

POSTWAR RESEARCH ASSIGNMENT DETAILS (See also: www.andrew.cmu.edu/course/48-350)

All students must do an in-depth research project on some self-defined aspect of postwar architecture. Your research work and the crafting of your argument should build on the methods and skills developed in your "Interpretation & Argument" course (76-101). In 76-101 you were handed a topic: here you need to find and commit to one on your own, but the work is similar. The "Interp." course taught students:

"to read arguments as parts of larger conversations so that they can become authors within those conversations. Those conversations are about *issues*, comprised by contested perspectives and by multiple voices. The major course assignments assume that academic authors make particular moves for entering a conversation about a contested area, and those moves are based upon authors' abilities to read the literature within the academic conversation in which they are participating."¹

The goal in 76-101, as well as in this 48-350 assignment, is to develop your own argument that contributes to the conversation / discourse / subject in a new and interesting way, and does not just regurgitate someone else's ideas. This sounds daunting, but can be done with enough time, patience, effort, and rigor.

The semester-long work on the research project will be divided into discrete, REQUIRED, phased, sub-sections in order to help you produce a first rate project. You must complete ALL PARTS of the research project in order to receive a passing grade for the course.

1) FIND A TOPIC:

The first thing you need to do is to choose a general topic/subject that interests you enough to work hard all semester on it. Start with something you are already curious about, or something you already know and find inspiring, but want to dig deeper.

The **topic MUST focus on a postwar building, project, drawing, essay, theory, or architect between 1945-72**. This is an architectural history seminar: the paper must be primarily historical in nature, and should focus on architecture (not urbanism, product design, etc.). Although you can research any building or theory, you are particularly encouraged to investigate architects that have built work in **Pittsburgh**, or more broadly in the USA, as this will often result in easier access to "primary sources" about the architect and their work, as well as the ability to visit the work you are researching. College-level research projects in architectural history must build on **primary sources** ("artifacts" or evidence *from* the time period), AND **secondary sources** (previous scholarship *about* the past). I suggest:

1) Work towards picking a specific "artifact" (a building or essay) from the time period or subject you want to investigate, and NOT just a general theme or idea you are curious about.

2) Write a comparative essay that compares and contrasts your main artifact to another artifact. When you compare two things, you start understanding them better in relation to each other, and you quickly move beyond mere description, to analysis and more nuanced and discerning understanding.

3) Be sure to create a "good" comparison between two artifacts that share a lot of characteristics, but have intriguing differences. Examples are two buildings by the same architect to show difference or change over time; or two buildings of the same type, but designed by different architects, etc. A good thesis statement then becomes: "Although these two appear similar, they are in fact different..."; or the opposite: "Although these two appear different, they share many important issues..."

4) Be flexible with your topic. Avoid sticking stubbornly to your first ideas about a topic. Allow your sources to help you find a good topic that you can write on effectively. Rather than start with a fixed topic, look for interesting artifacts, then write about them!

5) Create new knowledge: the goal is to move beyond mere description, or simple curiosity, or just summarizing or curating existing knowledge (a "report"), and instead contribute to a **revised interpretation or new understanding** of your subject (original "research"). To do this in a history class, you must find, read, and interpret a comprehensive list of existing sources or evidence on your focused topic, establish the different points of view that have already been expressed about that subject, and then argue your own position clearly and professionally.

** This year (S'15) there is a special (optional) opportunity to work on a research project that contributes to an exhibition on postwar Pittsburgh architecture and urbanism being prepared by Over, Under Architects for the Heinz Architectural Center in the Carnegie Museum of Art, for fall 2015. Projects can be more traditional written term papers, graphic analysis of data and ideas, or architectural analysis of detailed construction systems of an iconic building. In each case, the research should aim to uncover new and exciting archival

¹ D.S. Wetzel, "Core Concepts for Teaching Interpretation and Argument," MS, Fall 2009,

resources that can add to, or change our understanding of these projects. A great resource for postwar Pittsburgh architecture is www.andrew.cmu.edu/user/ma1f/ArchArch/postwarPGHarchbibliography.html; Some lists of possible research topics and sources:

<u>Important Pgh. Bldgs./Projs.</u>	<u>Some Good Architects with Work in Pgh.</u>	<u>Collections at CMU Architecture Archives:</u>	<u>Other Archives in Pittsburgh:</u>
IBM / Steelworker's Building	Altenhof & Brown	Paul Schweikher	- CMU University Archives
Alcoa Building	Edward Larabee Barnes	Raymond Viner Hall	- Carnegie Library, Pennsylvania Department
Civic Arena (The "Igloo")	Welton Beckett Assoc.	Peter Berndtson	- Heinz History Center, Library and Archives
Gateway Center (1,2,3,4)	Harrison & Abramovitz	Glenn Bickerstaff	- Pittsburgh History & Landmarks Foundation,
Lower Hill Redevelopment	I.M. Pei	Alexander Sansosti	James van Trump Library,
Mellon Square	Frank Lloyd Wright	John Pekruhn	- Archives Service Center, University of Pittsburgh
Equitable Plaza	Philip Johnson	John Knox Shear	- Duquesne University archives & special collect.
Allegheny Center	William Lescaze	Tasso Katselas	
US Steel Building	Charles Luckman	William S. Huff	
Westinghouse Bldg.	S.O.M.	Mitchell & Ritchey	
Panther Hollow Project.	Louis Valentour	Celli-Flynn	
"Pgh. In Progress" exhibit	James Speyer	Ryan Homes, Inc.	
Pgh. Bicentennial events			
+	+	+	+

2) CMU ARCHITECTURE ARCHIVES VISIT:

In order to give you a feel for "archival" material, the class will visit the CMU Architecture archives to see some of the rich materials they have available regarding Postwar Pgh. If you choose not to work on a Pgh. topic, you will need to find similar material through other means for your research project.

3) YEAR IN ARCHITECTURE COLLAGES (2): As an introduction to the postwar era, to get everyone immersed in the material and the "feel" of the period, and exposed to "primary sources" from the period, every student will be assigned to research 2 years in the period 1942-1972 during the first week of classes. The assignment:

- Leaf through the entire volume of pages of Architectural Record, and of London's Architectural Review, and the entire pdf of Pittsburgh's Charette magazine (see website) for the 2 years assigned to you.
- Scan/save at least 15 pages from each journal, as well as any other images that interest you, including interesting and boring buildings, funky ads, notable quotes, art, fashion, cars, etc. Look especially for Pittsburgh buildings or companies!
- Compose a tightly-packed, well-organized, **single-page, 11"x17"** (landscape orient) collage of ID'ed images for **each** of the two years assigned to you, and attempt to capture and communicate the most important and significant architectural events for Pittsburgh, the US, and international context.
- Feel free to connect it to the paper topic that you are beginning to choose.
- Feel free to use additional images from anywhere on the web, including the AP Archives, Life, etc.
- Each page should include your name, year, and the title: "Postwar Modern Architecture in Pittsburgh"
- Submit color hardcopy & pdf with filename: **Postwar_19XX_Lastname.pdf** by **Thu. Jan. 22.**



4) "PAPER TOPIC" FORM: After you have explored some possible topics, and gotten the feel for some of the source material in the journals and archives, fill out the "Initial Paper Topic Form" handed out on the first day of classes. Due Tue. Jan. 27.

5) SEARCH FOR SOURCES: Start your search for sources. If your topic is still broad (such as the career of an architect), gather several authoritative sources on the subject, read, look for interesting ideas, and narrow your topic, pick a specific artifact, focus!. After deciding on a specific building, project, theory, or architect, do extended library and web research to find as many scholarly and local sources on that topic as you can. Try to find (literally) EVERY book and article that mentions it. Find recent articles and books, as well as old reviews and accounts from when it was built.

Use the library's architecture research webpage (<http://guides.library.cmu.edu/architecture>), and click on our class-specific research web page ([48-350](#)) for a range of search resources. Use a variety of library data bases and search engines: Cameo, Worldcat, Avery, JStor and other databases with several different key words. Google Books and Google Scholar are also increasingly useful. Think BROADLY about where you could find info: be creative, think outside the box!!! Use footnotes, bibliographies and references in the sources to find more sources. Follow the trail. Be sure to sift through all the sources, and identify the BEST sources... Determine who are the main scholars, and what are the best sources on your topic. Work to find out where the personal or professional archives and papers of the building or architect you are studying are stored (Avery in NYC, Archives of American Art in DC, Burnham Archives in Chicago, Heinz History Center, CMU Hunt Library Architectural Archives, etc.)

Be flexible with your topic. Avoid being stubborn or closed minded. Allow your search and sources to help you find a topic that you can write on effectively, even if it diverts from initial interests.

6) FIND / DETERMINE THE EXISTING ARGUMENTS: Gather, skim or read as many sources as you can, and read broadly to understand what has been written, and the various "arguments" proposed by other authors about your subject.

Every author has a point of view and personal bias, a particular story to tell. What are the existing "stories" about your topic, and how are they different? If they appear to just be objective, or just describe facts, you are NOT reading closely enough... everything has a bias, you just need to know enough to identify it.

7) RESEARCH CONSULTATIONS: Consult with experts to help focus your subject and find more sources. Set up a meeting as soon as possible with Kai. Find other experts and ask for help, including at other libraries and archives in Pittsburgh. Write an email to the archive that holds the papers of your architect.

When you are ready, you will also be REQUIRED to set up a meeting with architecture librarian Martin Aurand, a fantastic resource on postwar architecture, especially in Pittsburgh. Contact him at (ma1f@andrew.cmu.edu), and make an appointment to visit him at his office on the 4th floor of Hunt Library. Martin will report back to me on your progress and the success of your research.

8) 2nd TOPIC PROPOSAL REVISION (½ page + biblio): Based on my feedback, additional research, and meetings with Martin Aurand and others, revise your ideas and write a ½-page typed summary of your topic, potential thesis, and developing bibliography of primary AND secondary sources. **DUE: Tue. Feb. 10**

9) 3rd TOPIC PROPOSAL REVISION + ANNOTATED BIBLIOGRAPHY: Based on feedback and further research, revise your paper proposal again.

Also assemble an annotated bibliography of at least 12 "good" (authoritative), and substantially different sources on your subject. You must include several "PRIMARY SOURCES" and AT LEAST FOUR JOURNAL ARTICLES. All bibliographies must be properly formatted according to CHICAGO STYLE, the most popular format for architectural historians (this is likely different from other classes, where you may have used MLA style or scientific notation). There will be in-class help sessions and handouts to help you prepare the annotated bibliography. See www.chicagomanualofstyle.org/tools_citationguide.html. All bibliographies must be "ANNOTATED" with a brief summary of the book or article, the overall argument used by the author, and what specific aspect of the book you will use for your paper. Bibliographic annotations are typically indented and immediately under each citation, often in smaller font. **DUE: Tue. Feb. 24**

10) DEVELOP YOUR THESIS: Continue to gather sources, and discern the “argument” and bias promoted by each author. Then formulate your own point of view that allows you to explore a problematic issue raised by the sources, one that begins to address a particular problem within the conversation of the other authors. Create your own response to open question and issues by developing a thesis and a paper-length argument that will allow you to enter their conversation.

** If you have not written many research papers, you should consider using the required book by Sylvan Barnett, *A Short Guide to Writing About Art*, for help on formulating a comparative topic and a thesis, formatting the bibliography, and how to go about writing a college level research paper.

11) WRITE FIRST THREE PAGES + UPDATED BIBLIOGRAPHY: Write the first three pages of your project, including a THESIS STATEMENT and introduction, which includes a *summary* of the topic and some of the *questions* you hope to answer, as well as the *argument* you will make. Be sure to include a PAPER TITLE, and a revised ANNOTATED BIBLIOGRAPHY. These fully formatted first pages + bibliography will be **DUE Tue. Mar. 24**, and give me further opportunity to help direct your research effort.

12) FINAL PROJECT DUE: Do more research as needed, then write an 10-12 page DRAFT of your entire term paper. There will be an in-class help session on paper formatting and writing in class. Have a friend read it, and/or put it aside for a few days, and then come back to the paper to revise, to be sure the arguments are clear, to remove any extra information, and to polish your prose and formatting.

Then write the FINAL paper, **DUE Thu. Apr. 16**. The final paper must be neatly presented, formatted correctly, and contain a fully developed thesis argument as per the 76-101 model. I will be grading the paper and offer substantive feedback on your thesis, the evidence, the conclusion, and your writing skills. If you are satisfied with your first grade, you're DONE!

I am happy to read drafts; but I will not read outlines or incomplete papers. The earlier you submit a complete paper, the more feedback I can provide. I can even assign a grade. If you are NOT satisfied with the grade, you will have a chance to revise and rewrite the paper based on my comments, and improve your paper grade.

The final rewrites and the last day to submit anything for the course will be **DUE Thu. May. 7**.