects, and art of the period around the globe.

## **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.

<b>Assessment</b>	<b>Date of Evaluation</b>	<b>Weighting</b>
Descent Narrative	October 6	25%
Creative Analysis Paper	November 10	25%
Utopia Project	December 17	25%
Class Participation/ Lecture Journal	December 3	10%
Reading Responses	Each Wed before class	15%

## **Universal Learning Design**

This course supports Universal Learning Design (ULD), which is a “set of principles for curriculum development that give all individuals equal opportunities to learn” by creating “instructional goals, methods, materials and assessments that work for everyone—not a single one-size fits all solution” (UDL in Higher Ed). The course assignments take into consideration that students have a variety of learning styles and needs.

The principles of ULD offer 1) multiple means of representing information 2) multiple means of expressing knowledge and 3) multiple means of engagement (UDL On Campus).

For more information on ULD, please consult the following.  
<https://uwaterloo.ca/accessability-services/sites/ca.accessability-services/files/uploads/files/uld-final2021.pdf>

## **Course Delivery Platforms and Communication**

The course holds lectures on Wednesdays and workshops/films on Fridays. We will hold Wednesday lectures in the e-classroom with 50% of the class in attendance each week. If the University of Waterloo reverts to online learning, the classes will all be held on TEAMS. You will find the TEAMS link on LEARN in the modules.

### **Readings and Digital Material**

All readings, films, and grades are found on Learn.

### **Office Hours**

Office hours are held after class and on Teams by appointment.

### **Note regarding LEARN settings**

Please adjust so that LEARN forwards emails and announcement notifications.

## **Names and Pronouns**

Feel free to tell me your preferred pronoun or name, if it differs from that provided on the University-generated registration system. My (Tara's) pronouns are she/her.

## **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. (see references here:

<https://uwaterloo.ca/engineering/about/territorial-acknowledgement>)

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## **Course Outline and Weekly Reading Calendar**

### **Required Books**

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

Mark Musa's Translation: <https://yeauganda.files.wordpress.com/2018/08/mark-musa-the-divine-comedy-inferno-volume-1984.pdf>

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

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

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### **Week 1      Introductions**

**Sept 8            Introductions**

**Sept 10          No Class. Catch up on the readings!**

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### **Week 2      The Self and the Commons**

Time and Space: Pilgrim's Path, the Commons, the Crusades, Spirit Roads

**Sept 15          Lecture**

**Reading**

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

## **Sept 17**

### **Film**

*The Wheel of Time* (Werner Herzog, 2003)

### **Alternate Film**

<https://www.nytimes.com/2016/05/13/movies/review-paths-of-the-soul-a-road-trip-unlike-any-other.html>

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## **Week 3      Underground and Underworld**

Katabasis, Underworld, Underground Spaces, Chthonic Rock-cut Buildings

## **Sept 22      Lecture**

### **Reading**

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

<https://yeauganda.files.wordpress.com/2018/08/mark-musa-the-divine-comedy-inferno-volume-1984.pdf>

Absolutely required passages of the text are as follows. **You are not required to read the notes at the end of each chapter.**

Canto I to IV (67-128)

Canto VIII & IX (138-159)

Image on page 172

Canto XIX (239-244)

Canto XX (251-255)

Canto XXXI to XXXIV (352-383)

## **Sept 24      Film & Discussion**

### **Film**

*After Hours* (Martin Scorsese, 1985)

### **Discussion**

Descent Narratives (in preparation for A1)

### **Supplementary Reading**

JL Borges: *Inferno I: 32*: <https://thefloatinglibrary.com/2008/07/28/inferno-i-32/>

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## **Week 4      The Geometric Ideal (1100-1450)**

Divine Math, The Idea of the Gothic, Privileging the Ear, Mosque Designs

**Sept 29          Lecture**

### **Reading**

"Southeast Asia and Southern India. Lived-In Models of Cosmic Order," *World Architecture. A Cross-Cultural History*. Second Edition. Oxford University Press: New York. Oxford, 2013, 270-284.

Francis D. K Ching, Mark Jarzombek, and Vikramaditya Prakash, "Seljuk Turks" *A Global History of Architecture*. Third edition. Hoboken, New Jersey: John Wiley & Sons, Inc., 2017, 345-351

### **Peruse**

Excerpt from Villard de Honnecourt's Sketchbook

Excerpt from Mathes Roritzer, *The Rectitude of Pinnacles*, Regensburg, 1486.

### **Listen in class**

Polyphonic Music

**Oct 1              A1 Prep: Narrative Modes. Narrative Structures**

### **Optional Listen**

Podcast: Just One Story: Joseph Campbell and the Hero's Journey

<https://www.cbc.ca/player/play/1597149251965>

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## **Week 5      Technologies of Exchange (1100-1450)**

**A1 Due on LEARN: October 6**

Part I: Great Inka Road, Khmer Road

Part II: Caravan Routes

Part III: Chinese Postal Networks

**Oct 6              Lecture**

### **Reading**

Francis D. K Ching, Mark Jarzombek, and Vikramaditya Prakash, "China: Chan Chan" & Incas: Machu Picchu," *A Global History of Architecture*. Third edition. Hoboken, New Jersey: John Wiley & Sons, Inc., 2017, 420-423

David Graeber, "Exchange," *Critical Terms for Media Studies*, Ed. Mitchell, W. J. T., and Mark B. N. Hansen. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2010, 217-231.

**Optional**

<https://www.cbc.ca/news/world/orient-express-china-s-grand-plan-for-a-new-silk-road-1.2913097>

**Oct 8                      Workshop and A2 Research Prep**

**1. Exchange and Translation: Jalāl al-Dīn Rūmī**

Read a few selected pages from the following: Jalāl al-Dīn Rūmī, selections from *Rumi a New Translation*. Trans. Farrukh Dhondy. Arcade, 2017.

**Read for discussion:**

<https://www.newyorker.com/books/page-turner/the-erasure-of-islam-from-the-poetry-of-rumi>

**2. How to Research Workshop for A2**

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**Reading Week October 10-16**

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**Week 6                      History, Memory, Reuse, Imitation, the Copy**

**Oct 20                      Lecture**

**Reading**

Andrew Leach, "What is Architectural History?" Chap. 1. Cambridge, Oxford and Boston: Polity, 2010, Selections: "Foundations of a Modern Discipline," 9-13, "Architecture and Empiricism," & "Studying the Past," 25-28.

Vitruvius, *On Architecture*, Penguin Classics. 2009, and "The Origin of Buildings" Short Selections: "The Education of the Architect" "and "The Origins of the Three Orders," 4-13 & 37-42.

**Optional**

Michael Shanks, "We Are All Archaeologists Now," in *The Archaeological Imagination* (Walnut Creek, CA: Left Coast Press, 2012), pp. 21-42.

**Workshop                      A2 Prep: Critical Thinking with Wendy Yuan**

**Oct 22                      Guest Lecture: Nadine Valcin**

**Read for discussion:** <https://www.publicmedievalist.com/hateful-medieval-images/>

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## **Week 7      Utopia and the Ideal City**

Humanism, the Renaissance, Ideal Cities, Utopia and its Legacies

**Oct 27      Lecture**

### **Reading**

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

### **Optional**

Short article by Ursula LeGuin on the power of Utopias (Verso's Issue on Utopia): War Without End

Michel Foucault, "Of Other Spaces. Utopias and Heterotopias," *Architecture /Mouvement/ Continuité*. October, 1984.

**Oct 29      Utopia Workshop In-Class**

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## **Week 8      The Word and the Letter**

The Printing Press in China and Europe, Literacy, the Reformation

**Nov 3      Lecture**

### **Reading**

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.

### **Optional**

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

**Nov 5      Critical Heritage Workshop: Reckoning with History**

### **Reading**

<https://www.publicmedievalist.com/whose-middle-ages/>

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## **Week 9      Architectural Communication and Design**

Limit and license, Modes of Transmission, Technologies of Knowledge



**A2 Due on LEARN: November 10**

**Nov 10          Lecture**

**Readings**

Selections from Alberti, Leone Battista. *Ten Books on Architecture*. Edited by Joseph Rykwert. London: A. Tiani, 1955. \*Selections are chosen on the topic of the “Architect” and “Beauty”.

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

**Peruse**

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

**Nov 12          Workshop: Utopia Project**

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**Week 10      The Spatialized Body**

World-Upside-Down, the Carnival, “Disability”

**Nov 17          Lecture**

**Readings**

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

**AND**

Georgina Kleege, Blindness and Visual Culture: An Eyewitness Account, *Disability Studies Reader*. Ed. Lennard J. Davis. New York, NY : Routledge, 2013

**OR**

Edward Wheatley, Crippling the Middle Ages, Medievalizing Disability Theory. *Stumbling Blocks before the Blind: Medieval Constructions of a Disability*. The University of Michigan Press, Michigan: 2010, 2-28.

**Nov 19          Workshop: Disability in the Early Modern Era**

**Watch in class**

Examined Space by Sunaura Taylor and Judith Butler

<https://youtu.be/k0HZaPkF6qE>

### Optional

Thea Kurdi and David Lepofsky lecture <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZuxMCH6KY5Y>

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## Week 11 Time, Knowledge Keeping, and First Nations

Cyclical & Linear Time, Storytelling and Resistance, The Ethics of “Wonder”

### Nov 24 Lecture

#### 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*, University of Toronto Press, Toronto: 2017, 33-47.

Leroy Little Bear, “Jagged Worldviews Colliding,” ed. Battiste, M. *Reclaiming Indigenous Voice and Vision*. Vancouver; Toronto: UBC Press, 2000.

#### Optional

Robin Wall Kimmerer, “The Gift of Strawberries,” and “The Language of Animacy,” *Braiding Sweetgrass*, Minneapolis, Minnesota : Milkweed Editions, 2013. First edition

Margaret Kovach, “Story as Indigenous Methodology”, *Indigenous Methodologies. Characteristics, Conversations, and Methods*. University of Toronto Press, 2009, 105-119.

#### Podcast

<http://www.thehenceforward.com/>

### Nov 26 Film

#### Film

*Embrace of the Serpent* (Ciro Guerra, Columbia/Brazil, 2016)

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## Week 12 African Mobilities

### Dec 1 Lecture

#### Readings

Ikem Stanley Okoye, “Enigmatic Mobilities/Historical Mobilities,” *African Mobilities*, German Federal Cultural Foundation, Berlin, 2018.

<https://archive.africanmobilities.org/discourse/2018/05/enigmatic-mobilities-historical-mobilities/>

Andrea Myers Achi and Seeta Chaganti, "'Semper Novi Quid ex Africa:' Redrawing the Borders of Medieval African Art and Considering Its Implications for Medieval Studies," in *Disturbing Times: Medieval Pasts, Reimagined Futures* (Punctum Books, 2020), pp. 73–106.

W.E.B Dubois, "The Home of the Slave," *Cabin, Quarter, Plantation. Architecture and Landscapes of North American Slavery*. Yale University Press. New Have & London: 2010.

### **Optional**

bell hooks, "Black Vernacular: Architecture as Cultural Practice". In *Art on My Mind: Visual Politics*. NY. The New Press. 1995. pp. 145-151.

Carl Anthony, "The Big House and the Slave Quarters: African Contributions to the New Worlds" (1976) *Cabin, Quarter, Plantation. Architecture and Landscapes of North American Slavery*. Yale University Press. New Have & London: 2010.

Trevor Marchand, *The Masons of Djenne*, Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2009

### **Podcast**

[RUPTURES African Mobilities with Olalekan Jeyifous and Wale Lawal](#)

### **Dec 3 Course Discussion and Utopia Project Workshop**

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**Final Utopia Assignment: December 17**

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### **Fall 2021 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. For your convenience, a copy of this notice is included on the last page of the 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 Coordinator](#) 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, but also through practices and policies that must be changed. If you experience discrimination, micro-aggression, or other forms of racism, sexism, discrimination against LGBTQ2S+, or disability, there are different pathways to report them:

A) If you feel comfortable bringing this up directly with the faculty, staff or student who has said or done something offensive, we invite you, or a friend, to speak directly with this person. People make mistakes and dealing them directly in the present may be the most effective means of addressing the issue.

B) you can reach out to either the [Undergraduate office](#), [Graduate office](#), or Director ([Anne Bordeleau](#)). If you contact any of these people in confidence, they are bound to preserve your anonymity and follow up on your report.

C) You may also choose to report centrally to the Equity Office. The Equity Office can be reached by emailing [equity@uwaterloo.ca](mailto: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.