

**UNIVERSITY OF WATERLOO
SCHOOL OF ARCHITECTURE**

ARCH 540 **Russian Avant-Garde Architectural Theory:
Arkhitektura i Mnimosti [architecture and imaginarieness] or the
Mystical-Philosophical Basis of Russian "Rationalism"**

Fall 2019 Friday 10:00 am - 1:00 pm
Ward Room

Elizabeth C. English, PhD

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 (Suggest 6-7 pm on Mon, Tues, Thurs)
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COURSE DESCRIPTION

The focus of this course will be to explore early 20th-c. Russian avant-garde Rationalist architectural theory, the body of artistic and architectural works that it produced, and its origins in a 19th-c. Russian Slavophile intellectual tradition that integrated mystical-religious, philosophical and mathematical ways of thinking. A major contribution of the Russian architectural avant-garde to Western modern architecture has been the incorporation of dynamism, the explicit expression of motion, in architecture. Its primary source was the experiments of the Russian Rationalists, derived from individual and collective attempts to manifest the "imaginary" space of higher consciousness located in non-Euclidean space, in the fourth dimension of time, and to find ways of expressing, if not incorporating, this space in architecture. These experiments may also be described as seeking in architecture the space of the synthesis of rational and non-rational modes of thought, the space where the Slavophile philosophers' *edinstvo* (unity, or literally "one-ness") of technology and spirituality can be made manifest through the art of architecture. Russian avant-garde Rationalist theory, its fundamental tenets derived from nineteenth-century Russian Slavophile philosophy, may be recognized for its potential to inform today's debates on the relationship of art and science in architecture, particularly in the contemporary domain of virtual space. The material presented in this course also serves as a case study within the larger context of exploring relationships among culture, technology and design thinking.

OBJECTIVES

Pedagogical objectives are to advance students' understanding of the relationship between culture and technology through investigations of philosophy, mathematics and design theory; to engage students in interdisciplinary thinking, and to enhance students' awareness of the cultural context of disciplinary perspective; to encourage students' examination of the separations and connectivities between past and present, Eastern and Western cultures, thinking and making, technology and design, and rational and non-rational modes of thought; and, for each student in the class to find, in the architecture of this place and time and contemporary writings across a broad spectrum of disciplines, a place of connection with this rich intellectual tradition that provides inspiration to her/his own thesis project.

COMPLETION REQUIREMENTS

Engaged participation in class discussions of reading and lecture material is expected of all students enrolled in the course.

The term project as suggested here is primarily design-based, inspired by the juxtaposition of a set of specific texts. Students may choose to select a pairing of a thinker (e.g. philosopher, mathematician) and a maker (architect, artist, engineer) from those surveyed in the course, and a pairing of disciplines, one of which represents a rational mode of thought and the other a non-rational mode, for example mathematics and religion, medicine and music, or physics and poetry. From the interactions of these pairings, each student will develop a cumulative project of textual, two-dimensional and/or three-dimensional explorations, ultimately to be presented in class and compiled into a documentary booklet at the conclusion of the course.

The term project may also take the form of a focused creative endeavor conceived and executed by the student during the course of the term, such as an installation or a performance, inspired by or in some way significantly related to the course content and directed reading assignments. It is an explicit intention of the course that each student's work for the course develop into an individual exploration of themes and intellectual currents that can contribute to thesis research development.

Attendance at all class meetings is required. Please contact me in advance of the class if you expect to be late or will be unable to attend.

GRADING

Class participation and attendance	20%
Weekly assignments	20%
Final project	20%
Project presentation	20%
Project documentary booklet	20%

BOILERPLATE

Avoidance of Academic Offenses:

Academic Integrity: To create and promote a culture of academic integrity, the behaviour of all members of the University of Waterloo is based on honesty, trust, fairness, respect and responsibility.

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, <http://www.adm.uwaterloo.ca/infosec/Policies/policy70.htm>

Discipline: A student is expected to know what constitutes academic integrity, to avoid committing academic offenses, and to take responsibility for his/her actions. A student who is unsure whether an action constitutes an offense, or who needs help in learning how to avoid offenses (e.g., plagiarism, cheating) or about “rules” for group work/collaboration should seek guidance from the course professor, academic advisor, or the Undergraduate Associate Dean. When misconduct has been found to have occurred, disciplinary penalties will be imposed under Policy 71 – Student Discipline. For information on categories of offenses and types of penalties, students should refer to Policy 71 - Student Discipline, <http://www.adm.uwaterloo.ca/infosec/Policies/policy71.htm>

Appeals: A student may appeal the finding and/or penalty in a decision made under Policy 70 - Student Petitions and Grievances (other than regarding a petition) or Policy 71 - Student Discipline if a ground for an appeal can be established. Read Policy 72 - Student Appeals, <http://www.adm.uwaterloo.ca/infosec/Policies/policy72.htm>

Note for students with disabilities: The Office for Persons with Disabilities (OPD), 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 the OPD at the beginning of each academic term. Once registered with OPD, please meet with the professor, in confidence, during office hours to discuss your needs.