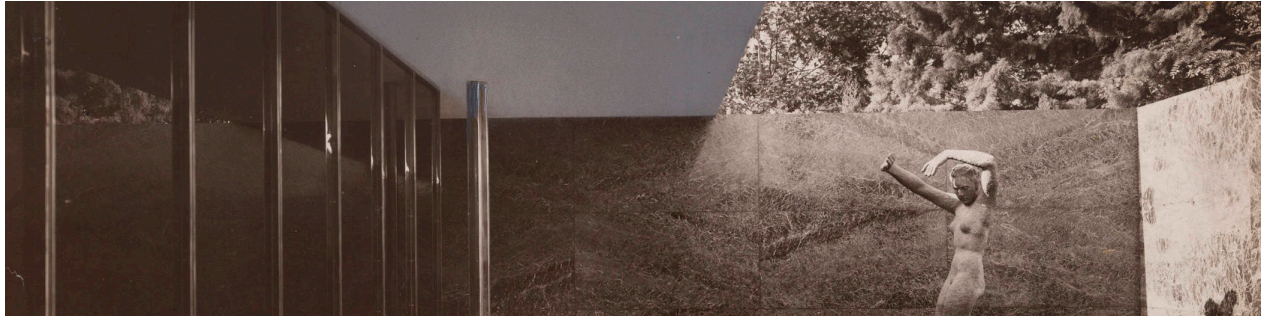


THE PHOTOGRAPHIC MEDIATION OF ARCHITECTURE

SEMINAR HOURS	WEDNESDAYS, 6–9PM
LOCATION	ARC 2026
PROFESSOR	PETER SEALY
EMAIL	PSEALY@FAS.HARVARD.EDU
OFFICE HOURS	BY APPOINTMENT



COURSE DESCRIPTION

As a medium that asserts the objectivity of its images, photography offers a potent index of many of the main theoretical concerns in architecture across the past three centuries. While the relationship between buildings and their representations is necessarily complex, themes including SPACE, SUBJECTIVITY, MATERIALITY, ORNAMENT, MIMESIS, INTERIORITY and OTHERNESS all find their expression in architectural photographs. From Julius Shulman's idealizations of California modernism to Le Corbusier's collaboration with Lucien Hervé up to Helène Binet's present-day interpretations of Zaha Hadid's and Peter Zumthor's buildings, architectural photographs tell us much about architecture in its formal, cultural and intellectual contexts. Sometimes images correspond to the intentions of architects, their clients and the imagined publics for whom buildings have been designed; in other cases, photographs reveal previously hidden aspects of built space and invite new interpretations.

Using significant works and thematic explorations, this seminar will synoptically probe architecture's almost 200-year-old relationship with photography. The status of this relationship in the 21st century will be a key focus. In an age of digital production seemingly untethered from the real, architects and photographers have developed new representational techniques and tactics. These include architectural fictions such as Philipp Schaerer's *Bildbauten* series and Edwin Zwakman's *Fly Over III*, the use of photomontage by Dogma and Office Kersten Geers David van Severen, and Thomas Demand's model photographs.

Beyond photography, this course will explore numerous analogous media such as drawing, plaster casting, 3D scanning and printing, and cinema. Through a series of historical and contemporary case studies, we will collaboratively develop new understandings of architecture through photographs as well as new approaches to architectural photography. Most importantly, we will question architecture's own communicative role in society, that is to say its own status as a medium.

Please note that an OPTIONAL SEMINAR VISIT to Montréal is planned for October 21-23.

COURSE OBJECTIVES

Seminar participants will be challenged to:

1. Study the HISTORY OF PHOTOGRAPHY, and its multiple relationships with architecture;
2. Explore a number of ANALOGOUS MEDIA to photography, such as drawing, plaster casting, 3D scanning and printing, and cinema;
3. Gain familiarity with CANONICAL ESSAYS on photography by theorists including Roland Barthes, Rosalind Krauss and Susan Sontag;
4. Engage in CLOSE READINGS of assigned texts and summarize key arguments;
5. Express complex ideas in a coherent and concise form during seminar PRESENTATIONS and DISCUSSIONS;
6. Develop a facility analyzing the FORM and CONTENT of IMAGES;
7. Respond to contemporary architectural and artistic practices through the MAKING of an image/artefact and the WRITING of a rigorous and scholarly essay.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS / SEMINAR FORMAT

All students are required to attend all seminar meetings, at which their informed and inquisitive participation is expected.

All assigned readings must be completed beforehand, and each seminar participant will circulate a short READING RESPONSE the day prior to the seminar. Each student will be responsible for PRESENTING and LEADING the GROUP DISCUSSION on one an assigned reading during the seminar; other readings will be presented by the professor.

Each seminar will begin with a brief introduction of the week's theme by the professor. This will be followed by two student-led presentations of readings, with ample time for discussion. After a break, the professor will present the third reading, again followed by discussion. Finally, the professor will briefly introduce the following week's theme and readings.

An OPTIONAL VISIT TO MONTRÉAL is planned for 21-23 October, during the a special seminar session will be at that Canadian Centre for Architecture. Each participant will have been assigned an object in the CCA's photography collection to present at this meeting. Since this is an optional event, a similar assignment will be provided for those students unable to attend.

Seminar participants will complete two major, related projects. First, students will make an image or an object that responds to the themes of the seminar. These may be inspired by contemporary architectural and artistic practices and should take the form of a rigorous exploration in a chosen medium. The completed IMAGE/OBJECT will be presented to the seminar, along with a brief summary of the theoretical issues to which it responds, on 16 November. Secondly, students will submit a final paper in the form of a 4,000-word CRITICAL ESSAY exploring the themes raised by their image/object from a scholarly perspective. These must be submitted by 22 December.

RELATIVE WEIGHT OF ASSIGNMENTS

CATEGORY	ASSIGNMENT	DUE	VALUE	TOTAL
PARTICIPATION	WEEKLY RESPONSES	TUESDAYS 6PM	5%	25%
	READING PRESENTATION	TBD	10%	
	CCA PRESENTATION	14 OCTOBER	10%	
MAKING	IMAGE/OBJECT	16 NOVEMBER	25%	25%
WRITING	FINAL PAPER	22 DECEMBER	50%	50%

ASSIGNMENTS**WEEKLY RESPONSES (5%)**

Each student must submit by e-mail a one-page response paper to the professor and the other participants by 6 pm the evening prior to seminar (Tuesday).

Response papers are to be approximately 200 words in length, and are to be accompanied by 1 or 2 images. The goal is to concisely summarize the most important arguments raised by the assigned readings, while also identifying possible questions, areas of disagreement and avenues for discussion, etc. The image(s) may be drawn from the readings themselves, but will ideally be found elsewhere. The chosen image(s) should respond to the assigned readings and the broader theme for the week, while enlarging the visual lexicon available for the seminar to discuss.

Completing the readings and the response papers in a timely fashion will ensure each participant is prepared to actively participate in the seminar.

READING PRESENTATION (10%)

Two of each week's assigned readings have been chosen for their correspondence to the week's larger theme. These will be presented by seminar participants; each student will therefore present one reading per term.

The presenter is responsible for guiding the group through a well-informed, nuanced and critical discussion of the reading. The presenter should briefly explain who the author is, and in what circumstances the text was published. The presenter will have identified major points for discussion arising directly from the text, and will be prepared to pose questions to his or her classmates. The presenter will have also considered the reading more broadly in the context of the weekly theme and the seminar as a whole.

The schedule for these presentations will be established at the first seminar meeting on 14 September.

Additionally, each week the professor will lead a discussion of a major text in the history and theory of photography from the late twentieth century. We will read works by Roland Barthes (including his 1980 book *Camera Lucida*), Rosalind Krauss and Susan Sontag.

CCA PRESENTATION (10%)

Each seminar participant will be assigned an object from the Canadian Centre for Architecture's photography collection. The participant is to research the object and deliver a 7-minute presentation to the group in Montréal on 21 October during our visit to the CCA, at which time the seminar will consult the objects in person. As with the reading presentation, clarity, concision and originality are key. What is the photograph or other object? When was it made? By whom? What is its content? What sort of issues are raised by it? How could it be relevant to our seminar discussions?

Travel to Montréal is optional and those students unable to attend will be asked to present their object via Skype from Cambridge.

Objects will be assigned at our second meeting on 21 September.

IMAGE/OBJECT (25%)

Students will use photography or another appropriate medium (casting, 3D printing, collage, drawing, a camera lucida, etc.) to create an image or an object, or a series thereof, in response to themes of the seminar (indexicality, remediation, perspective, the digital real, etc.) These may be inspired by contemporary architectural and artistic practices and should take the form of a rigorous exploration in a chosen medium.

On 10 November, each student will present their finished image/object to the seminar. Presentations will last exactly 10 minutes, during which the participant will explain the theoretical issues addressed by the image/object. The image/object must be documented digitally (i.e., exported, photographed or scanned as appropriate) and these files submitted to the professor.

FINAL PAPER (50%)

Students will continue their exploration of the thematic issue addressed in their image/object in a well-written, coherent and thoughtful 4,000-word critical essay, to be submitted on or before 22 December. Written to a high scholarly standard and using an appropriate citation system, this essay will address the historical, theoretical and practical implications of the chosen theme. Students should engage with texts and objects (especially photographs), and with primary and secondary sources.

SEMINAR SCHEDULE

Please note that readings marked with a circle (•) will be presented a student; those marked with a section symbol (§) will be presented by the professor.

Students are asked to purchase a copy of the following book:

- Roland Barthes, *Camera Lucida: Reflections on Photography*, trans. Richard Howard (New York: Hill and Wang, 2010).

All other readings will be made available as PDF files.

SEPT. 14 **INTRODUCTION**SEPT. 21 **MEDIA AND REMEDIATION****READINGS**

- John Guillory, “Genesis of the Media Concept,” *Critical Inquiry* 36, no. 2 (2010): 321-362.
- Neil Levine, “The Template of Photography in Nineteenth-century Architectural Representation,” *Journal of the Society of Architectural Historians* 71, no. 3 (2012): 306-331.
- § Susan Sontag, “In Plato’s Cave” in *On Photography* (New York: Picador, 2001), 3-24.

SEPT. 28 **MIMESIS RE-CAST****READINGS**

- Thordis Arrhenius, “The Authentic,” in *The Fragile Monument—On Conservation and Modernity* (London: Artifice, 2012), 48-91.
- Mari Lending, “Promenade Among Words and Things: The Gallery as Catalogue, the Catalogue as Gallery,” *Architectural Histories* 3, no. 1 (2015): Art. 20, 1-22, DOI: <http://dx.doi.org/10.5334/ah.da>.
- § Roland Barthes, “Rhetoric of the Image,” in *Image—Music—Text*, Stephen Heath, trans. (New York: Hill and Wang, 1977), 32-51.

OCT. 5 **PHOTOGRAPHY IN PERSPECTIVE****READINGS**

- Hugh Campbell, “The Façade Fills the Frame: The Uses and Meanings of the Elevational View,” *The Journal of Architecture* (2016): DOI: 10.1080/13602365.2016.1218906.
- Peter Galassi, *Before Photography: Painting and the Invention of Photography* (New York: Museum of Modern Art, 1981), 11-29.
- § Rosalind Krauss, “Photography’s Discursive Spaces: Landscape/View,” *Art Journal* 42, no. 4 (1982): 311-19.

OCT. 14 **NO SEMINAR**OCT. 19 **THE URBAN LANDSCAPE****READINGS**

- Detlef Mertins, “Walter Benjamin and the Tectonic Unconscious” in *Walter Benjamin and Art*, Andrew Benjamin (London: Continuum, 2005), 148-163.
- Anthony Vidler, “Photourbanism: Planning the City from above and from Below” in *A Companion to the City*, eds. Gary Bridge & Sophie Watson (Malden: Blackwell, 2000) 35-45.
- § Roland Barthes, *Camera Lucida: Reflections on Photography*, trans. Richard Howard (New York: Hill and Wang, 2010), 3-30.

OCT. 21-23 **MONTRÉAL VISIT**

An optional seminar visit to Montréal is scheduled for 21-23 October. Participants will present their assigned object from the Canadian Centre for Architecture’s photography collection on 21 October.

OCT. 26 **INDIVIDUAL MEETINGS**

NOV. 2 **THE INHABITED INTERIOR****READINGS**

- Eve Blau, “Transparency and the Irreconcilable Condition of Modernity,” *Praxis* 9 (2007), 50-59.
- Beatriz Colomina, “Le Corbusier and Photography,” *Assemblage* 4 (1987): 6-23.
- § Roland Barthes, *Camera Lucida: Reflections on Photography*, trans. Richard Howard (New York: Hill and Wang, 2010), 30-60.

NOV. 9 **CINEMA AND MONTAGE****READINGS**

- André Bazin, “The Ontology of the Photographic Image” in *What is Cinema?* Vol. 1 (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2005), 9-16.
- Martino Stierli, “Mies Montage,” *AA Files* 61 (2010): 54-72.
- § Roland Barthes, *Camera Lucida: Reflections on Photography*, trans. Richard Howard (New York: Hill and Wang, 2010), 63-85.

NOV. 16 **PRESENTATIONS**

Seminar participants will present their completed IMAGE/OBJECT as well as its theoretical milieu. Presentations are to be exactly 7 minutes in length.

NOV. 23 **MIES IN BARCELONA****READINGS**

- José Quetglas, “Fear of Glass: The Barcelona Pavilion,” in *Architectureproduction*, ed. Beatriz Colomina (New York: Princeton Architectural Press, 1988): 122-151.
- Claire Zimmerman, “Photography Into Building: Mies in Barcelona,” in *Photographic Architecture in the Twentieth Century* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2014), 48-83.
- § Roland Barthes, *Camera Lucida: Reflections on Photography*, trans. Richard Howard (New York: Hill and Wang, 2010), 85-119.

NOV. 30 **THE DIGITAL REAL****READINGS**

- Mario Carpo, “Variable, Identical, Differential,” in *The Alphabet and the Algorithm* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 2011), 1-48.
- William J. Mitchell, “Intention and Artifice,” in *The Reconfigured Eye: Visual Truth in the Post-Photographic Era* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1992), 22-57.
- § Teju Cole, “Memories of Things Unseen,” in *Known and Strange Things: Essays* (New York: Random House, 2016), 196-200.

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.

Please check the OFFICE OF ACADEMIC INTEGRITY for more information: <https://uwaterloo.ca/academic-integrity/>

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 [<https://uwaterloo.ca/secretariat/policies-procedures-guidelines/policy-70>]. 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.

Please check the OFFICE OF ACADEMIC INTEGRITY for more information: <https://uwaterloo.ca/academic-integrity/>

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 [<https://uwaterloo.ca/secretariat/policies-procedures-guidelines/policy-71>]. For typical penalties, check GUIDELINES FOR THE ASSESSMENT OF PENALTIES [<https://uwaterloo.ca/secretariat/policies-procedures-guidelines/guidelines/guidelines-assessment-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 [<https://uwaterloo.ca/secretariat/policies-procedures-guidelines/policy-72>].

ACCESSABILITY SERVICES

Note for students with disabilities: ACCESSABILITY SERVICES [<https://uwaterloo.ca/disability-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 you require academic accommodations to lessen the impact of your disability, please register with ACCESSABILITY SERVICES at the beginning of each academic term