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A history of Western architecture and urban design: Prehistory to Mannerism

ARCH&UD 10a – Winter 2009
Tuesdays and Thursdays 11am-12:15pm, Perloff Hall 1102
UCLA Department of Architecture and Urban Design

Buildings and cities both reflect and affect the culture into which they are born. Any study of the history of Western culture's built environment is therefore an inquiry into its constitutive social, technological, and aesthetic practices. Drawing upon examples from Europe, Western Asia, and the Mediterranean Basin, this course constructs a critical position within which students can explore the implications of the terms history, architecture, city, and culture. Lectures address a broad range of architectural and urban traditions, examining specific buildings and urban settings in relation to their theoretical, philosophical, and socio-political contexts and purposes. Although this course is primarily a historical survey of buildings and cities, we will occasionally reflect on the problems, methods, and motivations behind works of historical scholarship.

Lectures are organized by time frame rather than by historic period, geographic location, or style. Each lecture examines architectural episodes in its particular time frame (often across dispersed geographic and cultural categories), taking into consideration the *stories* by which historians have explained their development and the specific architectural *concepts and practices* that they illustrate. Certain classes will be dedicated to "close readings" of specific buildings that illuminate key concepts introduced in earlier lectures.

This course has the following objectives:

1. To help students understand why the built environment of the Western world looks the way it does.
2. To help students to read critically the works of historians and gain some insight into why history is written the way it is.
3. To provide students with conceptual frameworks with which to interpret architecture, and to encourage the development of an analytical attitude toward the historic built environment.
4. To allow students to develop skills in analytical expression in both short and medium-length scholarly writing.

Our textbook is *A Global History of Architecture* (2007), by Ching, Jarzombek, and Prakash. Additional readings, listenings, and viewings will be posted to the class web site.

Note: This syllabus is subject to change until the end of week 1.

Assignments and requirements

You must come to class having completed the readings and other preparation for that week. All materials other than the textbook required for class preparation will be available on the class web site. There are three types of assignment for this course:

40% of final grade, 8 in total, due on the course web site every Friday by 10:00 pm except during week 10

Assignment 1: Weekly written responses

At the start of the quarter you will be divided into small groups with which you will work for the duration of the quarter. Each week, instructors will post a set of questions based on the coming week's preparation materials. You should post short (75-100 word) answers to all of the questions to the course web site *by 5:00 pm each Thursday* so other members of your group can see them. Review the answers of your other group members and bring your own answers to Friday's discussion section. At the start of each discussion section your group will choose a leader and spend a few minutes in discussion, with the goal of coming up with a set of answers agreed upon by the group as a whole. After the group discussion, your TA will select one of the questions and each group leader will present their group's answer. After the discussion section you should revise and expand your own individual answer to that question (150-200 words) and post it to the course web site *by 10:00 pm Friday*. Only your best 8 of 9 responses will be counted toward your final grade. *If you miss the Thursday deadline for the short answer then you will receive a failing grade for that week's response as a whole.*

35% of final grade, due at the start of your discussion section during week 10. Assignment and deadline are subject to change.

Assignment 2: Final take-home exam

This exam will ask two questions requiring long written answers with supporting citations and footnotes. The first question will give you an image depicting a detail of a building and asks you to identify the building to which it belongs and to support your claim with written *and* visual evidence. The second question will ask you do a synchronic comparison between one building that we have covered in the course and another from the same time period but from a non-Western culture. Your analysis should not dwell only on formal aspects but should carefully ground an architectural comparison in a discussion of cultural differences.

Note that the format of this exam may change as the quarter progresses. Also note that if you would like your exam back with comments then you will need to submit it with *a self-addressed stamped envelope*.

20% of final grade, to be given at the start of class on random days

Assignment 3: Quizzes on the readings and lectures

Short-answer quizzes given *at the start of class on random days* will test your comprehension of the material. Note that quizzes will sometimes ask about *material from previous weeks*, so you should be sure to review your notes prior to each lecture.

Class schedule

Please consult the course web site for additional materials required for each class. Note that in case of discrepancies *the course web site will always take precedence over this syllabus.*

January 6

Lecture 1: Introduction

Stories

Prehistory

Architectural concepts and practices

Spontaneous versus self-conscious building; reading architectural history

Preparation

1. Textbook, pp. xi-xv
2. Collins, 1967. *Changing Ideals in Modern Architecture*, pp. 29-35
3. Barnes, 1953. "Edward Gibbon's Utopia," *The Classical Journal*, 39:1, 13-16
4. Robinson, 1904. "Why Study History Through Primary Sources."

January 8

Lecture 2: 7000 BCE to 2000 BCE

Stories

The birth of cities in Mesopotamia; the emergence of Egyptian culture; the development of ritual environments in the "barbarian" north

Architectural concepts and practices

Cities as synonymous with civilization; architectural symbolism; architecture as a component in natural systems; repeatable building types and other abstractions

Preparation

Textbook, pp. 5-52

1. *The Epic of Gilgamesh*, c. 2200 BCE. Introduction (excerpt), Prologue, Book 2, Book 3 (excerpt)
2. Pyramid Texts, c. 2400 BCE
3. Hammurabi's Code of Laws, c. 1775 BCE (read #228-233)
4. They Might be Giants, 2007. "The Mesopotamians"

January 13

Lecture 3: 1900 BCE to 1200 BCE

Stories

The stability of Egypt in a turbulent world; the development of Bronze Age cities in the Aegean

Architectural concepts and practices

Surveying as primal architectural gesture; compositional approaches in large building complexes; expression of societal attitudes in built form; plan-based organization

Preparation

1. Textbook, pp. 53-77
2. *Digital Karnak* selections
3. Thucydides, 395 BCE. "On The Early History of the Hellenes"
4. Film: *Spinal Tap* (excerpt), Rob Reiner, 1984.

January 15

Lecture 4: 1000 BCE to 500 BCE

Stories

The decline of Mesopotamia and Egypt; the Iron Age origins of Greek and Roman civilizations

Architectural concepts and practices

Sense of place and the topographical imagination; building site as sanctified locale; persistent form; the house as archetypal form

Preparation

1. Textbook, pp. 81-3, 95-108
2. Layard, 1882. *Nineveh and Its Remains* (editor's introduction and excerpts)
3. Old Testament books of Kings and Ezekiel (excerpts)
4. Stambaugh, 1988. *The Ancient Roman City*, pp. 7-15
5. Livy, 25 BCE. *The Early History of Rome*, pp. 33-40
6. Film: *Fellini Roma* (excerpt), 1972.

January 20

Lecture 5: 600 BCE to 300 BCE

Stories

The rise of the Persian Empire; the flowering of Classical Greece; the democratic ideal of the Greek Polis

Architectural concepts and practices

Architecture as political ideology; organicism; the natural and the artificial

Preparation

1. Textbook, pp. 109-29
2. Herodotus, "On The Customs of the Persians," c. 430 BCE
3. Solon, fragment 4 (on the *demos*), c. 580 BCE
4. "Aristotle's Politics", *In Our Time*, BBC Radio 4 podcast, 2008

January 22

Lecture 6: Close reading 1 – The Parthenon

Architectural concepts and practices

Autonomy; architecture as syntactic system; *promenade architecturale*

Preparation

1. Textbook, review pp. 118-9, 128-9
2. Le Corbusier, 1931. *Towards a New Architecture*, pp. 131-148, 199-223
3. Eisenstein, 1937. "Montage and Architecture," in *Assemblage* 10, 1989

January 27

Lecture 7: 300 BCE to 50 BCE

Stories

The compromise of the Classical Polis under a Hellenistic new order; the ascendancy of Rome

Architectural concepts and practices

Cosmopolitanism; theatricality; engineered landscapes

Preparation

1. Textbook, pp. 130-7, 145-53
2. Stambaugh, 1988. *The Ancient Roman City*, pp. 16-47
3. MacKendrick, 1960. *The Mute Stones Speak*, pp. 141-63
4. Film: *A Funny Thing Happened on the Way to the Forum* (excerpt), Richard Lester, 1966.

January 29

Lecture 8: 50 BCE to 100 CE

Stories

The destruction of Pompeii; the birth of architectural theory; the uneasy transition of Rome from Republic to Empire

Architectural concepts and practices

Tenements and monster homes; writing about architecture; space as memory system; relationship of technical innovation to aesthetic innovation

Preparation

1. Textbook, pp. 154-66
2. Vitruvius, from *On Architecture* (c. 25 BCE), including introductory material by Mallgrave, pp. 3-14
3. Ackerman, 1990. *The Villa: Form and Ideology of Country Houses*, pp. 35-61
4. Yates, 1966. *The Art of Memory*, pp. 1-9
5. Film: *Viaggio in Italia* (excerpt), Roberto Rossellini, 1954
6. Film: *Pink Floyd: Live at Pompeii* (excerpt), Adrian Maben, 1971

February 3

Lecture 9: Close reading 2 – Roman Forum and Palatine

Preparation

1. Textbook, review pp. 154, 159-60
2. Pliny and Trajan, correspondence (c. 112 CE)
3. Juvenal, Third Satire (on the city of Rome, c. 100 CE)
4. Film: *Fellini-Satyricon* (excerpt), Federico Fellini, 1969

February 5

Lecture 10: 100 CE to 300 CE

Stories

The cycle of moral degeneracy and recovery in the later Roman Empire; globalization in the Roman world; the collapse of Classical aesthetics

Architectural concepts and practices

Monumentality; center and periphery; exoticism and allusion; architecture as a manifestation of the deep structures of culture

Preparation

1. Textbook, pp. 185-208
2. L'Orange, 1965. *Art Forms and Civic Life in the Late Roman Empire*.

February 10

Lecture 11: 300 CE to 500 CE

Stories

The spread of Christianity through Roman infrastructure; the eastward dissipation and re-centering of the Roman Empire

Architectural concepts and practices

Type and program; strategic location of building sites

Preparation

1. Textbook, pp. 223-5, 237-47
2. Stapleford, 1979. "Constantinian Politics and the Atrium Church", in Millon and Nochlin, eds. *Art and Architecture in the Service of Politics*
3. "The Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire", *In Our Time*, BBC Radio 4 podcast, 2006

February 12

Lecture 12: 500 CE to 700 CE

Stories

The rise of Byzantium and the eclipse of Rome; the West enters the “dark ages”; the birth of Islam

Architectural concepts and practices

Visual effects; decorated surfaces as space-defining elements; transformations of received types; contested sites

Preparation

1. Textbook, pp. 253-5, 260-70
2. Procopius on Hagia Sophia, c. 540 CE
3. “The Arab Conquests”, *In Our Time*, BBC Radio 4 podcast, 2008
4. Film: *Arabian Nights*, Pier Paolo Pasolini, 1974.

February 17

Lecture 13: 700 CE to 900 CE

Stories

The expansion of Islam through Arab infrastructures; the withdrawal of Western culture into monasticism; the Carolingian “Renaissance”

Architectural concepts and practices

Post-Classical ordering systems; spaces of ritual and introspection; revivalism

Preparation

1. Textbook, pp. 283-5, 303-17
2. Film: *Into Great Silence*, Philip Groning, 2005.

February 19

Lecture 14: 1000 CE to 1200 CE

Stories

The “Romanesque” as the precursor to the Gothic; the reassertion of Christianity through pilgrimage, crusade, and *reconquista*; the Great East-West Schism

Architectural concepts and practices

Architectural symbolism; architectural style

Preparation

1. Textbook, pp. 323-5, 345-68

February 24

Lecture 15: Close reading 3 – The Alhambra at Granada

Preparation

1. Textbook, review pp. 409-11
2. Film: *The Alhambra*, Frédéric Compain, 2005.

February 26

Lecture 16: 1100 CE to 1400 CE

Stories

The emergence of the “French manner” as a pan-European architectural style; the birth of Early Modern Europe in re-urbanization and mercantilism

Architectural concepts and practices

Structural expression; narrative and didacticism; negotiation between civic and private interests in urban space

Preparation

1. Textbook, pp. 375-7, 397-408
2. Excerpt from *The Book of Suger, Abbot of Saint-Denis*, c. 1144

March 3

Lecture 17: 1400 CE to 1525 CE

Stories

The rebirth of Humanist culture from the darkness of medievalism; the rise of Italy in cultural leadership

Architectural concepts and practices

Architect as author; ideal form; number and proportion; architectural theory; systematization of Roman architecture

Preparation

1. Textbook, pp. 415-7, 437-40, 444-55
2. "Machiavelli and the Italian City States", *In Our Time*, BBC Radio 4, 2006
3. Life of Brunellsechi, from Vasari, *Lives of the Artists*, 1550

March 5

Lecture 18: 1500 CE to 1575 CE

Stories

The rise of the Venetian Republic at the crossroads of East and West; the Islamic "renaissance"; the reassertion of Rome as a monumental center

Architectural concepts and practices

Abstraction and light; regional style; the city as stage set

Preparation

1. Textbook, pp. 443, 456-62
2. Cosgrove, 1993. *The Palladian Landscape*, pp. 26-54

March 10

Lecture 19: 1525 CE to 1600 CE

Stories

The "mannerist" response to the doctrines of Humanism; the broadcast of Italian Renaissance ideas throughout the West

Architectural concepts and practices

Private houses and gardens as zones of experiment; complexity and contradiction; architecture as language

Preparation

1. Textbook, pp. 463-5, 482-99
2. Film: *Fellini Roma*, 1972 (excerpt)

March 12

Lecture 20: Close reading 4 – Palladio and the new domestic architecture

Important deadlines

Each Thursday by 5:00 pm, except during week 10

Submittal of short answers to all weekly reading response questions.

Each Friday at 10:00 pm, except during week 10

Submittal of longer weekly reading response answer.

Friday, March 13, at the start of your discussion session.

Take-home exam due, in hard-copy, submitted to the instructor at your session.

Course policies and procedures Email communication and online resources

Outside class time, the best way to communicate with me is by email; likewise, I will communicate with the class through email, and so you should make sure that your email address on record at UCLA is working and that you check it regularly. You will also need an active UCLA Logon username and password to access the class web site as well as online article databases. Many online databases require that you either log in from a computer on the campus network or, if you plan to work from home, that you correctly configure your computer to access a proxy server (instructions are at <http://www.bol.ucla.edu/services/proxy>).

Office hours

Instructor's office hours are shown at the start of this syllabus. Office hours for T.A.s will be discussed during their respective discussion sections.

A note on Wikipedia

Wikipedia (<http://www.wikipedia.org>) is often an excellent place to start when dealing with unfamiliar material, and I encourage you to use it; that said, you should be aware of its limitations and risks. First, it is an unreliable source of facts; although many of the entries are checked by experts in the field, many are not. Second, its anonymous nature makes it difficult to understand the particular scholarly conversation of which you are a part when you use information that you find there. Third, if you make use of any material from Wikipedia *you will be expected to cite it as you would any other scholarly resource*.

Disabilities and special requirements

It is a priority of the instructor and the responsibility of the university to make this course as accessible as possible to students with disabilities or medical conditions that may affect any aspect of course assignments or participation. If you have a disability that prevents you from meeting the course requirements as set out in the syllabus then you are encouraged to speak to me before the end of the first week of classes so that we can make alternate arrangements. You can get more information about the Office for Students with Disabilities at <http://www.osd.ucla.edu>.

English as a second language

If you are currently learning English and think this will affect your reading pace or assignments, you are asked to communicate with the instructor about options and support. It will be your responsibility to keep up with the course materials. For details on ESL courses, visit <http://www.international.ucla.edu/languages/esl>

A note on academic integrity

It is your responsibility to make sure that you are aware of what constitutes academic dishonesty and of its consequences. Plagiarism—the use of another's words or ideas without proper acknowledgment—is a serious offense. You will receive a failing grade on any assignment in which there is clear evidence of plagiarism. *All evidence of cheating and plagiarism will, without exception, be turned over to the Dean of Students.* If you feel that you do not fully understand what constitutes academic dishonesty you should review the documents at <http://www.deanofstudents.ucla.edu/integrity.html>.

Grading criteria

I will be using a non-competitive grade scale, which means that your work will be assessed based on the degree to which it demonstrates mastery of the material. Your grade does not depend on your performance relative to others in the class.

Weekly responses

| | |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------|
| Answer accurately responds to the question and demonstrates comprehension of readings and lectures | 3 |
| Clearly argues the answer using well-chosen supporting references to sources and correct spelling and grammar | 2 |
| Total per hand-in | 5 |
| <i>Total percentage of final grade (best 8 of 9 hand-ins)</i> | <i>40</i> |

Take-home exam

| | |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------|
| Hypotheses are reasonable and accurately responds to the questions | 10 |
| Clearly and convincingly argues the hypothesis | 15 |
| Makes convincing use of visual evidence | 5 |
| Correctly uses spelling and grammar | 5 |
| <i>Total percentage of final grade</i> | <i>35</i> |

Quizzes

| | |
|------------------------------------------|-----------|
| Correctly answers short-answer questions | 20 |
| <i>Total percentage of final grade</i> | <i>20</i> |

Participation in discussion sections and lectures

| | |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------|
| Poses thoughtful questions to instructors or to other class members and offers thoughtful responses to questions posed by instructors | 5 |
| <i>Total percentage of final grade</i> | <i>5</i> |

Policy on late submissions

All late assignments will lose one letter grade for each day late and will not be accepted after four days—no exceptions. If you submit an assignment late because of medical or family reasons then you will need to provide written proof. *Assignments submitted on the day they are due but after the deadline time will be considered one day late. Take-home exams submitted anytime after the deadline will not be accepted.*