

## COURSE OBJECTIVES

Within Alchemical traditions, it is thought that the '*Prima Materia*' is the universal chaos from which all worldly matter is formed. '*Deus Faber*' is an archetypal image which permeates wide spread cultures of the globe, and asserts a strong motif of the human psyche. It claims that the complex world we inhabit was created, lovingly, by hand and skill of craft. In many of these archetypes the creator fashions the whole of existence, and even man himself, of Earth. Clay, sand, mud or dust are therefore inherently linked to with the *Prima Materia* in our sub-conscious.

The attitude of earth or matter as animate - the spirit within matter - is an ideology which has dwindled in our modern zeitgeist. Yet The living, changeable nature of our building materials remains as a phenomenological fact of our environment. All materials, modern or antiquated, natural or artificial, take their constituent parts directly of the earth. It is merely a modern perception to view the earth, and matter at large, as being inanimate, inert or lifeless, a perception which lends itself to a retreat from our visceral unconscious territory. Through a phenomenological study of the Earth - and our most primal and symbolic connections to it - this course aims to revive an attitude of mind within matter.

This reading course,

**ARCH 684 - Special Topics in Architecture;**

**THE PHENOMENOLOGY OF THE EARTH**

will deal with exploration of the following subjects:

- **Exoteric Alchemy**, the symbols and themes of physical transformation.
- **Esoteric Alchemy**, the archetypal images of our psyche as related to creation and transformation.
- **Phenomenology**, the sensory experiences of matter and our built environments.
- **Creation Myths**, the primal and basic connections of man to his planet.
- **Utopian Allegories**, the idealistic views of man's potential to exist in harmony.
- **Geological Travelogues**, encounters with the earth, rendered through art and language.

## READING SOURCES

TITLE	AUTHOR	DATE	DESCRIPTION / APPLICATION
<i>The City of the Sun</i>	Tommaso Campanella	1602	Isolationist Utopian Allegory. Written as a conversation, inspired by Plato's republic.
<i>New Atlantis</i>	Francis Bacon	1627	Isolationist Utopian Allegory.
<i>Journey to the Centre of the Earth</i>	Jules Verne	1864	A fictional narrative of geologist confronting the earth in an astounding subterranean expedition. A beautiful example of weaving fact and fiction into a brand new environment.
<i>Alchemy Rediscovered and Restored</i>	Archibald Cockren	1941	An account of the extractions and preparations of the elixir of life, described through the power and potential of the earth's minerals.
<i>Psychology and Alchemy</i>	Carl G Jung	1944	An evaluation of the symbolism of Alchemy and it's applications towards personal, internal transformations.
<i>Conversations with the Earth</i>	Hans Cloos [trans. E. B. Garside]	1953	A pioneering study of rock formations , deformations and tectonics. Written as a travelogue it is a personal account of a geological adventure.
<i>The Poetics of Space</i>	Gaston Bachelard [trans. Maria Jolas]	1958	A phenomenological study of the intimate values of indoor space, questioning what draws us, individually to certain spaces and places.
<i>The Theory of the Earth</i> [or An Investigation of the Laws Observable in the Composition, Dissolution, and Restoration of Land upon the Globe]	James Hutton	1959	An aesthetic theory of Geology regarding the forces and motions of our planet and the ways in which they produce the various of earth's rock formations. [dense, obscure prose]
<i>Mysterium Coniunctionis</i>	Carl G Jung	1963	An Inquiry into the duality expressed through the symbolism of Alchemy, particularly concerned with the separation and synthesis of the alchemical process.
<i>The Book of the Hopi</i>	Frank Waters	1963	The Hopi bible; a complete version of Hopi mythology, creation and migration legends, a tale suspended between fact and fiction.
<i>The Origin of the Work of Art, From Poetry, Language, Thought</i>	Martin Heidegger [trans. Albert Hofstadter]	1971	A philosophical view of art through study of the phenomenology of a 'thing'. It provides of view of art as collective consciousness beyond the realm of pure representation.
<i>Anatomy of the Psyche: Alchemical symbolism in Psychotherapy</i>	Edward F Edinger	1985	Detailed descriptions of the alchemical stages of transformation, as symbolic applications to understanding the processes of our psyche.
<i>Creation Myths</i>	Marie-Luise von Franz	1995	An examination of archetypal images in creation myths, and their applications to help us better understand our physical and psychological environments.
<i>The Ancient Earthworks and Temples of the American Indians</i>	Lindesey Brine	1996	The travelogue diaries of a British naval captain's epic journey of 1869 encountering the major archeological sites of Central and North America
<i>Alchemical Active Imagination</i>	Marie-Luise von Franz	1997	A relation of Western or Jungian alchemy, back towards its roots in Medieval alchemy. Symbolic interpretations
<i>Alchemical Psychology, Old recipes for living in a new World</i>	Thomas F. Cavalli	2002	A view of alchemical themes as expressions of evolution and time, as methods by which to draw an intimate relationship with nature.
<i>The Eyes of the Skin Architecture and the Senses</i>	Juhani Pallasmaa	2005	An exploration of how our human senses along with the phenomenological properties of our environments, constantly work to reinforce one another and provide internal psychological understanding.
<i>Born to Run, A Hidden Tribe, Super Athletes, and the Greatest Race the World has Never Seen</i>	Christopher McDougall	2009	A true story of a small group of modern men, searching for a heightened connection to the planet, explored through the running man theory and an encounter with the Tarahumara.

## IMAGE SOURCES

TITLE	AUTHOR	DATE	DESCRIPTION / APPLICATION
<i>The Golden Game, Alchemical Engravings of the Seventeenth Century</i>	Stanislas Klossowski de Rola	1988	A collection of alchemical imagery with commentary on thematic iconography.
<i>Rosarium Philosophorum</i>		1550	A series of 20 woodcuts illustrating alchemical process.
<i>Atalanta Fugiens</i>	Michael Maier	1618	A series of 50 alchemical emblems alongside musical canons, and poetry, compiled to inspire discourse.
<i>Splendor Solis</i>	Salomon Trismosin	1582	22 elaborate images, expressing the alchemical process wrought through symbolism.
<i>The Book of Lambspring</i>	Nicholas Barnaud	1599	A series of 15 emblematic plates, illustrating the alchemical process without the dense layers of symbolism imagery.
Geological Imagery			TBD
Native American Symbolism			TBD

## COURSE EVALUATION / EXECUTION

Course work throughout the term will involve reports on the readings and modest amounts of creative writing in response to the reference material listed above. This work is meant as a means by which to begin building a body of text in preparation for framing of the thesis.

The aim for conclusion of the course will be the proposal [and potential execution] of a creative endeavour. The goal is to propose or create an installation, or series of experiments inspired through the materials above.

A possible alternative to a physical built work would be to begin a larger design proposal for the context of the design thesis, this would involve locating an appropriate site for a large scale design proposal and beginning an initial site study and along with design work.

Final evaluation will take into account the course work above, and its execution in terms of its ability to cohesively synthesize and frame a thesis.