
48-351 Human Factors in Architecture :: Response
THREE The Cognitive Dimension

Assigned: Thursday 31 Jan

Due: Field journal blog post, by beginning of class, 7 February.

Submit electronically to Blackboard by the beginning of class, 7 February.

Bring printed copy to class. Thursday 7 February.

In class we have learned about perception and cognition and their relationship to our built environment. We have looked at what distinguishes a number of different theories and have briefly discussed their application to architectural practice and theory. This assignment should help you connect these different ideas through your observation journal and should expose you to applications of these ideas in architectural theory.

Part One: Experience (Field Journal Entry Number Two)

From the recent Sejima lecture write a response that connects the lecture material to the topics of human dimension and cognitive issues. If you did not attend the lecture, read the excerpt from Thomas Fisher, "Critiquing the Design Culture." Define his main points and write a response. Post your response to the blog. If you are unable to post to the blog, email your response to Christian Wagner by the deadline.

Part Two: Reflection on Readings

The following readings extend our discussion of perception and cognition to the realm of architecture and architectural theory. Summarize each of the following readings in 2-3 paragraphs, single spaced. Include a brief critical reflection for each reading. Think about the following questions as you read. Submit with the following naming convention **LASTNAME cognitive reading**.

Bauhaus and Bauhaus People / Eckhard Neumann

Gestalt perceptual theory and the Bauhaus pedagogy. This essay is an excerpt of participants in the Bauhaus.

- What is the understanding of Gestalt expressed here?
- What relationship is discussed regarding the role of positive theory (scientific investigation) to the teaching?
- What do you think Albers meant by "Thus art is not an object / but experience?"
- Do you see any influence of these ideas in your education at CMU?

Why Buildings Are Known / Donald Appleyard

Transactional perceptual theory and application in positive theory. This essay demonstrates methodology and results for incorporating perceptual research as a predictive tool for designers.

- What was Appleyard trying to discover in his research? What was his methodology?
- What implication does it have for design (his response)?
- How does this work reflect the ideas of transactional theory?
- How might this information be relevant in your own work?

The RSVP Cycles / Lawrence Halprin

Description of design process that relies heavily on user interaction, movement and non traditional means of representation and documentation.

- What is meant by the RSVP cycle?
- Why does Halprin say it is needed?
- How does this work reflect the ideas of ecological perceptual theory?
- How might this information be relevant in your own work?

Option: You may replace up to one reading with a book or journal article related to these topics. Summarize and make explicit the connection to the topics discussed in class. Bring a copy to class for inclusion in the resource book (full text, link or excerpt). Make sure to include the title, author and source.

Reference readings:

Lang, Chapter 9: Fundamental Processes of Human Behavior

This assignment will be the starting point of our discussion in class. Class participation is expected and will be factored into the grade.