

History of Modern Architecture

HIST 388-002 / ARTH 315-001

Syllabus

Prof. Sun-Young Park
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Robinson B 336
Office hours: Th 1:30-2:30pm

Fall 2017
TR 3-4:15pm
Art & Design 2003

(Please always e-mail me in advance if you plan on coming to office hours, as I may have unforeseen commitments on certain weeks. If you are not available during the scheduled office hours, please feel free to get in touch with me to set up an appointment.)

Contact information of 2 classmates:

1. _____
2. _____

Course overview

This course will trace the history of modern architecture in the Western world from the mid-19th century to the present. We will explore this history through key movements such as Art Nouveau, Futurism, Modernism, and Post-Modernism; influential architectural designers and theorists, from Louis Sullivan to Le Corbusier; and enduring issues such as gender, class, race, and technology. We will look closely at major modern monuments, while also placing these and other vernacular architectural developments within their changing urban contexts. Our aim will be to gain a more nuanced understanding of the modern built environment alongside evolving political, social, and cultural currents.

Course requirements

Grade breakdown:

Class participation 20%
Case study and presentation 25%
Midterm 25%
Final exam 30%

1. *Class participation:* This course will be comprised of both lectures and discussions. You are expected not only to attend each class session, but also to have prepared thoughts on the day's readings for discussion. I may occasionally give unannounced reading quizzes to check that you are keeping up. One of the aims of this course is to teach you how to read and reflect critically on a range of historical texts. Learning to respond to your fellow students' opinions and comments is a valuable part of this process, and a skill you will be able to take with you to future courses.
2. *Case study and presentation:* You will each prepare a case study on a work of modern architecture corresponding to one of the class themes, culminating in a 15-minute class presentation and a 5-6 page paper on your analysis (due 2 weeks after your presentation). These presentations and papers will be staggered throughout the semester, so that your project will coincide with the week when we are studying the related movement or development.

3. *Midterm* (Tuesday 10/17): The midterm will comprise slide identifications, comparisons, and essay questions, on topics covered during the first half of the semester.
4. *Final exam* (Thursday 12/14, 1:30-4:15pm): The final exam will consist of slide identifications, comparisons, and essay questions on topics covered over the entire semester, with an emphasis on material since the midterm.

Reading assignments

The following required textbooks are available for purchase at the university bookstore:

- William J.R. Curtis, *Modern Architecture Since 1900* (London: Phaidon, 1996)
- Ulrich Conrads, ed., *Programs and Manifestoes on 20th-Century Architecture* (Cambridge: The MIT Press, 1971)

Additional reading assignments for each week, comprising both primary and secondary texts, will be made available online through Blackboard.

Course policies

- *Academic integrity:* The integrity of the University community is affected by the individual choices made by each of us. GMU has an Honor Code with clear guidelines regarding academic integrity (<http://www.gmu.edu/academics/catalog/9798/honorcod.html>). Three fundamental and rather simple principles to follow at all times are that: (1) all work submitted be your own; (2) when using the work or ideas of others, including fellow students, give full credit through accurate citations; and (3) if you are uncertain about the ground rules on a particular assignment, ask for clarification. No grade is important enough to justify academic misconduct. Plagiarism means using the exact words, opinions, or factual information from another person without giving the person credit. Writers give credit through accepted documentation styles, such as parenthetical citation, footnotes, or endnotes. Paraphrased material must also be cited, using MLA or Chicago format. A simple listing of books or articles is not sufficient. Plagiarism is the equivalent of intellectual robbery and cannot be tolerated in the academic setting. If you have any doubts about what constitutes plagiarism, please see me.
- *Course communication:* Mason uses only Mason e-mail accounts to communicate with enrolled students. Students must activate their Mason e-mail account, use it to communicate with their department and other administrative units, and check it regularly for important university information including messages related to this class.
- *Attendance and conduct:* You are expected to attend and participate in every class session. For justifiable absences (such as illness or other emergencies), you may be asked to provide official documentation. You should e-mail me in advance if you know of an upcoming conflict. Repeated absences will impact your participation grade. Please always be respectful of your classmates and professor in your speech and conduct.
- *Use of technology:* Cell phones and other communicative devices must be switched off or put on silent (not vibrate) mode during class hours. If you are seen using your phone during class time, it will be confiscated until the end of the class. Laptops/tablets may be used solely for note-taking purposes, and not for e-mailing, internet browsing, or using social media. I may occasionally check

that you are complying with this policy, and in the case that it is not respected, I reserve the right to prohibit laptop/tablet use for the remainder of the course.

- *Late assignments:* For written work, lateness will be penalized by 1/3 of a letter grade (for example, A to A-) for every 24-hour period beyond the deadline. If you have extenuating circumstances, you should always get in touch with me directly.
- *Special accommodations:* If you are a student with a disability and you need academic accommodations, please see me and contact the Office of Disability Services at 703.993.2474 or ods.gmu.edu. All academic accommodations must be arranged through that office.

Weekly schedule

Unit 1: Inventing the Modern, 1850-1914

Week 1 Introduction

T 8/29 Introduction to modern architecture

R 8/31 Nineteenth-century historicism

- Curtis, p.21-31 (ch1: The idea of a modern architecture in the nineteenth century)
- Heinrich Hubsch, "In What Style Should We Build?" (1828), p.64-85

Week 2 The Modern Metropolis

T 9/5 Industrialization and the modern city

- David van Zanten, "The Quartier de l'Opéra," in *Building Paris* (1994)

R 9/7 The World's Fairs

- Zeynep Çelik, "Islamic Quarters in Western Cities," in *Displaying the Orient* (1992)

Week 3 Nature Re-visited

T 9/12 Art nouveau

- Curtis, p.53-63 (ch3: The search for new forms and the problem of ornament)
- Conrads, p.13, 18

R 9/14 Antoni Gaudi

- George R. Collins, "Antonio Gaudi: Structure and Form," *Perspecta* 8 (1963): 63-90

Case study options:

- Victor Horta, Hotel Eetvelde, 1895-1901
- Charles Rennie Mackintosh, House for an Art Lover, 1901
- Antonio Gaudi, Casa Batlló, 1904-6

Week 4 Industry and Ornament

T 9/19 Vienna Secession and the Vienna Workshops

- Curtis, p.66-71 (ch3 continued)
- Otto Wagner, *Modern Architecture*, excerpt

R 9/21 Adolf Loos and the problem of ornament

- Conrads, p.19-24

Case study options:

- Josef Hoffmann, Palais Stoclet, 1905-11

- Adolf Loos, Villa Müller, 1928-30

Week 5 Responses to Mechanization

T 9/26 Deutscher Werkbund

- Curtis, p.99-106 (ch6: Responses to mechanization)
- Conrads, p.26-27

R 9/28 Expressionism before WWI

- Conrads, p.28-31

Case study options:

- Peter Behrens, AEG Turbine Factory, 1909
- H.P. Berlage, Amsterdam Stock Exchange (Beurs van Berlage), 1896-1903

Week 6 The Chicago School

T 10/3 The skyscraper

- Curtis, p.39 (second column)-51
- Louis Sullivan, "The Tall Office Building Artistically Considered" (1896)

R 10/5 Frank Lloyd Wright

- Curtis, 113-129 (ch2 continued; ch7: The architectural system of Frank Lloyd Wright)
- Conrads, p.25, 124-125

Case study options:

- Daniel Burnham, Flatiron Building, 1902
- Frank Lloyd Wright, Larkin Building, 1904
- Frank Lloyd Wright, Pope-Leighey House (Alexandria, VA), 1941

Week 7 Futurism

T 10/10 NO CLASS (Columbus Day holiday)

R 10/12 Italian Futurism

- Curtis, p.107-111 (ch6 continued: Responses to mechanization)
- Conrads, p.34-38

Week 8 MIDTERM

T 10/17 Midterm

R 10/19 Post-War Expressionism

- Conrads, p.54-55

Unit 2: High Modernism, 1918-1950

Week 9 De Stijl and Bauhaus

T 10/24 De Stijl

- Curtis, p.149-159 (ch9: Cubism, De Stijl, and new conceptions of space)
- Conrads, p.39-40

R 10/26 Bauhaus

- Curtis, p.183-199 (ch11: Walter Gropius, German Expressionism and the Bauhaus)
- Conrads, p.46-53

Case study options:

- J.J.P. Oud, Weissenhof row houses, 1927
- Walter Gropius, Gropius House, 1938

Week 10 Mies van der Rohe

T 10/31 Mies van der Rohe

- Alice T. Friedman, "People Who Live in Glass Houses," in *Women and the Making of the Modern House*

R 11/2 NO CLASS (Professor away)

Case study options:

- Mies van der Rohe, Tugendhat House, 1930

Week 11 International Style

T 11/7 Le Corbusier

- Curtis, p.163-181 (ch10: Le Corbusier's quest for ideal form)
- Le Corbusier, *Toward an Architecture* (1923), excerpts

R 11/9 Modernism and gender

- Caroline Constant, "E.1027: The Nonheroic Modernism of Eileen Gray," *JSAH* 53:3 (1994)

Case study options:

- Le Corbusier, Villa Stein, 1927

Week 12 Architecture and Politics

T 11/14 Constructivism

- Curtis, p.201-215 (ch12: Architecture and revolution in Russia)
- Conrads, p.56

R 11/16 Post-war housing

- Conrads, p.137-147

Case study options:

- Konstantin Melnikov, Rusakov Workers' Club, 1927-29
- Minoru Yamasaki, Pruitt Igoe low-cost housing, 1950-4

Week 13 City and Dwelling

T 11/21 The garden city

- Curtis, p.241-255 (ch14: The Ideal Community)
- Jane Jacobs, *The Death and Life of Great American Cities* (1961), excerpt

R 11/23 NO CLASS (Thanksgiving holiday)

Case study options:

- Welwyn Garden City, 1920

Unit 3: Late to Post-Modernism, 1950-present

Week 14 Modern Architecture in America

T 11/28 Disseminating Modernism

- Curtis, p.395-415 (ch22: Modern Architecture in the U.S.A.)

R 11/30 Louis Kahn

- Curtis, p.513-527 (ch28: On Monuments and Monumentality)
- Conrads, p.169-170

Case study options:

- Louis Kahn, Phillips Exeter Academy Library, 1965-72
- Eero Saarinen, TWA Terminal, JFK Airport, 1956-62

Week 15 Post-Modernism to the present

T 12/5 Post-Modernism to the present

- Curtis, p.547-565; recommended: 589-613 (ch30: Extension and Critique in the 1960s; ch32: Pluralism in the 1970s)
- Robert Venturi, *Complexity and Contradiction in Architecture* (1977), excerpt

R 12/7 Some trends in contemporary architecture

Case study options:

- Robert Venturi, Lieb House, 1967
- Philip Johnson, American Telephone and Telegraph Building, 1979