"Frank Lloyd Wright: Precedent, Analysis & Transformation" is an architectural history course that seeks to understand and learn from the design principles of F.L. Wright through a case study method. After a survey introduction to the career and bibliography of F.L. Wright and investigations of several important houses from throughout his career, the class will select one Wright house to analyze and work with in detail for the rest of the semester. The main purpose of the analysis will be to more fully understand a design of F.L. Wright's, especially the interior woodwork, and see if it is possible to uncover "design principles" or "systems" that act like a "kit of parts." A second phase of the course will investigate how these principles might be used to generate or "grow" new designs through various transformations.

The analysis will be broad in scope in order to get at the heart of Wright's complex and intriguing designs. Students will be asked to take field trips to study the building in person, analyze detailed construction and preservation documents, describe the designs in words, drawings, and other media, construct large-scale and analytical models, invent innovative diagrams and graphic representations, abstract and synthesize the designs with reference to nature, geometry and the human body, interpret and interpolate the designs through computer graphics software, and find other innovative ways to explore and analyze the Wright house. In addition, the class will read essays by F.L. Wright on issues such as the "nature of materials" and "breaking the box," read a broad spectrum of existing studies and analyses of Wright's work, as well as explore related topics that may have influenced Wright's work such as his childhood memories of Gothic cathedrals and Froebel blocks, his love of nature and Japanese design, his discovery of Mayan ornament and an "American Architecture," his relationship to the Arts & Crafts, Craftsman, and Roycroft movements, his awareness of the influence of the machine, mechanization and mass production on all cultural production, his desire to solve the problem of housing for the low and middle-income American, and much more. The many references and analysis approaches will then be synthesized into a comprehensive case study analysis report before undertaking preliminary investigations of new designs made possible by the analysis.

This is a "project course" that will explore architectural history through a unique "hands-on" method of learning. It will require much initiative, creativity and synthesis. It will demand cooperation and a teamwork mentality from all the students, the research/teaching assistants, and the instructor. Although a general structure and the final goals for the course have been set, the precise nature of our analysis and learning will evolve over time as we make new discoveries and determine new paths to understanding Wright.

Initiative and special funding for the course came in part from a grant from the Enkeboll Foundation of the Arts and Architecture to study the woodwork in several case studies of historic architecture.
Research/Teaching Assistants: Rebecca Rahmlow <rrahmlow@andrew.cmu.edu>  
Jennifer Verbeke <jverbeke@andrew.cmu.edu>

Contacts: Use Blackboard to email anyone in the class or the RA’s

Initial Schedule of Seminar: Topics, Readings, Assignments, Deadlines, etc

Abbreviations: * = Most important reading!! Pay particular attention! 
ER = E-Reserve Reader (see CAMEO reserves) 
T = Required textbook

FLWCW = FLW Collected Writings 5 vols. (Rsv: 720.8 W94WCO VOLS. 1 - 5) 

Note: This schedule is subject to change. See handouts for changes.

Week 1
Mon. Jan. 10  Course Introduction, Expectations, Assignments
Assign: Student teams to do research and analyze Martin Hse. (Prairie) & Pope-Leighey Hse. (Usonian), then create “complete bibliography” and prepare Powerpoint presentation and summary handout on analysis on each house. 

* Handout: from W.A. Storrer, The FLW Companion (1992) (Ref. 720.8 W94STAAA)

Overview Readings:

Other Optional FLW Career Overviews:
-- V. Scully, FLW (1960) pp.11-32 
-- L. Roth, Concise History of Amer. Arch. pp.200-211, 254-262, 292-294 
-- P. Sprague, "FLW Dictionary of Art," vol.33 
-- Video: Ken Burns, "FLW" (1998, at Hunt Library)

Wed. Jan. 12  Lec 1: Search for an American Style (Guest Lecture by Diane Shaw)
Readings:

Fri. Jan. 14  Lec. 2: The Domestic Suburb (Guest Lecture by Diane Shaw)
Readings:
* ER: G. Wright, "Victorian Suburbs and the Cult of Domesticity," Building the Dream (1981) Ch.6=pp.96-113

Week 2
Mon. Jan. 17  NO CLASS, Project Work Session
Each group to meet with TA’s (in class, library, studio or cafe) to organize and prepare student presentations

Wed. Jan. 19  Class Presentations on Martin House
DUE: Student Reports on Martin Hse. & Pope-Leighey Hse.

Fri. Jan. 21  Class presentations on Pope-Leighey House
Week 3
Mon. Jan. 24  Lec 3: FLW Youth, Training, Froebel
Readings:
  * ER: W. Cronon, "Inconstant Unity" in T. Riley, FLW (1994), pp.8-31

Lec. 4: FLW Early Influences: Viollet-le-Duc
Readings:
  T: Writings on Wright pp.103-113 (R.C. Spencer, H. Monrow)

Fri. Jan. 28  Lec. 5 FLW Influences: Hugo, Jones, Arts & Crafts

Week 4
Mon. Jan. 31  Lec. 6: Silsbee & Sullivan’s Ornament

Wed. Feb. 2  Lec. 7: Columbian Exposition & Influences: Classical, Japanese, Mayan
Readings:

Fri. Feb. 4  Lec. 8: Earliest Houses (Own House, Winslow)
Readings:

Week 5
Mon. Feb. 7  NO CLASS, Mid-Mini Break
(Research trip to Buffalo, Martin House)

Wed. Feb. 9  Lec. 9: Prairie House I (Martin House)
Readings:
  ER: FLW in Ladies Home Journal (1901/07) in FLWCW vol.1 pp.73-77, 81-83
  ER: G. Wright, "FLW & Domestic Landscape," in Riley, FLW, pp.80-95.

Fri. Feb. 11  Class presentation on comparative analyses
DUE: Draft of house analysis with respect to theme

Week 6
Mon. Feb. 14  Lec. 10: Prairie House II (Robie House)
Readings:
  * ER: FLW, "Cardboard House" (from Mod. Arch, 1931), in FLWCW vol.2 pp.53-59; also in FLW Writings & Buildings pp.37-55
    Optional:

Wed. Feb. 16  Lec: Concrete (Larkin & Unity)
Discuss Readings "In the Cause of Architecture"
Readings:
  * ER: FLW, "In the Cause of Architecture," (1908) in FLWCW vol.1, pp.84-100
    T: Writings on Wright pp.115-117 (R. Sturgis)
Fri. Feb. 18  Lec: Building a New Home: Taliesin
DUE: Analysis Report on House vs. Theme
Readings:
   ER: T. Riley, "Landscapes of FLW" in Riley, FLW, pp.96-107

Week 7
Mon. Feb. 21  Lec: Grand Manner Plans: Imperial Hotel & Midway Gardens
Readings:
   T: Writings on Wright pp.1-18 (Ashbee, Mendelsohn, Woollcott, Anon.)

Wed. Feb. 23  Lec.: California & Desert Diagonals: the Projects of the 1920s
Readings:
   T: McCarter, FLW, Ch.9

Fri. Feb. 25  Lec.: Hagan House
Handout: Hagan House Plans
Readings:
   T: Hoffmann, FLW’s House at Kentuck Knob (read whole book)

Week 8
Mon. Feb. 28 Guest Lec.: Hexagons, by Charles Rosenblum

Wed. Mar. 2  Hagan House Discussion
Readings:
   ER: R. McCarter, “The Integrated Ideal: Ordering Principles in the Arch. of FLW,”
   in FLW: A Primer of Arch’l Principles

Fri. Mar 4  NO CLASS  Mid-Semester Break

Mar. 7-11  SPRING BREAK

Week 9
Mon. Mar 14  Lec.: California and Textile Block Houses
Readings:
   * ER: Frampton, "Modernization and Mediation," in Riley, FLW, excerpt pp.67-71

Wed. Mar. 16 FLW School of Architecture
Readings:
   Handout: “FLW to Open a Bookless School” NY Times (Aug. 1932)
   T: Writings on Wright pp.93-101 (Tafel)

Fri. Mar. 18  Fallingwater & European Modernism
Readings:
   * ER: Alofsin, "FLW & Modernism," in Riley FLW, pp.32-57
   T: Writings on Wright pp.69-72 (Kaufmann)

Sun. Mar. 20  FIELD TRIP  Kentuck Knob, in-depth tour, 9:00-12:00
   Fallingwater, regular tour, 1:00

Week 10
Mon. Mar. 21 Broadacre City
Readings:
   ER: FLW, excerpt from “The New Frontier,” in FLWCW vol.4, pp.60-65
   T: Writings on Wright 195-206 (March)
Optional

ER: FLW, The Living City (1958) skim entire book; and read closely in FLWCW vol 5, pp.272-276, 335-338

Wed. Mar. 23 Usonian Houses (Rectangular: Jacobs, Pope-Leighy, Rosenbaum, etc)

Readings:
T: Writings on Wright pp.51-68, 75-81 (Pope, Chadwick, Leighy, Afflek, Hanna)

Optional

FLW, Natural House (1954) skim book, esp. "Usonian I", "Usonian II" (Res. 728.08 W94N); also as FLWCW vol.5 pp.77-127 (Reserve).

Fri. Mar. 25 Class Review on Hagan House Analysis
DUE: Hagan Research Project Draft 1

Week 11

Mon. Mar. 28 Usonian Houses II (Hexagonal / Triangular: Hanna, Auldbrass, etc.)

Wed. Mar. 30 Johnson Wax & Wingspread

Readings:
ER Frampton, "Modernization and Mediation," in Riley, FLW, excerpt, pp.71-77

Fri. Apr. 1 Taliesin West

Readings:
* -- N. Levine, Arch. of FLW, Ch.9

Week 12

Mon. Apr. 4 Guggenheim

Optional:

Wed. Apr. 6 FLW's Pittsburgh Plans & Late Projects

Optional:

Fri. Apr. 8 Class Review on Hagan House Analysis
DUE: Hagan Research Project Draft 2

Week 13

Mon. Apr. 11 NO CLASS

Wed. Apr. 13 Hagan House Analysis Discussion

Fri. Apr. 15 NO CLASS, Spring Carnival

Week 14

Mon. Apr. 18 Intro. Hagan Analysis & Transformation Project
DUE: Draft of Context Magazine Images

Wed. Apr. 20 Legacy I (Taliesin Architects, Taliesin Fellows)

Fri. Apr. 22 Legacy II (Goff, Prince, Lautner, "Critical Regionalism")
Week 15 (Review Week)
Mon. Apr. 25  Legacy III (Birkets, Domino’s)

Wed. Apr. 27  IN-CLASS Discussion on “Transformation Exercise”

Fri. Apr. 29  Legacy IV (Contemporary Trends)

Exams
Mon. May 8  DUE: Final Hagan Research, Analysis and Transformation Project
Bibliographical Note

This bibliography does not list all the published and unpublished material used in the research and writing of this book. The complete documentation of works and sources is recorded in the notes. The purpose of the following compendium is to provide a broad and concise overview of the Wright literature and archival collections that may be most useful for further research and study.

Monographs and General Art Historical Studies

The essential documentation of Wright’s entire corpus of buildings and projects is:


Until this twelve-volume series containing plans, drawings, and photographs, as well as descriptive texts, became available in the mid-1980s, the fundamental work covering Wright’s output up to 1941 was:


The Hitchcock text remains an authoritative analysis of Wright’s career and formal development. Other general studies that offer significant interpretive advances are:


Studies of Individual Buildings or Groups of Buildings

Most important studies of Wright since the late 1970s have focused on a single period, an individual building, or a group of typologically related buildings. References to these writings will be found in the relevant notes. For convenience, the following is a list of notes containing bibliographies for buildings or projects discussed at some length in the text:

Oak Park House and Studio: Chapter I, note 10; Chapter II, note 5.

Winslow House: Chapter I, note 39.

Willits House: Chapter II, note 21.

Larkin Building: Chapter II, note 53.

Luty Temple: Chapter II, note 40.

Robie House: Chapter II, note 56.

Taliesin: Chapter IV, note 3.

Imperial Hotel: Chapter V, note 2.

Hollyhock House and Olive Hill Cultural Center: Chapter V, note 41.

Textile-block houses and designs: Chapter VI, notes 13, 17, 23.

Johnson Death Valley Compound: Chapter VI, notes 43, 46.


Broadacre City: Chapter VII, note 21.

Fallingwater: Chapter VII, note 32.

Talesin West: Chapter IX, note 1.

Johnson Wax Company: Chapter X, note 20.

Florida Southern College: Chapter X, note 30.

Guggenheim Museum: Chapter X, notes 40, 130, 167, 188.

Morris Shop: Chapter XI, note 1.

Maxier Memorial: Chapter XI, notes 38, 50.

Baghdad Opera House, Cultural Center, and University: Chapter XI, notes 37, 60, passim.

Martin County Civic Center: Chapter XI, notes 124, 130.

Biographies

The biographical component of the study of Wright’s architecture has always been an important one. Three recent biographies stand out either for their critical approach to the subject or for the new information they provide:


For other biographies, see Introduction, note 19.

For published correspondence, talks, interviews, miscellaneous writings, and personal recollections of those who knew and/or worked with Wright, see Introduction, note 19, and Chapter XI, note 5.

Significant Publications of Wright’s Work during His Lifetime

Among the most important primary sources for understanding Wright’s architecture in its historical context are the publications of his work in his lifetime. Key among these are:


Wright’s Own Writings

A number of collections of Wright’s writings exist:


Perhaps the single most important document of Wright’s thoughts on architecture and life in general is:


Among the other texts that most fully represent the evolution of his thinking are:


Research Tools and Archival Collections

The definitive bibliography of writings by and about Wright up to 1977 is:


The most comprehensive guide to Wright’s buildings is:


The voluminous Wright correspondence preserved in the Frank Lloyd Wright Archives at the Frank Lloyd Wright Foundation, Taliesin West, is indexed in:


The many collections containing archival materials on Wright can be found in:


The most important collection of original drawings, correspondence, manuscripts, photographs, works of art, and other archival materials is:

Frank Lloyd Wright Archives, Frank Lloyd Wright Foundation, Taliesin West, Scottsdale, Ariz.

Other significant holdings can be found in:

Research Center, Frank Lloyd Wright Home and Studio Foundation, Chicago.


Department of Special Collections, Stanford University Libraries, Stanford, Calif.: Frank Lloyd Wright-Darwin D. Martin Papers, MS 355.

Drawings and Archives, Avery Architectural and Fine Arts Library, Columbia University, New York: John Lloyd Wright Collection; Edgar Kaufmann-Fallingwater Collection.

Manuscripts Division, Special Collections, University of Utah Libraries, Salt Lake City: Taylor Woolley Archives, MS 452; Clifford Evans Scrapbooks, MS 666.

Archivo de Arquitectura y Construcción, Escuela de Arquitectura, Universidad de Puerto Rico, San Juan: Henry Klumb Archive.