## Contemporary Architectural Theory I

**Eyes That Do Not See...**

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<tr>
<th>Course Number</th>
<th>Credits</th>
<th>Meeting Location &amp; Times</th>
<th>Pre-requisites</th>
<th>Instructor</th>
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<tr>
<td>ARCH 5362</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>Online</td>
<td>None</td>
<td>Armando Rigau, AIA, NCARB, LEED AP BD+C</td>
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<td>Tuesdays &amp; Thursdays 3:30pm–4:50pm CST</td>
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<td><a href="mailto:armando.rigau@ttu.edu">armando.rigau@ttu.edu</a> (TBC)</td>
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![Contemporary Architectural Theory I](image_url)
In 1923, Le Corbusier published *Toward an Architecture* in reaction to the technological and socio-economic advances at the turn of the 20th century. Particularly in the chapter “Eyes That Do Not See,” he exhorts architects to see with fresh eyes the inner workings of modern engineering. He was arguing for an architecture capable of reflecting the spirit of his times. Like Le Corbusier, architects throughout history have continually looked for “new” theoretical grounds for making buildings.

In this introductory course, students trace how different systems of ideas have transformed architectural production throughout time. While theory addresses an array of topics – including aesthetics and human experience, technological and economic progress, as well as social and political events – this course focuses on how ideas drive design decisions. A general aim to understand what is architecture underlies the following questions:

*What do architectural ideas entail, considering both their potentials and limits?*

*Where do ideas come from and how are they generated?*

*How can they manifest – and to what extent – in built form?*

*How do buildings express ideas and how can these be construed?*

The class delves into a variety of approaches that reveal architecture’s ever-evolving identity, from Antiquity to today. The course covers prevailing systems of thought that remain relevant to this day, from ancient cultures such as Egypt, Greece, and Rome; the Renaissance and succeeding Mannerist, Baroque, Rococo and Neoclassical styles; to the Modern and Post-Modern Movements, along with emerging contemporary trends. Within this disciplinary trajectory, the history of ideas is seen as a pendulum – rather than as a progression – whose favor fluctuates between sets of irreconcilable concepts:

*Object*  
Logic

*Subject*  
Rationalism

*Empiricism*  
The man-made

*The natural*  
The meta-physical

*The physical*  
Scientific truth

*Artistic experience*  
Historical realism

*Fictional myths*  
Autonomy

*Phenomenology*  
The figurative & abstract

*The literal & concrete*  

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Previous page: Sketch by Gian Lorenzo Bernini, Baroque architect

*Style is a unity of principle that animates all the works of an era and that results from a distinctive state of mind.*  

“Architecture is the will of an epoch translated into space.”  
– Mies van der Rohe

*Style is a unity of principle that animates all the works of an era and that results from a distinctive state of mind.*  
Historically, individuals and whole groups of people have positioned themselves differently in relation to these antinomies. As a result, they generated and/or adopted particular stances that shaped their professional undertakings. Thus, the course postulates "good" architecture as a happy marriage between both theory and practice.

Architectural theory is presented equally as a product of thinking, reading, and writing, as well as drawing, making, and building. On the one hand, students learn basic concepts for ideating the underlying structures of architectural projects; on the other, they refine their skills to represent the construction of space. This ability to "read" a design serves to investigate other works of architecture across cultures from any point in time.

Ultimately, the course is intended to raise enthusiasm for the nature and future possibilities of architectural space, framed within its past and present relevance. In acquiring foundational skills in analysis and criticism, students are expected to see beyond style into the ideas that nurture design and cultivate the discipline and profession of architecture.

“One must possess an idea before making architecture.”

- Peter Eisenman in Fernández Gomez, Margarita and María Melgarejo Belenguer, Opiniones sobre Arquitectura: La voz de los arquitectos (Valencia: Ediciones Generales de Construcción), p.131. (personal translation)
GENERAL OBJECTIVES

“All the techniques of representation [...] are pedagogically useful [...]; but their function is no more than allusive and preparatory to that moment in which we [...] enter and experience the spaces we have been studying. That is the moment of architecture.”
- Bruno Zevi, Modern historian

Upon completion of the course, a student should...

1. **Understand**
   what is architecture theory and its historical and contemporary relevance for how it manifests in design.

2. **Know**
   a general overview of the history of theory, including its key exponents, texts, projects, and recurrent themes.

3. **Articulate**
   differences and similarities between theoretical stances across time.

4. **Develop**
   basic vocabulary and skills, both visual and verbal, for the analysis, interpretation, and criticism of architectural designs.

5. **Grasp**
   the complementary relationship between theory and practice, as well as architecture's ties to other disciplines, such as art, history, literature, philosophy, and psychology, among others.

EXPECTED LEARNING OUTCOMES

NAAB’s Student Performance Criteria (SPC) met by the course:

**Realm A: Critical Thinking and Representation**

**A.1 Professional Communication Skills:** Ability to write and speak effectively and use representational media appropriate for both within the profession and with the general public.

**A.2 Design Thinking Skills:** Ability to raise clear and precise questions, use abstract ideas to interpret information, consider diverse points of view, reach well-reasoned conclusions, and test alternative outcomes against relevant criteria and standards.

**A.3 Investigative Skills:** Ability to gather, assess, record, and comparatively evaluate relevant information and performance in order to support conclusions related to a specific project or assignment.

**A.4 Architectural Design Skills:** Ability to effectively use basic formal, organizational and environmental principles and the capacity of each to inform two- and three-dimensional design.

**A.7 History and Global Culture:** Understanding of the parallel and divergent histories of architecture and the cultural norms of a variety of indigenous, vernacular, local, and regional settings in terms of their political, economic, social, ecological, and technological factors.
CLASS FORMAT & ASSESSMENT METHODS

Bi-weekly lectures are accompanied by required readings, as well as writing and representation exercises. The texts, which can be accessed through Blackboard, cover canonical works and also from other disciplines that have significantly shaped architectural discourse. Student performance is evaluated as follows:

10% Twitter Posts
Each student should post quotes from the readings in the course’s Twitter account to reflect comprehension of the assigned texts. To identify the source of the post, students must use a hastag associated with their initials.

15% Participation
Students should attend class everyday, come prepared, and engage actively in discussions.

30% Assignments
Throughout the semester, different assignments – announced or unannounced – cover writing and visual communication skills that test the knowledge acquired in the course. The lowest grade is dropped. Students are not able to make up for unannounced quizzes, unless for Observance of Religious Holiday.

45% Semester Project
Details of the final project are disclosed gradually throughout the semester. Late submittals result in a five percent (5%) deduction from the final grade for each day that passes.

PARTICIPATION

Attendance is mandatory, as the course heavily relies on weekly lectures and discussions for the development of course information. Class starts on the time scheduled; consequently, any student arriving after is deemed late. On the third (3rd) late arrival, each one results in a deduction of five (5) points from the participation grade. Furthermore, four (4) late arrivals constitute an absence. Four (4) absences constitute cause for dropping a student from the course. All absences count towards the record of late arrivals. In the case of illness or other unforeseen circumstance, please contact the instructor at the earliest convenience to make up for the missed material. In case of a religious holiday, a student is excused as long as he/she notifies the instructor ahead of the absence to make necessary arrangements to make up for any missed material. The course abides by the University Policy for Observance of Religious Holiday: [http://www.depts.ttu.edu/opmanual/OP34.19.pdf](http://www.depts.ttu.edu/opmanual/OP34.19.pdf). Please refer to the Attendance Policy from the University and also the College of Architecture for further explanation: [http://arch.ttu.edu/wiki/Attendance_Policy](http://arch.ttu.edu/wiki/Attendance_Policy).
### GENERAL CONTENT

**1. Why Theorize?**

*Theories of architecture(s)*  
Schools of thought and the byproduct of style

*How to Read Buildings*
Fundamental design language: points, lines, planes, volumes  
Basic concepts: scale, proportion, organization, and composition

*History For/ Against Theory/ Architecture*

*The Founding Myth: Object-Subject Problem*

**2. Myths of Antiquity**

*Architectures of Death and Ancient Greek Revolution*
Sacred rituals of the West in contradistinction to everyday rituals of the East  
The obliqueness of Greece versus the frontality of Rome  
Religious (mis)appropriations: the basilica

*Vitruvius’ Paradigm and Roman Space*

**3. Traditional Perspectives and Misbehaviors**

*Gothic Lightness*

*The Quattrocento and La Terza Maniera*
Alberti and the “birth” of the architect

*The Illusions of the Baroque and the Not-So-Excessive Rococo*

*Enlightened Rationalism and Illusions*
Restored authenticity or authentic restoration

*Modern Estrangement*

*Modern Anti-Space and its “Modest Proposal”*

*Classical Modernism*
The legitimate illegitimate Modernist offspring: Latin America  
Digesting Metabolism

*The Postmodern Condition and its Report on Traditional Urbanism*
Deconstruction’s haunt; Crafting tectonics  
The critical along with the regionalism

**4. Classical (Post) Modernity**

**5. Contemporary Speculation**

*The Post-Critical*
Mass customization and participation in the digital age  
Sustainability’s cradle  
The operations of landscape urbanism  
Thermodynamics, toward a new future?

*Whatever Happened to Theory?*
RECOMMENDED READINGS

*NA2500 .Z413 1974*

*NA2765 .R69 1997*

*NA2760 .R45 2006*

*Reference number not available.*

*NA737.E33 A35 2010*

*NA680 .M62 2004*

*NA200 .W47 2011*

*NA735.N5 K66 1994*

*NA1153.K66 S75 1995*


1. Why Theorize?

1. Why Theorize?  Set 01-A  *Theories of Architecture(s)*  
Assig. 01: Definitions of Architecture


http://philosophybites.com/2017/05/aaron-meskin-on-the-definition-of-art.html

CALENDAR OF THEMES, ASSIGNMENTS, & REQUIRED READINGS

Set 00-A  *Course Introduction*  
Assig. 00: Basic Knowledge (in class)

Set 00-B  *Library Tutorial*  
Discussion with Librarians about Scholarly Research

Set 00-C  *Research Day*

Set 00-D  *Semester Project Presentation and Text Primer*
Set 01-B  *How to Read Buildings*

**Assig. 02: Facade Analysis**


Colin Rowe and Robert Slutsky, *Transparency*, p. 21-82

Colin Rowe, *Transparency II*.

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Set 02-A  *History for/against Theory*

**Discussion Assig. 02**


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Set 02-B  *History for/against Architecture*

Stanford Anderson, “Memory in Architecture” from *Journal Daidalos*.

Excerpts from Le Corbusier’s *Toward an Architecture*


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Set 03-A  *The Founding Myth: Object-Subject Problem*

**Assig. 03: Cave Diagram**

Plato and P Shorey, trans. 'The Allegory of the Cave' in *The Republic*

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**2. Myths of Antiquity**

Set 03-B  *Architectures of Death and the Ancient Greek Revolution*

Mario Salvadori, "The Pyramids" in *Why Buildings Stand Up*.


Bertrand Russell, "The Roman Empire in Relation to Culture" in *A History of Western Philosophy*.

Branko Mitrovic, "II. Aristotle" in *Philosophy for Architects*.
Set 04-A  

**Vitruvius’ Paradigm and Roman Space**

Assig. 04: New Vitruvian Triad

Vitruvius, “The Education of the Architect”

Richard Weston, "Idea No. 26: Commodity, Firmness, and Delight," in *100 Ideas that Changed Architecture*.

Le Corbusier, 'I. The Lesson of Rome' in *Toward an Architecture*.

Le Corbusier, 'II. The Illusion of the Plan' in *Toward an Architecture*.

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3. Traditional Perspectives and Misbehaviors

Set 04-B  

**Gothic Lightness & the Neoplatonic Quattrocento**

Mario Salvadori, “The Unfinished Cathedral” in *Why Buildings Stand Up*

Bertrand Russell, "Saint Thomas Aquinas” in *A History of Western Philosophy*.

Samuel Y. Egerton, Jr., "III. Alberti’s Florence" in *The Renaissance Rediscovery of Linear Perspective*.

R. Wittkower, "Brunelleschi and Proportion in Perspective”

Wylie Sypher, "I. Renaissance" in *Four Stages of Renaissance Style*

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Set 05-A  

**La terza maniera**

Branko Mitrovic, "Formalism in Renaissance Architectural Theory”

Steven Fong, "Mannerism, Form, and Content at Cornell”

Kurt Forster, "Giulio Romano and Andrea Palladio on Common Ground”

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Set 05-B  

**Body and Building**

Assig. 05: Debate Short Essay on Body and Building

Korydon Smith, "Chapter 7: Body and Building" in *Introducing Architectural Theory*

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Set 06-A  

**The Illusions of the Baroque and the Not-So-Excessive Rococo**

Wylie Sypher, "Fictions of the Enlightenment” in *Rococo to Cubism in Art and Literature*
Wylie Sypher, "Rococo as Style" in *Rococo to Cubism in Art and Literature*

Fredric Jameson, "Chapter 1: Narrative Bodies: Rubens and History" in *The Ancients and the Postmoderns*

**Set 06-B** *Enlightened Rationalism*

Discussion on Immanuel Kant’s "What is Enlightenment?"

Immanuel Kant, "What is Enlightenment?"

**Set 07-A** *Enlightened Illusions*

Etienne-Louis Boullée, "Architecture, Essay on Art"

Hubert Damisch and Erin Williams, "Ledoux with Kant"

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4. Classical (Post) Modernity

**Set 07-B** *Modern Estrangement*

In class film by Jacques Tati

**Set 08-A** *Modern Anti-Space and its "Modest Proposal"

Steven Kent Peterson, "Space and Anti-Space"

Branko Mitrovic, "V. Romanticism and Historicism" in *Philosophy for Architects*.

Friedrich Nietzsche, "How the True World Finally Became a Fable: The History of an Error / The Will to Power as Art" in *Philosophers on Art from Kant to the Postmodernists*.

**Set 08-B** *Classical Modernism*


Set 09-A  *The Postmodern Condition and its Report on Traditional Urbanism*


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5. Contemporary Speculation

Set 09-B  *The Post-Critical*


Set 10-A  *Whatever Happened to Theory?*


Set 10-B  *Affect Theory*

Colin Rowe, "The Provocative Facade: Frontality and Contrapposto"
CLASSROOM PROCLIVITY
Technology can enhance the way we learn about and discover the world around us. Thus, computers and tablets are allowed for note taking, drawing, researching topics at hand, and other methods that are constructive for class discussion. Nevertheless, to avoid any unexpected disruptions, texting, emailing, and the use of social media platforms are prohibited for nonacademic purposes.

ACADEMIC INTEGRITY
Academic integrity is taking responsibility for one’s own 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 that grades are earned honestly and gives added value to the entire educational process. Academic integrity is the foundation upon which students, faculty, and staff build their educational and professional careers.

[Integrity Matters: Texas Tech is committed to creating an exciting university atmosphere that is free of academic dishonesty. All members of the university community, including faculty, students, and staff, are upheld to the standard of having integrity in the work they produce. The standard is for all members of the Texas Tech community to contribute to the campus environment in an ethical, fun, and honest manner. Integrity matters because student success matters. […]

What is Academic Dishonesty?: “Academic dishonesty” includes, but is not limited to, cheating, plagiarism, collusion, falsifying academic records, misrepresenting facts, and any act designed to give unfair academic advantage to the student (such as, but not limited to, submission of essentially the same written assignment for two courses without the prior permission of the instructor) or the attempt to commit such an act.” For further clarification: http://www.depts.ttu.edu/opmanual/OP3412.pdf]
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, https://www.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, https://www.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, http://www.depts.ttu.edu/ttpd/ (To report criminal activity that occurs on or near Texas Tech campus.)

LGBTQIA CAMPUS RESOURCE

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.