

Syllabus

# EPHEMERAL ARCHITECTURES

Ideas, actions, works and projects on short term eternity



Gabriel Orozco. *Island on an Island*. 1991.

"Time present and time past  
Are both perhaps present in time future  
And time future contained in time past.  
If all time is eternally present  
All time is unredeemable.  
What might have been is an abstraction  
Remaining a perpetual possibility  
Only in a world of speculation.  
What might have been and what has been  
Point to one end, which is always present".

T. S. Eliot. "Burnt Norton". *Four Quartets*.

Spring /2021. Contemporary Issues in Architecture. Arch 3314.  
Tuesdays and Thursdays 09:30 – 10:50. All On-line.

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<b>Grading:</b>	Letter grading	

## I. COURSE DESCRIPTION

Every work of architecture, in a broad reading of time, is ephemeral. Faced with a classical idea of the aspiration of eternity, contemporary architecture assumes various registers of transitory temporality with interesting practical applications: the need for provisional interventions, the strategic reversibility in constructed realities, the exhibition project, or the current value of certain practices such as installations, scenographies and performances. The course will also consider, together with the explanation of cases of study, metaphorical connections with the relative notion of time and some artistic implications, from the study of materiality, montage, set design or narration.

## II. AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

The essence of studying or researching is getting things from a theme or a place while giving others in compensation, like relations, interpretations or proposals. Together we reach further. This is also the matter of what architecture does with places. We transfer the abstract for the specific through projects. We enrich places and we enrich ourselves. The architectural project is the exchange between the abstract and the specific, and also between our hand that draws and the place. Every education, and in symmetry, every learning, is a story of transfers. We are always at both sides, like playing to cross frontiers every time, performing the role of instigators or mediums. Projects should always be threads in time and space between our tables and landscapes, among human beings and the world.

This elective course will try to encourage ideas and actions on cities and territories, and, in the end, on the relations between spirit and matter, potentiality and action, human beings and Earth, invoked in every practice and theory of art and architecture.

## III. FORMAT AND PROCEDURES

Weekly lectures, references, discussions, analysis of case studies, and student presentations will all be components of the course. It is expected that students will be proactive, thoughtful, and well-prepared in their participation in class discussions and presentations. In conjunction with attending course lectures and discussions, students will also develop a set of different ephemeral actions, following some guides given in class but finding a personal sense of freedom.

The structure of the sections will combine lectures by the instructor providing references, samples and suggestions for the actions to be developed, and also stating theoretical reflections and thoughts about ephemeral architecture and the importance of time in architecture. The first weeks of the course will consist only of lectures so that the students can have a significant amount of references before thinking in their own actions.

There will be three special events along the course consisting of an installation, a performance, and the final exhibition. The students have the choice to talk with the professor personally about the actions, looking for advice or recommendations.

## IV. COURSE REQUIREMENTS

Attendance is mandatory during class time which is on Tuesdays and Thursdays between 9:30 and 10:50. Participation and overall performance of the student in course activities, discussions, presentations and the daily dynamics of the course will be continuously evaluated throughout the semester by the instructor.

Every student will have to develop and document a set of actions in the city or in the territory that will be presented in class in different formats, and in addition to this, to prepare an elaborate the presentation and participation in three exhibition events that will be explained along the course.

The lectures will provide further explanations and samples on all of them, so that the students have possible clues enough to develop the actions, although the students are invited to be experimental and creative. All the actions should be affordable to be done by every student without causing problems, risks or demanding more money than the reasonable costs of buying materials in the same way as it is done in any other subject at the college. Anyway, the students have the choice to consult with the instructor their ideas before putting them into action and preparing the information in advance to inform about them as it will be explained in class.

## ACTIONS

The student needs to complete three actions chosen from the following list of categories, that should be understood in an open and creative way. The actions have to be documented in order to be presented in class (either before performing them as an intention to be reached, or after having executed them showing the final results), and to be compiled in the final exhibition and catalogue summarizing the production for this course.

One action could be considered as a set of actions, like variations, conforming a series matching one of these categories as a whole.

- **Dialogue with an existing building.**
- **Measuring time.**
- **Displacement.**
- **Improvement of a certain fragment.**
- **Secret action.**
- **Action in water.**

\* If the student has an idea that does not match any of these categories, the professor will be pleased to discuss about it.

The three actions could be independent, or considered as an intertwined story, depending on the speech.

It is widely recommended to present the actions in class or discuss them with the professor and partners, so that they can be enriched with comments, that improve the narration or even the development of them. Together with the actions themselves, narration is a key aspect in ephemeral production, so that it can have a large life by means of the memory.

These three actions should be taken as simple and humble gestures. The significant part may be the power of the concept but not the effort of carrying out them. Although they could be also considered as artistic interventions they should be ways to build the specific view of an architect about the space.

## EVENTS

Together with these three Actions developed along the semester, the students need to prepare and elaborate their participation in three mandatory events.

- **March 18<sup>th</sup>. Spring Creatures.**  
Every student has to install a piece in an interior so that the whole collection of abstract structures, could compose a family of creatures, like pets or masks, inhabiting buildings. The pieces must leave no traces or marks in the chosen building apart from their memoir, must not affect the normal functionality of the building, must not create any risk or potential danger, and must be easily removed if needed. All the pieces will be removed after the Final Presentation, so that they should resist at least for some weeks of exhibition, although they may play, if considered, with a certain sense of degradation.  
(Further instructions and details will be given)
- **April 8<sup>th</sup>. Performance.**  
The students have to prepare and perform an open air action that must be documented in order to share it in a class with the rest of performances, as if we all have the feeling of being together in a scenario, gallery or plaza enjoying the live show. Each performance should be also registered and documented to be presented in the final exhibition and catalogue. The performance could be interactive with an audience. The performance should have a purpose of celebration.  
(Further instructions and details will be given)
- **May 6<sup>th</sup>. Final presentation.**  
It will consist of a brief speech using words and images to tell the virtual audience the whole set of actions and events held around the course. Together with this, the students have to gather their personal works in a catalogue and a set of postcards and prepare a way of exhibiting the documentation of the semester. This event could be considered as an exhibition so that its design could be developed collectively by the whole group.  
(Further instructions and details will be given)

## V. GRADING PROCEDURES

Grades will be based on:

Attendance and participation in discussions	20%
Personal work and presentations fulfilling the assignment instructions	80%

## **VI. ACADEMIC INTEGRITY**

### **Classroom civility**

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. ([www.depts.ttu.edu/ethics/matadorchallenge/ethicalprinciples.php](http://www.depts.ttu.edu/ethics/matadorchallenge/ethicalprinciples.php)).

### **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**

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. [Texas Tech University ("University") Quality Enhancement Plan, Academic Integrity Task Force, 2010]

### **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/OP34.12.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](https://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](https://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](http://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.

## **VII. RESOURCE**

General references or specific recommendations adapted to every work will be supplied along the course.

\* Note that planning can be revised, altered and changed depending on academic interest, specially due to unforeseen circumstances.

## VIII. TENTATIVE COURSE SCHEDULE

May change to accommodate lectures, presentations and students needs.

### JANUARY

01/21 TU	Course presentation
01/26 TH	Course presentation
01/28 TU	Lecture

### FEBRUARY

02/02 TU	Lecture
02/04 TH	Lecture
02/09 TU	Lecture
02/11 TH	Lecture
02/16 TU	Lecture
02/18 TH	Lecture
02/23 TU	Lecture
02/25 TH	Lecture
(02/26 FI	Wellness Day)

### MARCH

03/02 TU	Lecture
03/04 TH	Lecture
03/09 TU	Lecture
03/11 TH	Lecture
03/16 TU	Lecture
03/18 TH	Installation Presentation
(03/19 FI	Festivity)
03/23 TU	Lecture
03/25 TH	Lecture
03/30 TU	Lecture

### APRIL

04/01 TU	Lecture
(04/05 MO	Festivity)
04/06 TU	Lecture
04/08 TH	Performance Celebration
04/13 TU	Lecture
04/15 TH	Lecture
04/20 TU	Lecture
04/22 TH	Lecture
04/27 TU	Lecture
04/29 TH	Epilogue
05/04 TU	Final presentation preparatives
05/06 TH	Final Presentation Exhibition
05/11 TU	Final Catalogue Submission

SHORT TERM ETERNITY

*Anarchitecture Notes. Gordon Matta-Clark.*