

# History of Architectural Theory

Spring 2008, CMU, Arch #48-341, Wed. 6:30-9:20pm  
Seminar website: [www.andrew.cmu.edu/course/48-341/](http://www.andrew.cmu.edu/course/48-341/)

Prof. Kai Gutschow  
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Off. Hr: M/W 12:30-1:30pm & by appt. in MM202

(1/11/08)

## S'08 Syllabus:

Architecture is not only building, technology, drawings, etc., but also discourse, meaning, communication, and concept: or theory. This architectural history seminar will study in roughly chronological order some of the major theories and theoreticians of architecture, from Vitruvius, through the Renaissance, the Enlightenment, the 19<sup>th</sup>-century, up to the modern era. Throughout the seminar we will chart the changing definitions of what constitutes "theory" in architecture, and how it relates to other writings such as criticism and history. We'll study in-depth how (if at all) theory relates to the intellectual context and built works before and after. Students will discover how ideas reoccur, and even the oldest theories have contemporary relevance. The seminar will culminate with presentations by students on post-war (1945-75) theories of architecture. Work for the seminar will involve extensive readings, active class discussions, and a "report" on post-war theory.

## Summary of Seminars

- We. Jan. 16 #1: Introduction: Theory, Blobs and New Materiality
  - We. Jan. 23 #2: Ancient & Gothic Order: Vitruvius & Geometry
  - We. Jan. 30 #3: Renaissance & Baroque Ideals
  - We. Feb. 6 #4: Enlightenment Neoclassicism: Laugier, Quatremere
  - We. Feb. 13 #5: Romantic Sensations: Burke, Bouleee
  - \*\* Tu. Feb. 19 #6: English Social Critique & Morality: Pugin, Ruskin, Morris
  - We. Feb. 27 #7: French Structural Rationalism: Viollet, Durand & Ecole
  - We. Mar. 5 #8: 19th-cent. German Materialism: Semper, Hübsch, Boetticher
- SPRING BREAK

- We. Mar. 19 #9: German Space, Empathy & Psychology: Schmarsow, Lipps
  - We. Mar. 26 #10: Heroic Modernism of the 1920s: Manifestoes
- POST-WAR Modern Student Presentations

- We. Apr. 2 #11:
- We. Apr. 9 #12:
- We. Apr. 16 #13:
- We. Apr. 23 #14:
- We. Apr. 30 #15:

Topics of classes #11-15 to be determined by student/class interests related to the architecture & theory of post-war modern architecture (1945-75). They could include topics such as technology, Brutalism, Metabolism, Critiques of Modernism, and explore figures such as Mies, Kahn, Saarinen Neutra, Kurokawa, and others!

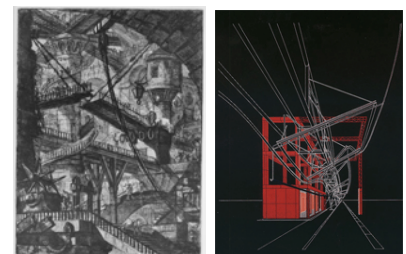
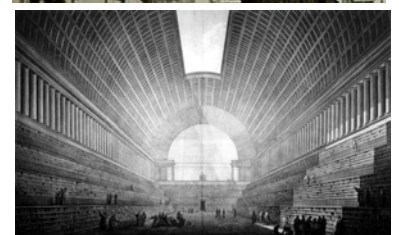
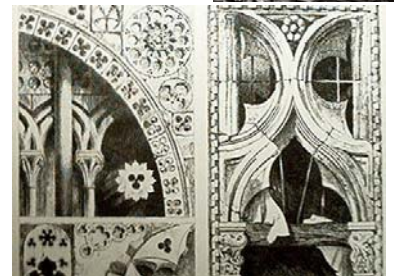
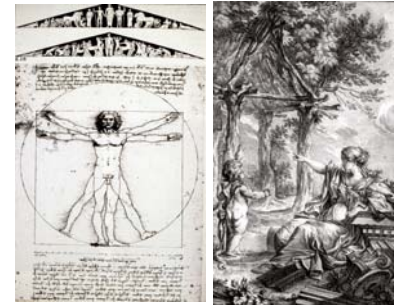
## Objectives:

- To familiarize students with some of the most important theoretical tracts of architectural history up to the present, and how they build on the past
- To understand the relationship of modern theory to older theoretical ideas
- To develop an understanding of what theory is, and how it relates to design
- To develop skills of critical thinking, quality research, and clear communication through readings, class presentations, discussions, and a research report.

## Resources:

Theory must be read: therefor this class will rely heavily on readings, as well as lectures about books and ideas. The reading will consist primarily of excerpts of original (translated) texts to be found in Hunt library and on e-reserve.

Architects should own books for lifelong refernce, as a result I have ordered several texts for suggested purchase at the bookstore: the most comprehensive survey of arch'l theory is H.W. Kruft, History of Architectural Theory (1994); good anthologies of theory H.F Mallgrave, Architectural Theory, from Vitruvius to 1878 (2005), and for the post-war theory Joan Ockman, Architecture Culture, 1943-1968 (1993). Other good surveys include; Fil Hearn, Ideas that Shaped Buildings (2003); Mallgrave, Modern Architectural Theory... 1673-1968 (2005); and P. Collins, Changing Ideals in Modern Architecture 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. (1998).



**The Work: Assignments / Requirements / Grading**

As with most things in life, you'll only get as much out of this class as you put into it. I have not structured the assignments as busy work, as simple tests of your knowledge, or as mere requirements for course credit. Rather, they are intended to be vehicles to structure your own learning experience. Your efforts should fall into three categories:

1) **Seminar Attendance, Participation** (30%): the most important elements in this course are the seminar meetings, to be held Wed. 6:30-9:20pm, in CFA 102. A seminar functions only through **active** student participation, especially in a once-a-week seminar session. Seminar will consist of student presentations, discussions, and some short slide lectures. Learning is not a passive activity: come to class awake, prepared to listen, to discuss ideas, to share your knowledge and research, to ask questions, and to help me and your classmates learn more about "History of Theory". Classes are the best place to pick up info. & ideas, ask good questions, discuss positions, and demonstrate your ability.

Since the seminar only meets once a week, it will not be possible to miss any class session (each class is a whole week worth of work!) Come rain or shine, tired or sick! Attendance will be taken each class, and active participation in all activities is required.

2) **Reading Presentations & "Position Papers"** (30%): Since classes will be based in large part on the communal discussion of readings, it is essential that you do **all** the required reading **BEFORE CLASS**.

A complete reading assignment will be handed out each week for the subsequent week, and also posted to the classwebsite at <http://www.andrew.cmu.edu/course/48-341>. The website contains links to pdf files of the readings stored (for copyright reasons) on library servers, and findable through CAMEO.

**Reading Presentations:** In addition to general active participation in class discussions, each student will be responsible for presenting several readings (oral book reports) and organizing comparative discussions of specific material during the first 10 weeks of the semester. These exercises, to be determined on a week-by-week basis through the semester, are intended to provide each student with the opportunity to share their expertise with the class, and to help promote student discussions. Presentations should be made from notes (not read word for word), and must include a short handout for the class outlining the presented reading and summarizing the most important points of the reading.

**Position Papers:** In order to promote thorough reading and good discussions, and to deepen your understanding of the history of theory, you will be required to write five (5) short, 1-double-sided-page (approx 500 word) papers on the historic theory we read during the first 10 weeks of readings (meaning there will be four weeks when you can choose not to write a paper). These short analytical essays should begin with a creative title, and then discuss-analyze-integrate in any way you wish ALL of the readings for that week. You should do MORE than summarize the essays like a book report. Rather you should analyze and discuss ideas you read about. For example: 1) seek to find ways that the weeks' essays relate, compare or contrast to each other; 2) point out contradictions or vagueness; 3) relate the readings to earlier readings or other ideas (past or present) you are interested in exploring; 4) Propose a counter-statement or rebuttal to any or all readings, etc. (these are only some possible examples).

Each essay should end with three provocative questions about the reading material that might help motivate a good, extended discussion in class, based on facts in the readings, but also subjective opinions and ideas (no true false or mere fact ID questions!). These papers will be DUE before class, sending a file to everyone through Blackboard, and bringing a copy for everyone to class for future reference.

3) **Post-War Modern Theory Presentation & Paper** (40%): A major component of the semester's work will be to focus on a specific aspect of Post-War modern theory (1945-1975), and to share the results of your research, readings, and insights with the class. I will have a list of possible topics, that you will choose from and then narrow down in consultation with me. The final outcome of this project will be: a) the selection of theory readings to be read by the whole class; b) an oral presentation to the class, c) a CD of high quality images related to your presentation; and d) a 10-12 page written term.

You should see these assignments as inter-related, a multi-step, multi-level process that involves exploring unknown material in great depth, developing good questions, finding useful information and readings, sifting out the irrelevant information, formulating an argument, drafting it up, and polishing it into a final piece of clear, persuasive communication that is reinforced by keyed illustrations, properly formatted notes, and an annotated bibliography. A series of handouts is available on the class website to guide you through the process. The work will be divided into discrete sub-sections in order to help you produce a first rate project as follows:

Cont'd...

3a) Pick a THEORETICIAN / ARCHITECT or SMALL THEORY TOPIC: Determine a person or topic of Post-War modern (1945-1975) theory that you would like to explore and present during the last five weeks of the semester, and prepare a term paper on. Check out my list of possible topics, then come see me to discuss and get approval for a topic. The primary goal is to find SPECIFIC THEORETICAL READINGS that you will read, assign to the whole class, and then seek to illuminate for us. That likely involves finding a specific person or topic of theoretical work you will be reading, presenting, and writing on. Sign up for a specific seminar date during which you will present your findings, and submit the "Initial Topic" form with your preliminary thoughts on what aspect of modern theory you'll explore by Jan. 30.

3b) 2-Page PROPOSAL and Copy of PROPOSED READINGS: Over the course of the semester you will be expected to continue research and more in-depth investigation of your theory topic, getting ready for the presentation and paper. Prepare a two-page type-written proposal, including a *summary* of the theoretical topic and/or person to be explored, some of the *questions* you hope to address, along with a *title*, and an *annotated bibliography* of sources (including original theoretical essays AND secondary sources about the theory). Also include a CLEAN & NEAT xerox copy of the readings you propose to have the whole class read. Please include the EXACT source at the top of the front page. The proposal gives me further opportunity to help direct your research effort, and will be due the week of Feb. 20.

3c) REVISE two-page PROPOSAL: An updated, REVISED version will be due Mar. 5.

3d) FINALIZE Seminar READINGS: Continue to research, read and understand your theory ideas. Then select one or two of the most important short original readings that relate to your topic so that all students can read/skim the essays you're researching, and we can have a productive discussion to understand your topic. Final, clean & neat xerox copy of readings, with source listed, due Mar. 19.

3e) SEMINAR PRESENTATION & HANDOUT: Then prepare a 20-30 minute oral class Powerpoint presentation on your topic and theoretical readings on the assigned day in seminar, classes #11-15, Apr. 2, 9, 16, 23, or 30. Presentations should be made from notes (not read word for word), and must illustrate your main points. All presentations must be accompanied by a comprehensive HANDOUT for the whole class, including a summary of readings, the main points, most important images, and a bibliography for further reading.

3e) 10-12pp. TERM PAPER: Based on the feedback to your presentation and the discussion on your topic, prepare a 10-12pp. paper on your subject. The paper should AT LEAST be a *book-report* type summary of the main readings and the main ideas you researched. Ideally, your paper would go beyond the report, and become both a summary AND an *analysis* or *interpretation*, putting the readings in context, comparing them to other texts or ideas, or offering your own theoretical ideas in relation to those you studied. This paper will be due on May 5.

### Policies:

1. Attendance for this seminar is required, and will be part of your class participation grade. Since the class only meets 15 times, it is essential that you are present at EVERY class, no excuses. I will pass around a sign-up sheet for every class to determine precisely who is absent. Email me well BEFORE a class if you know you can't make it to see how to make up work.

2. Lateness: Essays for the readings may not be turned in late. Readings must be done on time for class. Grades for other late work will be lowered by one full letter grade per week or part thereof (i.e. 1-7 days late = 1 full letter grade off; 8-14 days = 2 grades...). NO work will be accepted after May 9, 2006 without prior approval.

3. Grading: You must complete ALL the assignments in order to receive a passing grade for the course. According to university policy, I will grade on the following scale: A = superlative - excellent; B = very good; C = satisfactory; D = passing; F = failing. Your semester grade will be based on the following breakdown: Seminar Attendance & Participation (30%) + Historic "Position Papers" (30%) + Post-War Modern Theory Presentation and Paper (40%) = 100%

4. Special Needs. Students with any documented medical or learning conditions that require special classroom or testing accommodations should see me as soon as possible so we can make the appropriate arrangements.

5. Plagiarism. Our objective is to develop your own research, analytical, and writing skills. Make sure that your ideas and your words are your own or that acknowledgments are made to your factual and intellectual debts. Plagiarism is a serious offence and it will not be excused for any reason; students found guilty of cheating may receive a failing grade for the course and be referred to the University for further action.

The University policy states "Students at Carnegie Mellon are engaged in preparation for professional activity of the highest standards. . . In any presentation, creative, artistic, or research, it is the ethical responsibility of each student to identify the conceptual sources of the work submitted. Failure to do so is dishonest and is the basis for a charge of cheating or plagiarism, which is subject to disciplinary action. . . Plagiarism includes, but is not limited to, failure to indicate the source with quotation marks or footnotes where appropriate if any of the following are reproduced in the work submitted by a student: 1. A phrase, written or musical. 2. A graphic element. 3. A proof. 4. Specific language. 5. An *idea* [emphasis added] derived from the work, published or unpublished, of another person."<sup>1</sup>

If you have questions about what constitutes plagiarism, please see me.

<sup>1</sup> See <http://www.cmu.edu/policies/documents/Cheating.html> & University catalogue, p.34.