

ARCH 3314 Contemporary Issues In Architecture
College of Architecture, Texas Tech University
Fall 2020

Brendan Sullivan Shea - bshea@ttu.edu

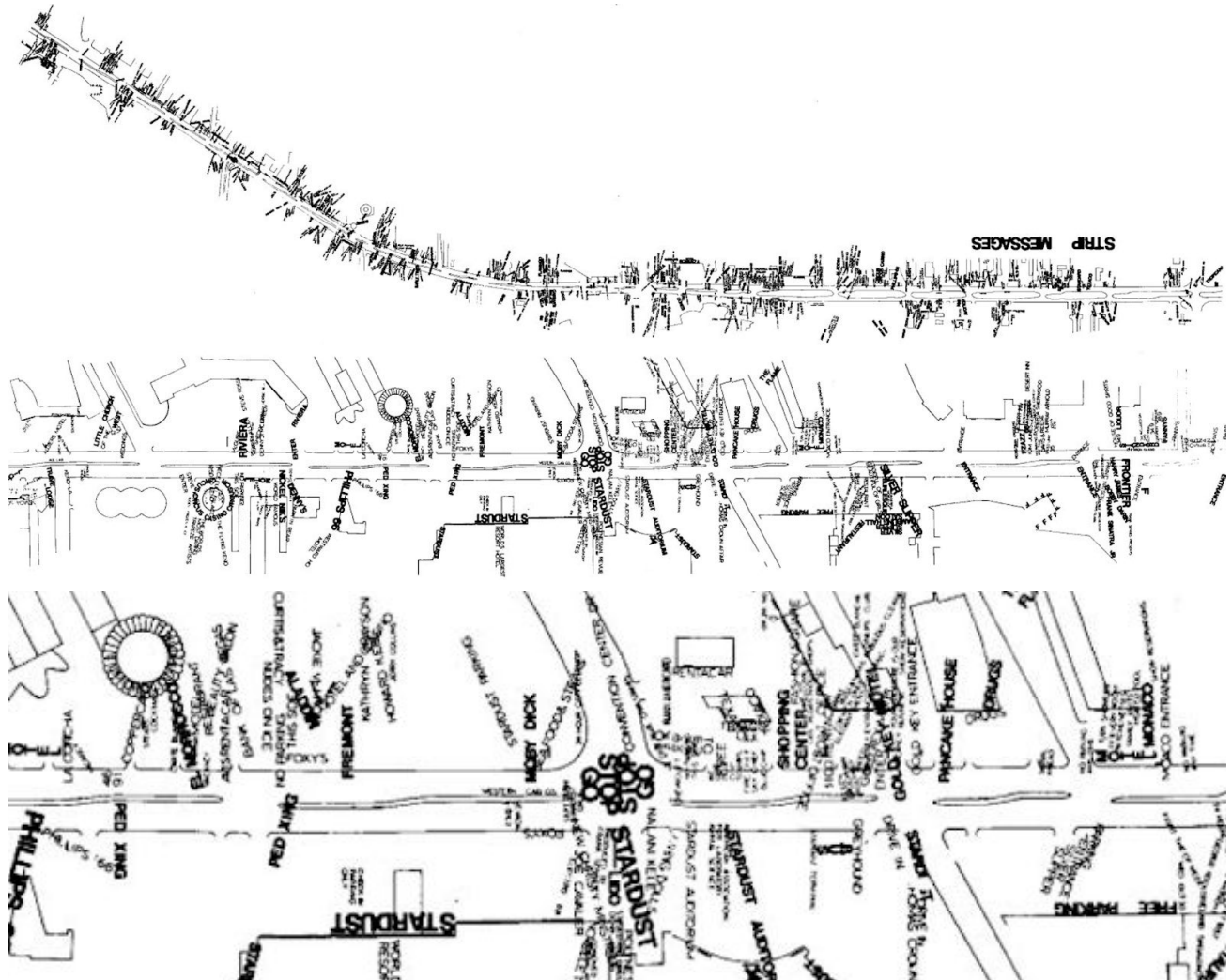


Fig 01 — “Strip Messages”, Learning From Las Vegas: The Forgotten Symbolism of Architectural Form, Venturi, Robert, Brown D. Scott, and Steven Izenour, Cambridge, Mass: MIT Press, 1977.

Unlearning From Las Vegas

Catalog Description

Contemporary issues in architectural theory and history utilizing precedents from early 20th century to present. Writing Intensive.

Course Description

This course introduces canonical texts and drawings then reconsiders them in light of alternative discursive positions and emerging formats of representation which might rework, resist or otherwise recondition the disciplinary conventions for the study of challenging topics in the history and theory of architecture. In this context, Las Vegas—a formally, spatially, and socially charged site with valences in and beyond the American West—will serve as the central case study to dismantle.

Student Learning Objectives

In the course, students are expected to gain an understanding of canonical texts, use critical thinking to raise questions, and challenge historical discourses with contemporary theories and methods. In the process, students are expected to develop an understanding of architectural discourse with both breadth and depth. Students are expected to demonstrate knowledge of a wide range of perspectives on building and cities through written communication and constructive verbal dialog. At the same time, students will be expected to hone their research skills by utilizing visual and spatial skills to draw, diagram, and animate graphic analyses as evidence in support of a well-reasoned argument and theoretical position.

Student Performance Objectives (S.P.C. A.1)

Professional Communication Skills: Ability to write and speak effectively and use representational media appropriate for the profession and with the general public.

Means of Evaluation

The evaluation of performance in the course is based primarily on the concept, execution, and presentation of fully organized material in the weekly responses, essays, and exams. The criteria for evaluation are outlined.

Concept - Ability to generate relevant architectural questions within the course context, Willingness to develop ideas through iteration, Willingness to respond to critique.

Execution - Ability to develop ideas in a coherent fashion, Ability to express relevant ideas in a written text and graphic format, Demonstration of disciplinary awareness.

Presentation - Ability to articulate verbally and present ideas visually, Quality of idea and resolution, Completeness of project, Coherence of presentations.

Teaching Methods

Weekly Responses

Weekly responses to readings and case studies will be due by midnight the night before the class. Responses should critically engage the theme of the week and make direct use of relevant passages from the assigned readings. Each student will be responsible for presenting a text once in the semester. Presentations should be pre-recorded, complemented by a brief slideshow to illustrate thematic points of the text and followed by moderated discussion.

Writing Assignments

Over the course of the semester, students will develop and submit two one-page essays on contemporary issues of architecture history, theory, and methodology.

Exams

The midterm examination will be in week seven of the semester and the final examination will be a take-home project assigned and due in finals week.

Grading Breakdown & Weights

Preparation & Participation	10%
Weekly Responses	20%
Writing Assignments	20%
Midterm	20%
Final	30%

Means of Preparation & Participation Evaluation

The criteria for assessing the preparation and participation credit are as follows: Attendance, Completion of deliverables in a timely manner, Capacity to integrate and respond to instructor's feedback, Demonstration of understanding key concepts of the class

Notes on Attendance & Grading

Attending classes is a basic responsibility of every TTU student who is enrolled in courses at the College of Architecture. In seminar courses, the central learning experience is through direct contact between the student and the faculty which advances a student's understanding through shared exploration. Regular and punctual class attendance is considered an essential part of satisfying both the NAAB requirements.

Assignments that do not reflect adequate progress or completion will not be discussed during desk crits, pinups and reviews; insufficient preparation by students will be recorded as a ½ absence. Please refer to TTU OP. 34.12 for further information on grading. depts.ttu.edu/opmanual/OP34.12.pdf

Tentative Course Schedule*

Week 1	Topic	Reading
August 25	Introduction	Syllabus
August 27	Reading Discussion	Venturi, Scott Brown & Izenour, "Preface", xi-xvii Hal Rothman and Mike Davis, "Introduction: The Many Faces of Las Vegas", 3-16
Week 2		
September 1	Reading Discussion	Venturi, Scott Brown & Izenour, "A Significance for A&P Parking Lots, Or Learning From Las Vegas", 3-21 Norman M. Klein "Scripting Las Vegas: Noir Naifs, Junking Up, and the New Strip", 17-30 Francisco Menendez "Las Vegas of the Mind: Shooting Movies in and About Nevada", 30-59
September 3	Drawing Discussion ¹	Case Study No.1 - Billboard
Week 3		
September 8	Reading Discussion	Venturi, Scott Brown & Izenour, "A Significance for A&P Parking Lots, Or Learning From Las Vegas", 22-48 Peter Goin "Discordant Infrastructure", 59-73 Eugene Moehring, "Growth, Services, and the Political Economy of Gambling in Las Vegas", 73-98
September 10	Drawing Discussion	Case Study No. 2 - Building
Week 4		
September 15	Reading Discussion	Venturi, Scott Brown & Izenour, "A Significance for A&P Parking Lots, Or Learning From Las Vegas", 49-72 Jay Brigham, "Lighting Las Vegas: Electricity and the City of Glitz", 99-114 John Christensen, " Build It and the Water Will Come", 115-125
September 17	Drawing Discussion	Case Study No. 3 - Boulevard
Week 5		
September 22	...	Essay 1 Draft
September 24	Movie Night	<i>Honey, I Blew Up the Kid</i> (1991) or <i>Mars Attacks!</i> (1996)
Week 6		
September 29	Reading Discussion	Venturi, Scott Brown & Izenour, "A Significance for A&P Parking Lots, Or Learning From Las Vegas", 73-83 Robert Parker, "The Social Costs of Rapid Urbanization in Southern Nevada", 126-144 Courtney Alexander, "Rise to Power: The Recent History of the Culinary Union in Las Vegas", 145-175 Mike Davis, "Class Struggle in Oz", 176-186
October 1	Drawing Discussion	Case Studies No. 1 - 3 - Billboard, Building & Boulevard
Week 7		
October 6	...	Essay 1 Due
October 8	...	Midterm

¹ For the drawing assignments, students must select case studies endemic to Las Vegas. Students are strongly encouraged to source a collection of architectural precedents according to their own academic interests and intuitions, including but not limited to precedents that exist outside of the Western canon.

Week 8

October 13	Reading Discussion	Venturi, Scott Brown & Izenour, "Ugly and Ordinary Architecture, Or The Decorated Shed", 87-92 Brian Frehner, "Squeezing the Juice Out of Las Vegas", 187-194 Shannon McMackein, "I Didn't Know Anybody Lived There", 195-207
October 15	Drawing Discussion	Case Study No. 4 - Business Park

Week 9

October 20	Reading Discussion	Venturi, Scott Brown & Izenour, "Ugly and Ordinary Architecture, Or The Decorated Shed", 93-103 Brian Frehner, "Squeezing the Juice Out of Las Vegas", 187-194 Shannon McMackein, "I Didn't Know Anybody Lived There", 195-207
October 22	Drawing Discussion	Case Study No. 5 - Bid

Week 10

October 27	Reading Discussion	Venturi, Scott Brown & Izenour, "Ugly and Ordinary Architecture, Or The Decorated Shed", 104-117 William Thompson, "How I Became a Native", 208 - 213 Kit Miller, "Inside the Glitter: Lives of Casino Workers", 214-242
October 29	Drawing Discussion	Case Study No. 6 - Bureau

Week 11

November 3	...	Essay 2 Draft
November 5	Movie Night	<i>Rango</i> (2011) or <i>Resident Evil: Extinction</i> (2007)

Week 12

November 10	Reading Discussion	Venturi, Scott Brown & Izenour, "Ugly and Ordinary Architecture, Or The Decorated Shed", 128-148 Joanne Goodwin, "She Works Hard For Her Money", 243-259 Mike Davis, "The Racial Cauldron", 260-267
November 12	Drawing Discussion	Case Studies No. 4-6, Business Park, Bid & Bureau

Week 13

November 17	Reading Discussion	Venturi, Scott Brown & Izenour, "Ugly and Ordinary Architecture, Or The Decorated Shed", 148-163 Constance Devereaux, "Inside Jean", 268-290 Annie Williams, "Looking Into A Dry Lake", 291-306
November 19	Drawing Discussion	Case Studies No. 1-6, Billboard, Building, Boulevard, Business Park, Bid & Bureau

Week 14

November 24	...	Essay 2 Due
November 26	...	Thanksgiving - No Class

Week 15

December 1	...	Final Class
December 3	...	Final Project Due

*These dates are subject to change at the discretion of the instructor and/or the CoA.

ADA Statement

Any student who, because of a disability, may require special arrangements in order to meet the course requirements should contact the instructor as soon as possible to make any necessary arrangements. Students should present appropriate verification from Student Disability Services during the instructor's office hours. Please note: instructors are not allowed to provide classroom accommodations to a student until appropriate verification from Student Disability Services has been provided. For additional information, please contact Student Disability Services in West Hall or call 806-742-2405.

Academic Integrity Statement

Academic integrity is taking responsibility for one's own class and/or course work, being individually accountable, and demonstrating intellectual honesty and ethical behavior. Academic integrity is a personal choice to abide by the standards of intellectual honesty and responsibility. Because education is a shared effort to achieve learning through the exchange of ideas, students, faculty, and staff have the collective responsibility to build mutual trust and respect. Ethical behavior and independent thought are essential for the highest level of academic achievement, which then must be measured. Academic achievement includes scholarship, teaching, and learning, all of which are shared endeavors. Grades are a device used to quantify the successful accumulation of knowledge through learning. Adhering to the standards of academic integrity ensures grades are earned honestly. Academic integrity is the foundation upon which students, faculty, and staff build their educational and professional careers. [Texas Tech University ("University") Quality Enhancement Plan, Academic Integrity Task Force, 2010]

Religious Holy Day Statement

"Religious holy day" means a holy day observed by a religion whose places of worship are exempt from property taxation under Texas Tax Code §11.20. A student who intends to observe a religious holy day should make that intention known in writing to the instructor prior to the absence. A student who is absent from classes for the observance of a religious holy day shall be allowed to take an examination or complete an assignment scheduled for that day within a reasonable time after the absence. A student who is excused under section 2 may not be penalized for the absence; however, the instructor may respond appropriately if the student fails to complete the assignment satisfactorily.

Discrimination, Harassment, And Sexual Violence Statement

Texas Tech University is committed to providing and strengthening an educational, working, and living environment where students, faculty, staff, and visitors are free from gender and/or sex discrimination of any kind. Sexual assault, discrimination, harassment, and other Title IX violations are not tolerated by the University. Report any incidents to the Office for Student Rights & Resolution,

(806)-742-SAFE (7233) or file a report online at titleix.ttu.edu/students. Faculty and staff members at TTU are committed to connecting you to resources on campus. Some of these available resources are: TTU Student Counseling Center, 806-742-3674, depts.ttu.edu/scc/ (Provides confidential support on campus.) TTU 24-hour Crisis Helpline, 806-742-5555, (Assists students who are experiencing a mental health or interpersonal violence crisis. If you call the helpline, you will speak with a mental health counselor.) Voice of Hope Lubbock Rape Crisis Center, 806-763-7273, voiceofhopelubbock.org (24-hour hotline that provides support for survivors of sexual violence.) The Risk, Intervention, Safety and Education (RISE) Office, 806-742-2110, depts.ttu.edu/rise/ (Provides a range of resources and support options focused on prevention education and student wellness.) Texas Tech Police Department, 806-742-3931, depts.ttu.edu/ttpd/ (To report criminal activity that occurs on or near Texas Tech campus.)

Civility In The Classroom Statement

Texas Tech University is a community of faculty, students, and staff that enjoys an expectation of cooperation, professionalism, and civility during the conduct of all forms of university business, including the conduct of student-student and student-faculty interactions in and out of the classroom. Further, the classroom is a setting in which an exchange of ideas and creative thinking should be encouraged and where intellectual growth and development are fostered. Students who disrupt this classroom mission by rude, sarcastic, threatening, abusive or obscene language and/or behavior will be subject to appropriate sanctions according to university policy. Likewise, faculty members are expected to maintain the highest standards of professionalism in all interactions with all constituents of the university (depts.ttu.edu/ethics/matadorchallenge/ethicalprinciples).

LGBTQIA Support Statement

I identify as an ally to the lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, intersex, and asexual (LGBTQIA) community, and I am available to listen and support you in an affirming manner. I can assist in connecting you with resources on campus to address problems you may face pertaining to sexual orientation and/or gender identity that could interfere with your success at Texas Tech. Please note that additional resources are available through the Office of LGBTQIA within the Center for Campus Life, Student Union Building Room 201, www.lgbtqia.ttu.edu, 806.742.5433." Office of LGBTQIA, Student Union Building Room 201, www.lgbtqia.ttu.edu, 806.742.5433 Within the Center for Campus Life, the Office serves the Texas Tech community through facilitation and leadership of programming and advocacy efforts. This work is aimed at strengthening the lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, intersex, and asexual (LGBTQIA) community and sustaining an inclusive campus that welcomes people of all sexual orientations, gender identities, and gender expressions

COVID-19 Information

Face coverings are required. Texas Tech University requires that students wear face coverings while in classes, while otherwise in campus buildings, and when social distancing cannot be maintained outdoors on campus.

Signage. Be attentive to signage posted at external and some classroom doorways that indicates entry and exit ways, gathering and queuing spaces, and availability of masks and hand sanitizer.

Seating assignments. The purpose of assigned seating is to assist in contact tracing, if necessary, and to augment social distancing. Students are expected to sit at a minimum of six feet apart. A required seating chart will be created once everyone is positioned with appropriate social distancing. There will also be an orderly procedure, designed to ensure social distancing, for exiting the classroom.

Illness-Based Absence Policy

If at any time during this semester you feel ill, in the interest of your own health and safety as well as the health and safety of your instructors and classmates, you are encouraged not to attend face-to-face class meetings or events. Please review the steps outlined below that you should follow to ensure your absence for illness will be excused. These steps also apply to not participating in synchronous online class meetings if you feel too ill to do so and missing specified assignment due dates in asynchronous online classes because of illness.

1. If you are ill and think the symptoms might be COVID-19-related:
 - a. Call Student Health Services at 806.743.2848 or your health care provider. After hours and on weekends contact TTU COVID-19 Helpline at 806.743.2911.
 - b. Self-report as soon as possible using the Dean of Students COVID-19 webpage. This website has specific directions about how to upload documentation from a medical provider and what will happen if your illness renders you unable to participate in classes for more than one week.
 - c. If your illness is determined to be COVID-19-related, all remaining documentation and communication will be handled through the Office of the Dean of Students, including notification of your instructors of the period of time you may be absent from and may return to classes.
 - d. If your illness is determined not to be COVID-19-related, please follow steps 2.a-d below.
2. If you are ill and can attribute your symptoms to something other than COVID-19:
 - a. If your illness renders you unable to attend face-to-face classes, participate in synchronous online classes, or miss specified assignment due dates in asynchronous online classes, you are encouraged to visit with either Student Health Services at 806.743.2848 or your health care provider. Note that Student Health Services and your own and other health care providers may arrange virtual visits.

- b. During the health provider visit, request a "return to school" note;
- c. E-mail the instructor a picture of that note;
- d. Return to class by the next class period after the date indicated on your note.

Following the steps outlined above helps to keep your instructors informed about your absences and ensures your absence or missing an assignment due date because of illness will be marked excused. You will still be responsible to complete within a week of returning to class any assignments, quizzes, or exams you miss because of illness.

If you have interacted with individual(s) who have tested positive for COVID-19:

Maintain a list of those persons and consult Student Health Services at 806-743-2911 or your primary care provider on next steps.

Do not return to class until you are medically cleared by your Health Care Provider.

Attendance Policy

Seminar meets every Tuesday and Thursday online. Students are required to attend and participate in each class period. It is crucial that students remain engaged throughout each class period. The College of Architecture's attendance policy is the following: Students are allowed to miss the equivalent of one week of class (two classes if the course meets two times/week, etc) without directly affecting the student's grade and ability to complete the course. If additional absences are required for a personal illness/family emergency, pre-approved academic reason/religious observance, the situation should be discussed and evaluated with the faculty member and appropriate Chair on a case-by-case basis. For each absence over that allowed number, the student's evaluation can be lowered up to one full letter grade, though the greater than four absences are grounds for failure at the discretion of the program.

Any student not in class within the first 10 minutes will be considered tardy, and any student absent (in any form including sleep, technological distraction, or leaving mid class for a long break) for more than 1/3 of the class time can be considered fully absent. If arriving late, a student must be respectful of a class in session and do everything possible to minimize disruption caused by a late arrival. It is always the student's responsibility to seek means (if possible) to make up work missed due to absences, not the instructor's, although such recourse is not always an option due to the nature of the material covered.

A mid-term or final review is to be treated the same as a final exam as outlined and expected by the University. Students must understand that days allocated for their seminar final in the syllabus are considered an examination period. If they are absent or tardy on any review day and miss their opportunity to present, this is considered equal to missing a final exam.

Netiquette

Netiquette refers to etiquette on computer networks. Students are expected to treat the online class community as a safe, engaging, and professional space.

Netiquette expectations are as follows:

- Use course content to support responses
- Strive for clarity
- Exercise professionalism on camera and in all assignments
- Think and reflect before responding
- Stay on point
- Avoid shorthand (e.g., IDK)
- Avoid sarcasm
- Avoid yelling (e.g., ALL CAPS!!!)
- Strive for quality over quantity

Best Practices

Since the class will meet on Zoom, please follow this protocol to maximize your ability to concentrate and participate with minimal distractions:

- Participate in class with web camera on, if possible
- Clear background of any visual distractions (or use designated virtual backgrounds, as requested)
- Keep microphone on mute unless speaking
- Use a headset to limit outside noises
- Alert others in their household not to disturb
- Follow established class norms for contributing to class discussion (e.g., raising hand; using chat; unmuting / muting when called upon; collaborating with small groups; presenting original work)