

Post-Everything: Future Speculations

ARCH 385/684_005

Wednesdays 1.30-4.30, room 2003

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Office hours: by appointment

'We tend to overestimate the effect of a technology in the short run and underestimate the effect in the long run' – Roy Amara

The architectural profession is by definition future-oriented. At this moment there are many indications of large, disruptive changes which makes it unlikely that the future will be a mere extrapolation of the present. How we live, work, consume, travel and play in the future will have a deep impact on cities and architecture, and on architects. This seminar invites students to look beyond the present and to speculate about possible futures of their future profession. What does it mean for society, for architecture, and for architects if there is no population growth anymore, or even a decline? What will be the possible impact of digital technology on the way we work, and live, and on the built environment? What if the shift from ownership to sharing (of cars, houses, spare rooms, couches etc) continues? Shopping malls are already closing, but what will happen to Main Street if we don't need stores to shop anymore? How much value will there remain in the neat division in building typologies if many human activities merge seamlessly? What if the worst-case scenarios of climate change are right? What if much of the work of the architect will be computerized in the near future?

Course Objective

Taking clues from a variety of sources, the aim of this course is to develop and think through plausible scenarios for these futures. Students are asked to contribute to the collective research that will form the basis for these scenarios, select and present their own individual theme, construct a scenario for this theme, and present this. Each student should develop a scenario and produce a commentary on one of the other students' scenarios. As an evaluation the final session will be devoted to an attempt to bring the individual scenarios together in one multifaceted forecast.

Each student has to write a final essay of circa 2000 words on their scenario, including a reflection on the commentary it has received.

All student work including assignments and final projects must be uploaded to the server in PDF format prior to the end of term. All term work must be submitted on or before 10 December 2014. Students who for reasons beyond their control are unable to submit an assignment by its deadline must obtain approval from their Instructor for an extension to the deadline. Any work submitted without extension after 10 December 2014 will not be accepted. Students will be required to petition for an extension if they will be unable to submit their work by 10 December 2014.

EVALUATION:

Participation 20%

Presentation of individual theme 10 %

Presentation of the scenario 25 %

Commentary on a scenario 15%

Final essay 35%

SCHEDULE

September 10: Introduction

September 17: Forecasting and Scenarios

September 24: Analyzing the present

October 1: Collecting themes, defining fields
October 8: Presentation of individual themes
October: 15 NO CLASS
October 23: Extrapolations and disruptive changes
October 29: Possible, plausible, probable, preferred and potential futures
November 5: Reality Check, Futures of the Past
November 12: Presentation of Individual Scenarios + Commentary (Part 1)
November 19: Presentation of Individual Scenarios + Commentary (Part 2)
November 26: Evaluation: Integration of the individual scenarios
December 10: DEADLINE Essay

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 <https://uwaterloo.ca/academic-integrity/> for more information.]

Grievance: Students, who believe that a decision affecting some aspect of their university life has been unfair or unreasonable, may have grounds for initiating a grievance. Students should read [Policy #70](#), Student Petitions and Grievances, Section 4. When in doubt, students must contact the department's/school's administrative assistant who will provide further assistance.

Discipline: Students are expected to know what constitutes academic integrity, to avoid committing academic offenses, and to take responsibility for their actions. Students who are unsure whether an action constitutes an offense, or who need help in learning how to avoid offenses (e.g., plagiarism, cheating) or about 'rules' for group work/collaboration should seek guidance from the course instructor, academic advisor, or the Associate Dean of Science for Undergraduate Studies. For information on categories of offenses and types of penalties, students should refer to [Policy #71](#), Student Discipline. For information on typical penalties, students should check [Guidelines for the Assessment of Penalties](#).

Appeals: A decision or penalty imposed under Policy 33 (Ethical Behavior), Policy #70 (Student Petitions and Grievances) or Policy #71 (Student Discipline) may be appealed, if there is a ground. Students, who believe they have a ground for an appeal, should refer to [Policy #72](#) (Student Appeals).

Note for Students with Disabilities: [AccessAbility Services](#), located in Needles Hall, Room 1132, collaborates with all academic departments to arrange appropriate accommodations for students with disabilities without compromising the academic integrity of the curriculum. If students require academic accommodations to lessen the impact of their disability, they should register with AccessAbility Services at the beginning of each academic term.

Accommodation: Should students require accommodation due to illness, they must provide a Verification of Illness Form to support their requests. [Check <https://uwaterloo.ca/registrar/current-students/accommodation-due-to-illness> for more information.]

Exam Period Travel: Student travel plans are not considered acceptable grounds for granting an alternative examination time.