

**Art History W300: Modern Architecture, 1750-Present [Writing Intensive]**

**Temple University, Department of Art History**

**Fall Semester 2006**

Main Campus: Ritter Hall, room 109

Tuesday, Thursday 11:40 AM – 1:00 PM

Instructor: Anthony Raynsford

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Office hours: Tuesday, 1:30-4:30 PM

\* E-mail is generally the best method of contact during non-office hours.

\* Please allow 48-hours for an e-mail response.

**GENERAL COURSE INFORMATION**

**Topic and Scope of the Course:** This course provides an introduction to the history of modern architecture in Europe and North America, between 1750 and the present. It will explore the relationships between historical developments in architecture and wider changes in the social, technological and aesthetic realms. In this sense, the study of architecture will serve as a window into broader aspects of cultural history. Simultaneously, however, the course will examine architecture as a unique medium, with its own visual codes, spatial forms and material structures. In this sense, the history of architecture will be seen in terms of the internal dynamics and ongoing issues of what it means to make a building in any context. As the course progresses, students will be expected to develop visual literacy in the forms and trends of modern architecture. Emphasis will be placed on learning to look at buildings and architectural representations in a deeper way. Textbook readings will help to introduce some of the basic issues while primary texts (written by architects) will supplement textbook readings. The course will place architecture within the broader history of modernity even as it also examines the particular responses of architects. In this way architecture will be read both from the outside, as a consequence of certain social, economic and ideological forces, and from the inside, as a problem of the professional architect.

What is meant by modern architecture? There is no simple, universally agreed-upon answer to this question. However, this course will explore three major strands of the modern: political modernity; technological modernity; and self-conscious aesthetic modernity. Political modernity has to do with the emancipation from static, inherited social hierarchies, illustrated in the 18th century by the American and French revolutions, and more recently by civil rights movements around the world. For Western architecture, this political change meant that architects were no longer as exclusively concerned with designing churches and palaces, the symbolic sites of traditional authority. Technological modernity has to do with the mechanization of production and communication, noticeable in England in the late 18th century. For architects, such technological changes meant the manufacture of new building materials, the decline of craftsmanship, urbanistic conditions of sprawl and the mass reproduction of architectural images. Self-conscious, aesthetic modernity has to do with architects understanding themselves as having broken with history and with the architectural traditions of the academy. This sense is captured by slogan of the Vienna Secession: "To each age its art, to each art its freedom." Self-conscious modernity meant that architects had to, not only prove that they were modern, but also decide what modernity should look like.

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These different strands of the modern are all interwoven, but this course will seek to unravel them somewhat, in order to investigate what “modern architecture” might, in fact, have meant under different historical conditions – and what it might still mean today. It is said that architecture is the most overdetermined of the arts. In other words its form is the most dependent on function, patronage, structure, social representation, conditions of labor, etc. It is also called an inherently spatial art on a large scale. For these reasons, architecture can become an index of many other historical developments, not least of all that of modernity. The course will investigate, not only the ways in which modern society has shaped its buildings, but also how its buildings shaped (or were expected to shape) Modern society. As an art form which is not only vast in scale but also vastly expensive to produce, architecture has always been directed by an elite minority while having visual and physical impacts on the vast majority. It is an art form, not only of visual impressions but also of bodily disciplines, literally enclosing and organizing the spaces of those who inhabit it. Through field trips, this course will also explore this embodied dimension of architecture as a social and aesthetic medium.

**Purpose of the Course:** This is a writing-intensive course, and students will be expected to do a significant amount of writing and revision. More specifically, students will be evaluated on their ability to synthesize knowledge through the medium of writing. In other words, a major goal is to provide students with a comprehensive experience writing to learn and learning to write. At the same time, this course is introductory and assumes no background in architecture or architectural history. In addition to developing writing skills, it seeks to provide students with an introduction to three basic foundations for studying Modern architecture: 1) a set of conceptual and visual tools for analyzing buildings and architectural images in general; 2) a critical overview of issues and problems faced by architects in the last three centuries; and 3) a historical sense of the major periods and developments in cultural and social history that directly impacted modern architecture. Through textbook readings, lectures and field trips, students should be able to look at the buildings all around them in a new, historical light and begin to recognize the major movements and building types within modern architecture. Students should also become more aware of the material and visual qualities of architecture general, while also learning how to translate observation and knowledge into persuasive verbal analysis. In addition, students will be expected to begin to develop research skills through an original investigation into a particular aspect of modern architecture.

**Class Format:** This course will be a lecture course, with opportunities for questions, discussion, writing development and independent research. The lectures and readings are intended to provide a broad, historical overview of Modern architecture in its international context. This historical background will then be supplemented by one or more field trips. Through various writing exercises, students will be expected to communicate knowledge about architecture and develop abilities in critical thinking, style, mechanics, organization and reasoning. Knowledge will also be tested in mid-term and final examinations. Consequently, the final grade will hinge as much on writing quality as on knowledge of course content.

**Required Texts:** Barry Bergdoll, *European Architecture, 1750-1890*, (Oxford: 2000); Henry-Russell Hitchcock, *Architecture: Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries*, (Yale: 1977); William J.R. Curtis, *Modern Architecture since 1900*, (Phaidon: 1996). All books are available at the Temple University Bookstore. All other readings will be available on e-reserve through Temple University's Diamond catalog.

## COURSE SCHEDULE

### **August 29: Course overview**

#### PART I: RATIONALISM, INDUSTRIALIZATION AND THE SEARCH FOR PRINCIPLES

### **August 31: Origins of Neoclassicism:**

Bergdoll Chapter 1, pp. 9-41

### **September 5, 7: Neoclassicism and the French Enlightenment**

Bergdoll Chapters 2 and 3, pp. 43-102 and pp. 105-117; Hitchcock pp. 13-22

### **September 12, 14: Romantic Classicism and the Transformation of Historical Models**

Bergdoll pp. 117-135, 173-195; Hitchcock Chapters 1 and 2, pp. 23-46, 47-73 and pp. 121-128

### **September 19, 21: Nationalism and Medievalism: 19<sup>th</sup>-Century Gothic Architecture**

Bergdoll pp. 139-170, 196-205; Hitchcock Chapters 6 and 10, pp. 143-168, 248-270.  
[Preliminary paper proposal due in class, Thursday, September 21<sup>st</sup>]

### **September 26, 28: Industrialized Building and European Urban Expansion**

Bergdoll Chapters 7 & 8, pp. 207-267; Hitchcock Chapter 8 pp. 191-217

#### PART II: SECESSIONISM AND SELF-CONSCIOUS MODERNITY

### **October 3: The Chicago School and the Invention of the Skyscraper**

Hitchcock, Chapter 14, pp. 327-352; Curtis Chapter 2, pp. 33-51

### **October 5: Mid-Term Exam!**

### **Saturday October 7<sup>th</sup>: Mandatory field trip to Eastern State Penitentiary**

Exact time to be announced, class will meet at ESP, 22<sup>nd</sup> St. and Fairmount Ave.

### **October 10, 12: The Art Nouveau and Secession**

Bergdoll Chapter 9, pp. 269-279; Hitchcock Chapters 16 and 17 pp. 383-417; Curtis Chapter 3, pp. 53-71  
[Field trip assignment due in class, Thursday, October 12<sup>th</sup>]

### **October 17, 19: Arts & Crafts / Organic Architecture**

Curtis Chapters 5, 7 & 8, pp. 87-97, 113-147; Hitchcock, Chapter 19, pp. 433-454

#### PART III: PARADIGMS OF 20<sup>TH</sup> CENTURY MODERNISM

### **October 24, 26: The Werkbund, Aesthetic Avant-Gardes and the Bauhaus**

Curtis Chapters 6, 9, 11 & 10, pp. 99-111, 149-159, 183-199, 201-215

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**October 31, November 2: The Machine Aesthetic and International Modernism**

Curtis Chapters 4, 10, 15 & 16, pp. 73-85, 163-181, 257-285

[Paper draft and bibliography due in class, Thursday, November 2<sup>nd</sup>]

**November 7, 9: Other Modernisms in the Interwar Years**

Curtis Chapters 13, 17 & 18, pp. 217-239, 287-327

**November 14, 16: Postwar Modernism and the New Monumentality**

Curtis Chapters 22, 23 & 28, pp. 395-435, 513-527

**November 21: Global, National and Regional Modernisms**

Curtis Chapters 21 & 27, pp. 371-391, 491-511

**November 23: Thanksgiving [NO CLASS!]**

**PART IV: CONTEMPORARY AND POSTMODERN ARCHITECTURE**

**November 28, 30: Postmodernism and Critical Reactions after 1960**

Curtis Chapters 30, 32 & 33, pp. 547-565, 589-633

**December 5: Contemporary Architecture - Contextualizing the Present**

Curtis Chapters 34 & 35, pp. 635-689

[Final paper due in class.]

**FINAL EXAM! Thursday, December 14, 11:00 AM – 1:00 PM!!**

**COURSE REQUIREMENTS**

**General Requirements:**

This is a writing-intensive course, in which papers or other written assignments will be required at regular intervals throughout the semester. The course requires developing strong writing skills; attention to lectures; close readings of the assigned pages; the visual observation of actual buildings; and the development of an original research project. Students are responsible not only for the material in the text but also the additional information and themes covered in the lectures. Evaluations will be based on exam performance, attendance, and a research project, consisting of an initial proposal and a final 10-page paper. In addition, there will be one mandatory field trip. Course performance will be evaluated primarily on a combination of examinations and written assignments, with some weight given to attendance. All papers must be submitted in two forms: a hard copy and an electronic file submitted through the Blackboard site for the course.

**Relative weight of course requirements:**

- 1) Preliminary Paper Proposal (5%)
- 2) Mid-Term Exam, (15%)
- 3) Field Trip Assignment (10%)
- 4) Draft Paper and Bibliography (15%)
- 5) Final Paper (25%)
- 3) Final Exam: Thursday, December 15, 2:00 - 4:00 PM (20%)

6) Class Participation (10%)

**Policy on late assignments and class participation:**

Unless there is a written excuse (either for medical or other personal emergency), late assignments will be docked half a grade during the first week of lateness and a full grade for the second week of lateness. Late assignments will not be accepted after two weeks.

Missed examinations can only be made up if there is a valid written excuse for emergency reasons.

The class participation grade is almost entirely based on class attendance, with extra credit accruing for active discussion. Two or fewer unexcused absences will not affect the class participation grade. However, each subsequent absence will deduct 25% of the class participation grade. So, for example, after 6 unexcused absences, the class participation grade might be 0. Absence from the mandatory field trip on October 7<sup>th</sup> will deduct 50% from the class participation grade.

Please note: As a rule, incomplete grades are not given in this course. If you cannot be present for the exams, you should not register for the course.

**Statement of Academic Rights and Responsibilities:**

Freedom to teach and freedom to learn are inseparable facets of academic freedom. The University has a policy statement on Student and Faculty and Academic Rights and Responsibilities which can be accessed through the following link: [http://policies.temple.edu/getdoc.asp?policy\\_no=03.70.02](http://policies.temple.edu/getdoc.asp?policy_no=03.70.02).

**Exceptional Accommodations:**

Any student who has a documented need for accommodation based on the impact of a disability should discuss the matter privately with me within the first two weeks of classes. The student should also contact Disability Resources and Services at (215) 204-1280.

**ADDITIONAL NOTES:**

This syllabus is subject to change, in the event of unforeseen circumstances, or in the case that changes will significantly enhance the quality of the course.