Expression in Architecture
Fall 2015, CMU, Arch #48-341, Wed. 6:30-9:20pm, CFA102
Seminar website: www.andrew.cmu.edu/course/48-341

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Office hour by appt. in MM302

(9/2/15)

F'15 Syllabus

This architectural history seminar will explore *expression* in architecture in its many forms, particularly in written works of architectural theory through the ages. We start with the premise that architecture is not merely pragmatic, technical, functional or even always systematic. It can also express or communicate unique ideas, just like a language. It can represent and inspire like many of the arts. It can shape behavior like technology, and evoke feelings like a living organism. It can trigger memories, emotions, or meanings. As Arata Isozaki once put it: "Architecture is a machine for the production of meaning."

We'll investigate many ways that *architects* have theorized the design process, as well as the forms, materials, and contexts they manipulate, to *express* a myriad of ideas and sensibilities. We'll also look at the ways that *buildings*, constructions systems, and materials can *be expressive*, often beyond the intent of the architect, and usually changing over time, as conventions change.

Seminars will be organized thematically, exploring a wide range of different theoretical positions about the role of expression in architecture (see list of weekly topics below). Each week we will explore both older theoretical tracts related to the theme, as well as more contemporary statements. The work of the seminar includes intensive weekly readings, especially of primary sources by architects, weekly student presentations and discussions about the sources, and a term paper on an important theory of expression in architecture of your choice.

Suggested Seminar Topics (*subject to change*)

Wed. Sept. 2   #1: Intro. to Expression
Wed. Sept. 9   #2: Classical System: Aesthetics, Order & Body
Wed. Sept. 16   #3: Language & Semiotics
Wed. Sept. 23   #4: Affect, Empathy & Embodiment
Wed. Sept. 30   #5: Art History, Style, Composition
Wed. Oct. 7   #6: Gothic Light, Savageness & Divinity
Wed. Oct. 14   #7: Baroque: Science & Exhuberance
Wed. Oct. 21   #8: Enlightenment Character
Wed. Oct. 28   #9: Tectonics: Structure & Ornament
Wed. Nov. 4   #10: Expressionism: Art, Sculpture & Formalism
Wed. Nov. 11   #11: Functional Form: Nature & Dynamism
Wed. Nov. 18   #12: Monumentality, Materiality & Brutalism
Wed. Dec. 2   #13: Political Expression & Morality
Wed. Dec. 9   #14: Postmodern Historical Expression

Objectives:

- Understand a series of different positions and outlooks about expression, focusing especially on the intent of the architect, how and what the material buildings communicate, but also the reception by viewers.
- Distinguish intellectually between the role of "expression" and related issues of technique, system, composition, association, etc. in architecture from the past, and your own design work.
- Develop an understanding of what "theory" is, and how it relates to design
- Understand the role of expression in some of the most important theoretical tracts of architectural history up to the present, and how they build on the past
- Understand the relationship of contemporary theory to older theoretical ideas
- Develop skills of critical thinking, quality research, information management, and clear communication through readings, class presentations, discussions, and a written research project.
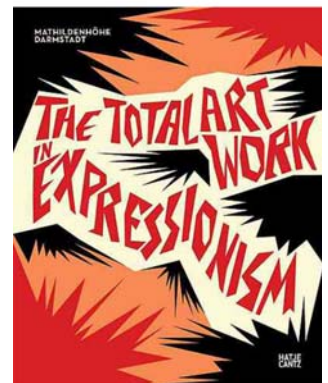
Resources:
Theory must be read: therefor this class will rely heavily on readings (made available on Blackboard). Comprehensive anthologies of theory worth purchasing are by H.F Mallgrave, Architectural Theory Vol.1, from Vitruvius to 1878 and Vol.II, from 1871-2005 (2009). The best overviews of theory are H.W. Kruft, History of Architectural Theory (1994) and Mallgrave, Modern Architectural Theory... 1673-1968 (2005).

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 created 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 & Active 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 "Expression in Architecture." 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. Missing even one seminar can lead to a grade reduction.

     2) **Reading & Presentations** (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,. Readings will be available as pdf's on Blackboard and/or class website.
      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 approximately every other week. Each reading during the semester will be assigned to one or more students, on a week-by-week basis through the semester. They 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.
     Every reading presentation must be accompanied by a 1-2pp. handout for the class summarizing the most important points of the reading. Every handout should include: 1) your name; 2) the full citation of the reading (including original publication dates); 3) if the reading is a primary source material, give a very brief bio pf the author, his career, and the role that this writing played in his career (to be taken from Kruft, or Wikipedia or similar); 4) a summary of the major points of the reading; 5) where appropriate, a few small important illustrations from the text; 6) Extra Credit: a short bibliography of interesting further readings about this source...

     3) **Research Paper** (40%): A major component of the semester's work will be to research and write about a specific aspect of Expression in Architecture, especially ideas that include substantial written theory, history, or criticism. Start by looking at the syllabus, readings assignment sheets, and Kruft and Mallgrave books listed above, for a topic that interests you. Email me ideas, then come see me to brainstorm and discuss. Finding a good topic should be collaborative with an advisor (Kai).
     Writing a college-level research paper is a multi-step, multi-level process that involves: 1) exploring unknown material in great depth; 2) developing good questions; 3) finding useful information and readings; 4) sifting out the irrelevant information; 5) formulating an argument that creates new knowledge or insight about your topic; 6) writing a first draft to get feedback; 7) revising ideas, arguments, and finding more material; 8) and polishing it into a final piece of clear, persuasive communication that is reinforced by keyed illustrations, properly formatted notes, and an annotated bibliography.

Remember, you are doing a *research paper* and not a *report*. There is no way you can research everything there is to know about any topic in 10-12 pages. You can, however, write perceptively about one aspect of a well-focused subject. When framing your topic, think about what *specifically* you are interested in a want to learn more about.

The work will be divided into discrete sub-sections in order to help you produce a first rate research project as follows:

3a) <u>Pick an EXPRESSION-RELATED TOPIC</u>: Determine a person or topic of architectural theory related to expression that you would like to explore and prepare a term paper on. Come see me to discuss and get approval for a topic. The early goal is to find SPECIFIC THEORETICAL READINGS that you will read, analyze and then contextualize in your research paper. An "Initial Topic" form with your preliminary thoughts on what expression-related theory you'll explore is due on <u>Sept. 16 (Week #3)</u>.

3b) <u>2-Page PROPOSAL</u>: Over the course of the semester you will be expected to continuously research and do more in-depth investigation of your expression related topic in consultation with me. 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). The proposal gives me further opportunity to help direct your research effort, and will be due <u>Oct. 7 (Week #6)</u>.

3c) <u>REVISE two-page PROPOSAL</u>:   An updated, REVISED version will be due <u>Oct. 21 (Week #8)</u>.

3d) <u>OPTIONAL Complete DRAFT</u>: you are encouraged to submit a full draft of your term paper to me for comments around <u>Nov. 11 (Week #11)</u>, and definitely before <u>Nov.18 (Week #12)</u>. I will not read notes, partial drafts, or woefully sloppy work.

3e) <u>FINAL 10-12pp. TERM PAPER</u>: Based on the feedback to your proposal and ongoing consultation with me, prepare a 10-12pp. research paper on a specific aspect of expression in architecture. Ideally, your paper would go beyond the report, and become both a summary AND an *analysis* or i*nterpretation*, putting the readings in context, comparing them to other texts or ideas, or offering your own theoretical ideas in relation to those you studied. It must be neatly presented, formatted correctly, and contain a fully developed thesis argument. I will be grading the paper and offer substantive feedback on your thesis, the evidence, the conclusion, and your writing skills. This final paper will be due on <u>Fri. Dec. 11 (Last day of classes)</u>.

For assistance with the written or oral communication assignments in this class, visit the Global Communication Center (GCC). GCC tutors can provide instruction on a range of communication topics and can help you improve your papers and presentations. The GCC is a free service, open to all students, and located in Hunt library. You can make tutoring appointments directly on their website: http://www.cmu.edu/gcc.   You may also visit their website to find out about communication workshops they offer throughout the academic year.

Policies:

1. <u>Attendance</u> for this seminar is required, and will be part of your class participation grade. Since the class only meets 14 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. <u>Lateness</u>: Readings and summary reports 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 Dec. 11, 2015, without prior approval.

3. <u>Grading</u>: 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%) + Reading Handouts (30%) + Expression Research Paper (40%) = 100%

4. <u>Special Needs</u>. 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. <u>Plagiarism</u>. CMU's policy of cheating and plagiarism is found at: http://www.cmu.edu/policies/documents/Cheating.html. My objective is for you 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." If you have questions about what constitutes plagiarism, please see me.