

# WATERLOO ARCHITECTURE ROME PROGRAM



## **SPRING 2022 - ARCH 449 MODERN ITALIAN ARCHITECTURE**

Instructors: Lorenzo Pignatti, Beatrice Bruscoli

MONDAYS 5.00 pm – 7:00 pm

### ***INTRODUCTION***

The course addresses modern and contemporary architecture in Italy, its developments and its theoretical and tangible aspects from the beginning of XX century to the end of 1960's. It is divided in two parts: the first one will present architectures and theories developed from the beginning of the XX century until the end of the Fascist Regime, while the second one will depart from Neorealist movement after WWII and discuss architectures and theories developed in the following two decades until the raise of Postmodernism Movement.

The intention of the course is to offer a broad view of XX century Italian architecture, also in relationship with the international architectural discourse of the period and some of the most significant episodes of architecture and urbanism of the rest of Europe. The work of masters of the

Modern Movement like Le Corbusier, Mies van der Rohe, Gropius, Mendelshon and the research of post war groups and architects like Team X, Archigrams, Robert Venturi will be discussed in class in order to better frame the development of modernism and post war architecture in Italy. The course will also address political and social events of the periods considered.

In the Twentieth century modernism becomes evident in artistic and architectural work. The European avantgardes were represented in Italy by Futurism, an artistic and intellectual movement that helped to defeat the middle-class culture and introduce, through its vigor 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 aesthetic 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 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 been characterized by some cultural movements, among which the Neorealism, that deeply questioned the legacy of Rationalism and Modern Movement. 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. It was only by the mid-Fifties that Italy entered into a period of economical prosperity and a more conscious culture of modernity, or better into a critical modernism where the symbols of the International Style started to be put into question. A generation of young architects was able to produce works and to generate a fertile debate on the role of tradition, history, social responsibility that anticipate many of the themes developed world wide in the subsequent years. Some very influential works of the Fifties anticipate the positions expressed in fundamental theoretical position of the 1960's. They are at the base of the most essential books of the following decades like "The Architecture of the City" by Aldo Rossi, "Complexity and Contradiction in Architecture" by Robert Venturi, "Collage Cities" by Colin Rowe and Fred Koetter. Books that have marked and still influenced the architectural debate up to our present days.

### **CLASS FORMAT**

The course structure will include in-class lectures, in situ lectures and walking tours  
Class will meet generally every Monday from 5:00 pm. to 7:00 pm.; however some lectures will be held on site during North Field Trip as well as the Contemporary Rome tour

### **READINGS**

Primary reading materials are extracted from a series of theory and history books as well as short essays and articles. They will be provided and distributed by the instructors to students as PDF files during the course. Here some of them:

Kostoff, S. *The Third Rome*

Doordan, D. *Building Modern Italy—Italian Architecture 1914-1936*

Ciucci, G. *The Classicism of the E 42. Between modernity and tradition*

Doordan, D. *Changing Agendas: Architecture and Politics in Contemporary Italy*

Casciato, M. *Neorealism in Italian Architecture*  
Doordan, D. *Rebuilding the House of Man*  
Banham, R. *Neoliberty the Italian retreat from modern architecture*

The books can be access through the Waterloo's libraries system and found in paper format in our small Rome Waterloo's library

## **COURSE REQUIREMENT**

The course requirement is a Case study group project about one Italian architecture build during the periods covered by the course. Students will select their master piece from a given list. The grade will be distributed:

**Participation 20%** of the final grade  
**Mid-Term Exam 40%** of the final grade  
**Case Study Group Project 40%** of the final grade

The **participation** grade considers the student's ability to actively participate with critical questions during lectures and to document materials presented during classes. Students are required to take notes (writing / sketching) during lectures, to read and take notes of the assigned readings. All the above as well as specific assigned learning activities should be documented inside a physical journal. The **mid-term** grade evaluates a take home text for the first half of the course. The **case study** grade is the result of a booklet and a slides presentation (more specific directions will be given in a separate handout)

## **LECTURES**

### *INTRODUCTION*

Rome and Italy today

### *FIRST 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 rhetoric

### *SECOND PART*

Italy after the war 1

- The Italian retreat from Modernism: the role of tradition, history and vernacular architecture in the years of reconstruction

Italy after the war 2

The idea of Museo Aperto: the museums function in building the country

Carlo Scarpa and Franco Albini

Italy after the war 3

Post war housing developments

Neorealism and INA Casa Projects

Italy after the war 4

A new community: Olivetti and Ivrea

Italy after the war 5

1960's Radicals: Superstudio

1970's: Aldo Rossi

Italy after the war 6

Rome: 30 years of urban transformations