



UNIVERSITY OF
WATERLOO

FACULTY OF ENGINEERING
SCHOOL OF ARCHITECTURE

Syllabus

ARCH 442/640: Contemporary Architectural Theory

Instructor: Dr Anwar Jaber, anwar.jaber@uwaterloo.ca

Office Hours: by appointment, office 2011

Class Details: Fridays | 9:30 am – 12:20 pm | Main Lecture Theatre

Teaching Assistants: Ali Khaja, ali.khaja@uwaterloo.ca

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1. Territorial Acknowledgement

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>)

2. Course Description

As architects, how could we understand our complex world today? This course introduces contemporary architectural theory through a critical lens. It questions the dominant theoretical approaches that have focused on western thought and offers a new perspective to address interdisciplinary currents in architectural and spatial thinking. The course focuses on larger cultural and socio-political issues and key currents of contemporary theory in relation to the contexts in which they were written. Through critical theory, mainly postcolonial theory, the course offers a deeper understanding of such contemporary issues, including state building, wars and destruction, conflicts, heritage, migration and camps, spatial resistance, and indigenous and vernacular architecture. It questions the role of architecture in emphasizing the living relationship and active connection between theory and social and material practices.

3. Learning Objectives

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

1. Develop an understanding of critical contemporary architectural theory.
2. Read contemporary architectural theory with a broad understanding of the social/
3. cultural/ ecological theories that underlie it.
4. Engage in debates about the relationship between contemporary architecture and its social and material context.
5. Address personal experiences and backgrounds of the students as researchers in the research process of their chosen subject.
6. Write an analytical paper on a related topic that critically engages with the course content.
7. Work independently in a group context.
8. Develop public speaking and analytical thinking through class presentations and group discussions.
9. Develop visual analytical skills through working on a visual illustration as required.

4. Topics and Schedule

Note: Bolded readings are mandatory for class discussion and weekly reflections.

Week 01	Sept 9 th	Introduction
Course introduction. No readings.		
Week 02	Sept 16 th	What is Architectural Theory?
<p>Nesbitt, K. (1996). Introduction. In <i>Theorizing a New Agenda for Architecture: An Anthology of Architectural Theory 1965—1995</i> (pp. 16–70). Princeton Architectural Press.</p> <p>Heynen, H., & Loosen, S. (2019). Marxism and Architectural Theory across the East-West Divide. <i>Architectural Histories</i>, 7(1), Article 1.</p> <p>Heynen, H., & Wright, G. (2012). Introduction: Shifting Paradigms and Concerns. In <i>The SAGE Handbook of Architectural Theory</i> (pp. 41–55). SAGE Publications Ltd.</p> <p>De la Vega de León, M. (2019). Modern to Contemporary: A Historiography of Global in Architecture. <i>CUADERNO DE NOTAS</i>, 20, 43–52.</p>		
Week 03	Sept 23 th	Theory Exhibition
Assignment 1. See description below.		
Week 04	Sept 30 th	Critical Theory: On (Post)Colonialism
<p>Hosagrahar, J. (2012). Interrogating Difference: Postcolonial Perspectives in Architecture and Urbanism. In <i>The SAGE Handbook of Architectural Theory</i> (pp. 70–84). SAGE Publications Ltd.</p>		

Rabbat, N. (2018). The Hidden Hand: Edward Said's Orientalism and Architectural History. *Journal of the Society of Architectural Historians*, 77(4), 388–396.

Celik, Z. (1996). Colonialism, Orientalism, and the Canon. *The Art Bulletin*, 78, 202–205.

Spivak, G. C. (1994). Can the Subaltern Speak? In *Colonial Discourse and Post-Colonial Theory*. Routledge.

Said, E. (1978). *Orientalism*. Pantheon Books.

Hernandez, F. (2010). *Bhabha for Architects*. Routledge.

Bozdogan, S. (1986). Orientalism and Architectural Culture. *Social Scientist*, 14(7), 46–58.

Castillo, G. (1997). Soviet Orientalism: Socialist Realism and Built Tradition. *Traditional Dwellings and Settlements Review*, 8(2), 33–47.

Rabbat, N. (2012). What Is Islamic Architecture Anyway? *Journal of Art Historiography*, 6, 1–15.

Celik, Z. (1997). *Urban Forms and Colonial Confrontations: Algiers under French Rule*. University of California Press.

Week 05 Oct 7th States, Nationalism and Capital Cities

Minkenberg, M. (2014). Introduction: Power and Architecture. In *Power and Architecture: The Construction of Capitals and the Politics of Space* (pp. 1–30). Berghahn Books.

Foucault, M. (2005). Panopticism. In N. Leach (Ed.), *Rethinking Architecture: A Reader in Cultural Theory* (pp. 336–347). Routledge.

Dovey, K. (1999). Chapter 1: Power. In *Framing Places: Mediating Power in Built Form*. Routledge.

Deleuze, G. (1992). Postscript on the Societies of Control. *October*, 59, 3–7.

Vale, L. (1992). *Architecture, Power and National Identity*. Yale University Press.

Yacobi, H. (2008). Architecture, Orientalism, and Identity: The Politics of the Israeli-Built Environment. *Israel Studies*, 13(1), 94–118.

No class Oct 14th Reading Week

Week 06**Oct 21st****Conflict Tools and Infrastructures**

Graham, S. (2004). Cities as Strategic Sites: Place Annihilation and Urban Geopolitics. In S. Graham (Ed.), *Cities, War and Terrorism: Towards an Urban Geopolitics* (pp. 31–53). Blackwell Publishing Ltd.

Pullan, W. (2011). Frontier urbanism: The periphery at the centre of contested cities. *The Journal of Architecture*, 16(1), 15–35.

Pullan, W. (2013). Conflict's Tools. Borders, Boundaries and Mobility in Jerusalem's Spatial Structures. *Mobilities*, 8(1), 125–147.

Weizman, E. (2004). Strategic Points, Flexible Lines, Tense Surfaces, and Political Volumes: Ariel Sharon and the Geometry of Occupation. In S. Graham (Ed.), *Cities, War, and Terrorism: Towards an Urban Geopolitics* (pp. 172–191). Wiley-Blackwell.

Corner, J. (1999). The Agency of Mappings: Speculation, Critique and Invention. In D. Cosgrove (Ed.), *Mappings* (pp. 213–252). Reaktion Books.

Leuenberger, C. (2016). Mapping Divided Cities and Their Separation Walls: Jerusalem Quarterly, Spring(65), 86–103.

Till, J. (2013). The Broken Middle: The Space of the London riots. *Cities*, 34, 71–74.

Weizman, E. (2006). Lethal Theory. *Log*, 7, 53–77.

Week 07**Oct 28th****'Warchitectural' Theory, Violence and Post-War Reconstruction**

Coward, M. (2004). Urbicide in Bosnia. In S. Graham (Ed.), *Cities, War and Terrorism: Towards an Urban Geopolitics* (pp. 154–171). Blackwell Publishing Ltd.

Herscher, A., & Iyer Siddiqi, A. (2014). Spatial Violence. *Architectural Theory Review*, 19(3), 269–277.

Bădescu, G. (2017). Post-war Reconstruction in Contested Cities: Comparing Urban Outcomes in Sarajevo and Beirut. In J. Rokem & C. Boano (Eds.), *Urban Geopolitics: Rethinking Planning in Contested Cities* (pp. 17–31). Routledge.

Herscher, A. (2008). Warchitectural Theory. *Journal of Architectural Education*, 61(3), 35–43.

Agamben, G., Fabbri, L., & Fay, E. (2009). On The Limits of Violence. *Diacritics*, 39(4), 103–111.

Week 08**Nov 4th****Heritage and Memory**

Cesari, C. D. (2015). Post-colonial Ruins: Archaeologies of political violence and IS. *Anthropology Today*, 31(6), 22–26.

Viejo-Rose, D. (2015). Cultural heritage and memory: Untangling the ties that bind. *Culture & History Digital Journal*, 4(2), e018–e018.

Harrison, R. (2010). *Understanding the Politics of Heritage*. Manchester University Press.

Cochrane, A. (2006). Making Up Meanings in a Capital City: Power, Memory and Monuments in Berlin. *European Urban and Regional Studies*, 1(1), 5–24.

Bevan, R. (2006). *The Destruction of Memory: Architecture at War*. Reaktion Books.

Bremner, L. J. (2007). Memory, Nation Building and the Post-apartheid City: The Apartheid Museum in Johannesburg. In N. Murray, N. Shepherd, & M. Hall (Eds.), *Desire Lines: Space, memory and identity in the post-apartheid city* (pp. 85–103). Routledge.

Week 09**Nov 11th****Spatiality of the Camps**

Katz, I. (2017). *Between Bare Life and Everyday Life: Spatializing Europe's Migrant Camps*. *Architecture_MPS*, 12(2), 1–21.

Watch: *Designs for a Refugee Shelter Rooftop*. (n.d.). Retrieved June 17, 2021, from <https://vimeo.com/406534207>

Martin, D., Minca, C., & Katz, I. (2020). Rethinking the camp: On spatial technologies of power and resistance. *Progress in Human Geography*, 44(4), 743–768.

Ramadan, A. (2013). Spatialising the refugee camp. *Transactions of the Institute of British Geographers*, 38(1), 65–77.

Week 10**Nov 18th****Other Voices: Spatial Resistance and Analysis**

Barclay, A., & Qaddumi, D. (2015, June 23). *On strategies of spatial resistance in Palestine*. OpenDemocracy. <http://www.opendemocracy.net/opensecurity/ahmad-barclay-dena-qaddumi/on-strategies-of-spatial-resistance-in-palestine>

Sharif, Y. (2017). *Architecture of Resistance: Cultivating Moments of Possibility within the Palestinian/Israeli Conflict—Design Research in Architecture*. Routledge.

Weizman, E. (2017). Part One: What is Forensic Architecture? In *Forensic Architecture: Violence at the Threshold of Detectability* (pp. 51–129). Zone Books.

Week 11	Nov 25th	Indigenous and Vernacular Architecture
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TBD

Week 12	Dec 2nd	Conclusion & Final Presentations
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Course conclusion and final optional presentations. Details are below in assignment 7.

5. Course Requirements and Assessment

Requirements	Grade %	Deadline
1. Theory exhibition (group work)	15%	Sept 23 rd
2. Group panel	25%	Once per term, check with TA's
2.1 Visual illustration	10%	
3. Final paper (individual)	35%	
3.1 Introduction, outline, diagram, and bibliography	10%	Oct 23 rd
3.2 Paper Submission	25%	Dec 5 th
4. Reading reflections	15%	On-going
5. In-class participation	10%	On-going
6. Lecture Series Brief (optional)	4%, added to your participation	On-going
7. Final paper presentations (optional)	5% extra, added to the paper	Dec 2 nd

You are required to complete group and individual assignments for this course. At the beginning of the term, you will be divided **into groups 9 groups: 5 groups each with 9 students, and another 4 groups each with 8**, and you are asked to stay in the same group until the end of the term. You will have the option to choose your own group. The TA's will share an excel sheet for you to facilitate the groups.

1. Theory Exhibition (group work)

During the third week, we will be conducting a theory exhibition. Groups will each be assigned to a key theoretical movement and will be asked to conduct research and answer the following questions:

2. What are the key principles of this movement? How did it emerge?
3. Who are the key thinkers?
4. Where did it originate?
5. How does it relate to architecture? Name of key architects who adopt it, and why. Name of key architectural projects.
6. Who objects it? And why.

Each group is expected then to produce one panel (24 * 36 inches) and present it to class in no more than 10 minutes. Groups are required to print their panels and bring it with them as a physical copy. We will first conduct a walking tour and then each group will present its panel to the class and take questions. Presentations will be using the projector so the whole class could see. **Panels should be submitted online no later than September 22nd at 10 pm. Check with TA's and ACM for printing deadlines.**

2. Group Panel

With your group members, you are asked to create a panel after one of the lectures. Your job is to complete the required reading(s) as a group, and prepare three PowerPoint slides and a visual illustration. Use the slides and the visual illustration to lead a 40-min class session. Within the same group, and for each class, we will have one facilitator, leading discussants, and respondents:

- a. **The facilitator:** you will have full control of the class for 40 mins. Your job is to lead the discussion, allow time for discussants and respondents to talk, discuss their outcomes and take questions from the rest of the class. You will also open the session by talking about your visual illustration as a group.
- b. **The discussant:** your job is to discuss the slides with at least three questions to ask the rest of the class. They can also include any other material you think might benefit the rest of the class and help facilitate the discussion (including images, links to videos, articles ... etc.)
- c. **The respondents:** your job is to respond to the discussants and their questions based on the reading. The instructor, TA's and facilitator will support the respondents and then will open the discussion for the rest of the class.

Visual illustration: is a representation of how you see your approach to the discussion, a representation of your position as a group, a summary of your discussion together and your conclusion to the panel. It could be a collage of images, a drawing, a form of mapping ... etc. It must be carefully crafted and not simply an image picked from other sources.

Please note that the facilitator, the discussants, and the respondents are one group and thus are expected to work together to prepare for the panel before the class, together.

3. Final paper

You are required to submit a small research paper on a topic that is directly related to the course contents. This assignment has two parts:

3.1 Introduction, outline, diagram, and bibliography

Write a 600-800 words introduction that ends with your research question that you will answer in the rest of the paper. Include then titles of your paper sections following the introduction. In those sections, include one or two sentences that explain what the section will be about and how it connects to the other sections. Include proper citations and an image in each section. You are also required to produce a diagram or a visual illustration that explains your thinking, and how your essay on theory is connected to architecture. At this stage, you need to also include bibliography with at least ten references, 5 of which, at least, should be academic references. **Deadline is October 23rd at 11 pm.**

3.2 Final submission

Write a fully captioned paper. The deadline is December 5th 2022. Please note the following:

- a. Papers should be between **1500-2000 words ($\pm 10\%$)**.
 - b. At least three references for the intended research should be from the bibliography list of the course, and 50% should be academic references (books and/or journal papers).
 - c. Never cite a Wikipedia link in academic work. You could use Wikipedia as a tool to familiarize you with the topic and get you quick access to resources. You should then refer to these resources, check them and cite them. See the link below on 'why I can't use Wikipedia for my assignments?': <https://oneseach.library.utoronto.ca/faq/can-i-use-wikipedia-my-assignments>
 - d. You should be referencing the weblinks, movies and other sources properly, just like you cite books. Depending on your referencing style (Harvard, MLA...etc.), please look up how to reference each source your use.
 - e. Papers should be divided into sub-sections that include the following sections: introduction, the main body (which could be divided into multiple sections), and a conclusion. Papers should also include a bibliography section and a table of content and a main, cover page.
 - f. The word count includes the main text, footnotes, and citations in the text. It does not include captions of images and the bibliography.
 - g. Students are encouraged to use figures to explain their ideas. All figures should be numbered, referred to in the text and have captions.
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4. Reading reflections

You will receive readings from the instructor and/or the TAs, and you are required to read them before each class. You are also required to write and submit a reflection on these readings. **These reflections should be in the form of one question that you think should be discussed in the class.** Questions will be marked based on how critical they are. They should reflect what you think in an academic, intellectual manner. They should address the assigned weekly reading but could also go beyond and expand to address other related topics. You may also include visual material and references to other work that you think is related to the reading. **Questions should be submitted no later than 11:00 pm every Thursday.**

COVID-19 and Stress Relief Policy: You are required to submit 9 reflections for this course. However, we learnt that life does not go as planned always. Therefore, you may skip one reflection and submit 8 To make things easier for you if you need it 😊

5. In-class participation

Your attendance and participation are part of your final assessment in this course. You are encouraged, and actually required, to ask questions and make comments during the class. Please note that in addition to submitting your coursework, you must attend all the classes on this course. The base of the discussion will be your reading reflection. Your participation must be critical and within the topic of the class. The TA's will take notes after each class noting everyone's participation. Their notes, as well as the instructor's feedback, will be taken into consideration for your grade. Participation includes asking question to the instructor and the group panel.

I understand that not all students feel comfortable expressing their ideas in public. Please note that there are no right or wrong questions, and you should not feel pressured to talk. Sometimes, one small question opens a whole new window for discussion and shows a brand-new perspective. Your participation makes the course more engaging and offers you an opportunity to discuss your ideas and think critically. If you have any issues, please feel free to reach out directly to the instructor.

6. Lecture Series Brief (optional with bonus grades!)

The School of Architecture plans a lecture series every term. These events are carefully planned and very relevant to contemporary debates in architecture. There are five conversations over the term, and the course instructor, Anwar Jaber, will be facilitating one of them. For additional grades, you are asked to attend these events and submit a brief (or reflection) on Learn of no more than 200 words. Here is the link to the full series: www.waconnect.ca/groups/praxes-care-communication-arriscraft-speaker-series-fall-2022

7. Final Paper Presentations (optional with bonus grades!)

You have the option to boost your grades through presenting your paper to the class. Presentations should be no more than 20 mins long (or shorter, depending on the number of interested students) plus Q&A session. Your presentation should include texts and pictures and explains all parts of your essay. You are not required to read from your essay. This is a learning opportunity for you. If you would like to be included, please reach out to the TA's. If you would like to present on any other topic that interests you and is linked to the course content, please feel free to reach out.

6. Course Delivery Platforms & Communication

To organize materials and communication outside of weekly in-person sessions, we will use the following:

LEARN – Official communication, work submission, and grade recording and release.

MS TEAMS – Used for supplementary discussions outside of in-person class time. Students will be added to the course team in the first week of class.

7. COVID-19 Special Statement

Given the on-going 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.

8. Fair Contingencies for Emergency Remote Teaching

To provide contingency for unforeseen circumstances, the instructor reserves the right to modify course topics and/or assessments and/or weight and/or deadlines with due and fair notice to students. In the event of such challenges, the instructor will work with the Department/Faculty to find reasonable and fair solutions that respect rights and workloads of students, staff, and faculty.

9. Late Work

Assignments that are handed in late will receive an initial penalty of 5% on the first calendar day late and a 5% penalty per calendar day thereafter. After 5 calendar days, the assignment will receive a 0%. 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>).

Late pass: Students are allocated **one** late pass for the term. This allows students to make **one** submission **up to 24 hours** after the stated deadline without penalty and without any request for accommodation. Students are required to communicate with their instructor and TA's their intention to use a late pass before the relevant deadline. **Please note that a late pass cannot be used for assignments 1 and 2.**

10. Passing Grades

The standard minimum passing grade in each ARCH course is 50% with the following exceptions: the minimum passing grade is 60% for all studio courses (ARCH 192, ARCH 193, ARCH 292, ARCH 293, ARCH 392, ARCH 393, ARCH 492, and ARCH 493). Grades below the specified passing grade result in a course failure.

11. CACB Student Performance Criteria

The BAS/MArch program enables students to achieve the accreditation standards set by the Canadian Architectural Certification Board as described [here](#). This course addresses the CACB

criteria and standards that are noted on the Accreditation page of the School of Architecture [website](#).

12. 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.

13. Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Commitment

The School of Architecture is committed to foster and support equity, diversity and inclusion. If you experience discrimination, micro-aggression, or other forms of racism, sexism, discrimination against 2SLGBTQ+, or disability, there are several pathways available for addressing this:

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 can 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>.

D) [Racial Advocacy for Inclusion, Solidarity and Equity \(RAISE\)](#) is a student-led Waterloo Undergraduate Student Association (WUSA) service launching in the Winter 2019 term. RAISE serves to address racism and xenophobia on the University of Waterloo campus with initiatives reflective of RAISE's three pillars of Education and Advocacy, Peer-to-Peer Support, and Community Building. The initiatives include but are not limited to: formal means to report and confront racism, accessible and considerate peer-support, and organization of social events to cultivate both an uplifting and united community. You can report an incident using their [online form](#).

14. 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.