

**B+C | A**  
Barnard and Columbia Architecture  
Fall 2020, ARCH V3901, 4 pts  
Online.  
Thursdays: 12:10–2:00 PM

INSTRUCTOR: Suzanne Stephens  
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OFFICE: To Be Determined  
Office hours by appointment only.

**DRAFT COPY:** This is a provisional syllabus for informational purposes only and is subject to change prior to the commencement fall classes.

## **SENIOR SEMINAR: ARCHITECTURAL CRITICISM IN AMERICA 1850–2020**

### **COURSE DESCRIPTION:**

This seminar investigates the criteria for judging architecture and urban design in the last 170 years in America. In doing so, the class will explore the values (such as functionalism and organicism), principles (compositional and contextual, etc.) and intellectual thought (such as idealism, positivism, phenomenology, structuralism, and post-structuralism) that shaped the criteria for evaluating the buildings. Seminar students will criticize the written results in order to arrive at an understanding about how architectural criticism could be improved.

The focus is on “applied” criticism in magazines and newspapers, where the buildings are evaluated according to criteria derived from theoretical principles peculiar to a certain time. During the seminar students analyze the critical essays to isolate those principles and criticize their effectiveness, while placing them within historical and philosophical frameworks. At the end of the semester, students themselves will criticize a contemporary work of architecture in New York for a seminar presentation.

Required readings include essays by seminal 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> century architects and architectural historians, theorists and journalistic critics, such as Viollet-le-Duc, Montgomery Schuyler, Lewis Mumford, Philip Johnson, Henry-Russell Hitchcock, Colin Rowe, Ada Louise Huxtable, Alan Colquhoun, Mark Wigley, Martin Filler, Michael Speaks, Sarah Whiting, Robert Somol, and George Baird, Mabel Wilson, and Kimberly Dowdell. Interspersed among these essays are pertinent readings from the works of philosophers such as Aristotle, Kant, Emerson, Nietzsche, Merleau-Ponty, and Roland Barthes.

**MAJOR REQUIREMENTS + PREREQUISITES:** This section of Senior Seminar fulfills the requirement of one senior course for the Architecture major. Additionally, the course, *Perceptions of Architecture* is required to be taken prior to this course.

**LEARNING OBJECTIVES:**

Students who participate in the course fully will:

- analyze readings, organize, and write brief critiques.
- verbally present independent or paired analyses and research using multiple media formats.
- formulate and conduct advanced research related to architectural criticism in the U.S.
- demonstrate an understanding of the history, role, and types of architectural criticism in the U.S.

**COURSE REQUIREMENTS, EVALUATION, AND GRADING:**

The course is held online, through Zoom. There is no final paper and there is no exam. Instead, a one or one-and-a-half page paper is due each week, in which the student evaluates the readings according to an assigned topic. The last paper will be a short critique of a current work of architecture written by the student. Occasionally, students will be asked to deliver short presentations (with images on shared screen) in lieu of the weekly paper. Another form of presentation is the debate, which students, divided up into opposing teams, will participate on zoom in the last part of the semester.

Students will be graded on papers (50%) , class participation (30%) and presentations (20%). Readings may be changed during the semester, and substitutions can be made if a student has a particular interest in a topic not on the list.

Papers have to be submitted each Thursday during class, unless a student has asked for an extension (one or two days for special circumstances). If the paper is late without permission, the paper will automatically be lowered a grade.

**ATTENDANCE POLICY:**

Class attendance is seriously mandatory. Class begins at 12:10 noon promptly every Thursday. Any student arriving after 12:20 PM will be considered 'late' and arrivals after 1 PM will be considered as absent. One unexcused absence results in a lowered grade for the papers (e.g., A to B) due that week, plus a failing grade for that week on class participation. Two unexcused absences will result in a lowered grade for the course (e.g. A to B). Three unexcused absences constitute a failing grade. The only excused absences are those for reasons of health or crisis. To arrange an excused absence, you must discuss the matter with the instructor before class. Notifying the instructor by e-mail the day of

the class is unacceptable. If a student can't attend online class due to a sudden illness, he or she must call the instructor before class (212-684-4377 or 646- 849-7132).

**OFFICE HOURS:** By appointment only.

### **FACULTY STATEMENT ON ACADEMIC INTEGRITY:**

The intellectual venture in which we are all engaged requires of faculty and students alike the highest level of personal and academic integrity. As members of an academic community, each one of us bears the responsibility to participate in scholarly discourse and research in a manner characterized by intellectual honesty and scholarly integrity.

We expect that students will work in accordance with their honor code. It is your responsibility to fully understand what constitutes a violation of the honor code. Below are links to the Barnard and Columbia Colleges honor codes along with pages that summarize what the colleges consider to be academic dishonesty.

Barnard:

<http://barnard.edu/dos/honorcode>

<https://barnard.edu/honor-code/faq>

Columbia:

<https://www.college.columbia.edu/honorcode>

<http://www.college.columbia.edu/academics/academicdishonesty>

If an instructor believes you to have acted dishonestly, you will be referred to the formal process of Dean's Discipline. Overseen by the Office of Judicial Affairs and Community Standards, the Dean's Discipline process is an educational one that determines your responsibility using the principle of "preponderance of evidence." If found responsible, and depending on the nature of the dishonesty and whether or not you have a disciplinary record, you could face one of several sanctions.

Parents and guardians may be informed, faculty committees awarding honors will be notified, and the case may remain on your permanent record meaning that employers and graduate schools may also be informed. These sanctions are in addition to whatever determination the instructor makes on how your final grade in the class will be affected.

### **STATEMENT REGARDING DISABILITY SERVICES:**

Students with disabilities who will be taking this course and may need disability-related accommodations are encouraged to register in advance with the Office of Disability Services (ODS) in 008 Milbank for Barnard students or Disability Services at Wien Hall, Main Floor — Suite 108A for Columbia students.

## WELLNESS STATEMENT:

It is important for undergraduates to recognize and identify the different pressures, burdens, and stresses you may be facing, whether personal, emotional, physical, financial, mental, or academic. We as a community urge you to make yourself—your own health, sanity, and wellness—your priority throughout this term and your career here. Sleep, exercise, and eating well can all be a part of a healthy regimen to cope with stress. Resources exist to support you in several sectors of your life, and we encourage you to make use of them. Should you have any questions about navigating these resources, please visit these sites: <http://barnard.edu/primarycare>, <http://barnard.edu/counseling>, <http://barnard.edu/wellwoman/about>, <http://health.columbia.edu/>.

## READING SCHEDULE (All readings are available on Courseworks)

### Week I: 19<sup>th</sup> Century Theoretical Groundwork

Plato. "How Representation in Art Is Related to Truth." *Republic of Plato*. Trans. Frances Cornford. Oxford: Clarendon, 1958. 314-25. Print.

Ralph Waldo Emerson. "Thoughts on Art." 1841. *America Builds: Source Documents in American Architecture and Planning*. Ed. Leland M. Roth. New York: Harper & Row, 1983. 90-99. Print.

John Ruskin. "Lamp of Truth." *The Seven Lamps of Architecture*. New York: John Wiley, 1849. 25-56. Print.

Ruskin, John. "Lamp of Sacrifice." *The Seven Lamps of Architecture*. New York: John Wiley, 1849. 7-24. Print.

Ruskin, John. "Lamp of Beauty." *The Seven Lamps of Architecture*. New York: John Wiley, 1849. 85-122. Print.

Eugene-Emmanuel Viollet-le-Duc. "Lecture X." *Lectures on Architecture*. Trans. Benjamin Bucknall. Vol. 1. New York: Dover, 1877. 446–50; 454–55; 466; 482–84. Print.

### Week II: A New Building Type: The Tall Office Building

Aristotle. "The Imitative Art of Poetry." Ed. Richard Kuhns. *Philosophies of Art & Beauty*. Ed. Albert Hofstadter. N.p.: U Chicago, 1976. 104-05. Print.

Louis Sullivan, "A Tall Office Building Artistically Considered." 1896. *America Builds: Source Documents in American Architecture and Planning*. Ed. Leland M. Roth. New York: Harper & Row, 1983. 240-46. Print.

Montgomery Schuyler. "The 'Sky-scraper' Up-to-Date." 1899. *American Architecture and Other Writings by Montgomery Schuyler*. Ed. William Jordy and Ralph Coe. Cambridge: Harvard University Press (Belknap Press), 1961. 437-31.

Frank Lloyd Wright, "In the Cause of Architecture." 1908. *Frank Lloyd Wright Collected Writings*. Ed. Bruce Pfeiffer. Vol. 1. New York: Rizzoli, 1992. 84-100. Print.

Russell Sturgis, "Larkin Building in Buffalo." *Architectural Record* Apr. 1908: 310-21. Print.

Frank Lloyd Wright "Response." *Frank Lloyd Wright's Larkin Building: Myth and Fact*. Ed. Jack Quinan. Chicago: U of Chicago, 1987. N. pag. Print.

Montgomery Schuyler, "Towers of Manhattan and Notes on the Woolworth Building." *Architectural Record* Feb. 1913: 98-122. Print.

### **Week III: Columbian Exposition**

Immanuel Kant, Excerpts from *Critique of Judgment*, Second Book, Analytic of the Sublime Sublime, §40."Of Taste as a Kind of Sensus Communis", p. 312-13; §46. "Beautiful Art is the Art of Genius," in *Philosophies of Art & Beauty*, ed. Albert Hofstadter and Richard Kuhns (U. Chicago Press, 1976),pp.314-315

Montgomery Schuyler, "Last Words About the World's Fair." *American Architecture*. New York: Harper & Bros., 1892. N. pag. Print.

Howells, William Dean. "Letters of an Altrurian Traveler. II," *Cosmopolitan* 16 (December 1893): 221.

Paul Bourget, "Farewell to the White City." *Architecture in America*. By William A. Coles and Henry Hope Reed. New York: Appleton-Century-Crofts, 1961. 185-86. Print.

Mariana Griswold Van Rensselaer. "At the Fair." *Century Magazine* May 1893: 2-13.

Henry Van Brunt, "The Columbian Exposition and American Civilization." *Architecture and Society; Selected Essays of Henry Van Brunt*. Ed. William A. Coles. Cambridge, MA: Belknap of Harvard UP, 1969. 305-18.

Louis Sullivan. "Chapter 15, Retrospect." *America Builds: Source Documents in American Architecture and Planning*. Ed. Leland M. Roth. New York: Harper & Row, 1983. 361-64.

#### **Week IV: New York Skyscrapers of the Twenties and Thirties**

Colin Rowe, "Chicago Frame," *Architectural Review* (1956), in *Mathematics of the Ideal Villa and Other Essays*, 1976, pp. 89-117.

Lewis Mumford, "Notes on Modern Architecture," *The New Republic*, (March 18, 1931), pp. 119-122.

Douglas Haskell, "The Filing-Cabinet Building," *Creative Art*, (June 1932), pp. 446-49.

Douglas Haskell, "The Rockefeller Necropolis," *The Nation*, v. 136, (May 31, 1933), pp. 622-24.

Lewis Mumford, "Frozen Music or Solidified Static, Reflections on Radio City," *New Yorker*, v. 7 (June 20, 1931), in *Sidewalk Critic, Lewis Mumford's Writings on New York*, ed. Robert Wojtowicz, 1998, pp.54-59.

Lewis Mumford, "Mr. Rockefeller's Center," *New Yorker* (Jan.14,1933), in *Sidewalk Critic*, ed. Robert Wojtowicz, 1998, pp. 107-109.

Lewis Mumford, "Rockefeller Center Revisited," *New Yorker*, (May 4, 1940), in *Sidewalk Critic*, ed. R. Wojtowicz, 1998, pp. 266-69.

#### **Week V: International Style and Modern Architecture in America**

Otto Neurath, "The Social and Economic Museum in Vienna," sections 1 (1925), 2 (1931), 3 (1933). *Empiricism and Sociology*. eds. Marie Neurath and Robert S. Cohen. D.Reidel, 1973: 214-225.

Hitchcock, Henry-Russell and Johnson, Philip. "The International Style." 1932, *America Builds: Source Documents in American Architecture and Planning*. Ed. Leland M. Roth. New York: Harper & Row, 1983. 488-501. Print.

Harold Sterner, "Architecture Chronicle," *Hound & Horn*, 1932, pp.452-460.

Royal Cortissoz, "An Exhibition at the Metropolitan and MoMA," *New York Herald Tribune*, section 7, (Feb. 14. 1932), p. 9.

Catherine Bauer, "Exhibition of Modern Architecture, Museum of Modern Art," *Creative Art*, v. 10 (March 1932), pp. 201-06.

Talbot Hamlin, "The International Style Lacks the Essence of Great Architecture," *American Architect*, v. 143, (Jan. 1933), pp. 12-16.

H.H. Mencken, "The New Architecture," *American Mercury*, 1931, pp. 164-65.

Philip Johnson, "The Architecture of the New School," 1931, in *Philip Johnson Writings*, 1979, pp.32-36.

Douglas Haskell, "The New School," *The Nation*, (Feb. 25, 1931), pp. 221-23.

### **Week VI: Debates at Mid-Century: Historicism/Vernacular**

Colin Rowe, "La Tourette," in *Mathematics of the Ideal Villa and Others Essays*, 1976, pp.186- 203.

James Stirling, "Garches to Jaoul," *Architectural Review*, v. 118, (Sept.1955), pp. 145-51).

James Stirling: "Ronchamp, Le Corbusier's Chapel or the Crisis of Rationalism," *The Architectural Review*, v. 119, (March 1956), pp. 155-61.

Philip Johnson: "100 Years, Frank Lloyd Wright and Us," 1957, in *Philip Johnson Writings*, 1979, (pp.192-98).

### **Week VII: Modernism's Pitfalls**

Sybil Moholy Nagy, "Breuer and Grand Central," *Art in America*, 1968, in *Places* March 2015 <https://placesjournal.org/article/future-archive-hitlers-revenge/>

Jane Jacobs, "The New York City Office Boom," *Architectural Forum*, March 1957, pages 104-15  
in <http://www.usmodernist.org/AF/AF-1957-03.pdf>.

Jane Jacobs, "Downtown is For People," *Fortune Magazine*, TK 1958. pages <http://fortune.com/2011/09/18/downtown-is-for-people-fortune-classic-1958/> pages 1-24.

Ada Louise Huxtable, "The Monumental Muddle: Kennedy Center" *NY Times* Sept 7, 1971;  
Kennedy Center II" September 1971; both in *Kicked a Building Lately*",  
*Quadrangle/NYT* , 1976, pages 3-8.

### **Week VIII: Architecture and Language**

Venturi, Robert. *Complexity and Contradiction in Architecture*. With a *Introd.* by

Vincent Scully. New York: Museum of Modern Art; Distributed by Doubleday, Garden City, N.Y., 1966. 22-103.

Roland Barthes, "Ornamental Cookery," pp. 78-80 and (optional) "Myth Today," 109-159 in *Mythologies*, 1972.

Ada Louise Huxtable: "Clever Tricks or True Art?" (AT&T), *NYTimes* April 16, 1978; in *On Architecture, Collected Reflections on a Century of Change*, Walker, 2008, page 261-266.

Alan Colquhoun, "Democratic Monument." *Stuttgart Staatsgalerie*, by James Stirling. *Architectural Review* Dec. 1984: n. pag. 28 Mar. 2011. Web. <<http://www.architectural-review.com/archive/1984-december-democratic-monument-by-alan-colquhoun/8612396.article>>.

### **Week IX: Post-Structuralist Influence on Criticism**

Derrida, Jacques. "Structure, Sign and Play." Trans. Alan Bass. *Writing and Difference*. Chicago: U. Chicago, 1978. 278-93. Print.

Catherine Ingraham. "Slow-Dancing: Architecture in the Embrace of Poststructuralism." *Inland Architect*, (Sept.-Oct. 1987): 44-47.

Mark Wigley. "Deconstructivist Architecture," in catalogue, "Deconstructivist Architecture Exhibition," Museum of Modern Art, 1988.

Herbert Muschamp. "The Leaning Tower of Theory," *The New Republic*, (Aug. 29, 1988): 36-40.

Michael Sorkin, "Decon Job" *Village Voice* July 5, 1988 in *Exquisite Corpse*, Verso, 1991, pages 301-306.

Rowan Moore, "All That's Solid Melts into Air." *Blueprint* (1990): 26-31. Print.

### **Week X: Experiential Criticism: Bilbao and the Getty and Beyond**

Merleau-Ponty, Maurice. Excerpts from "The Primacy of Perception and its Philosophical Consequences." trans. James M. Edie, (address given to Société Française de Philosophie, November 23, 1946, in *Selected Essays of Maurice Merleau-Ponty, Phenomenology, Language & Society*. ed. John O'Neil. (Heinemann, 1974): 196-202.

Pallasmaa, Juhani. "Hapticity and Time, Notes on a Fragile Architecture." *Encounters: Architectural Essays*. N.p.: Independent Group, 2005. 321-33. Print.



Muschamp, Herbert. "The Miracle in Bilbao." Rev. of *Bilbao Guggenheim*. *The New York Times* 7 Sept. 1997: 54-59, 72, 82. Web.  
<<http://www.nytimes.com/1997/09/07/magazine/the-miracle-in-bilbao.html>>.

Martin Filler : "Big Rock Candy Mountain," (Getty Museum) *New York Review of Books*, Dec. 18, 1999; OR rewritten as essay, "Richard Meier," *New York Review of Books*, in *Makers Of Modern Architecture II*, NYRB, 2007, pages 189-209.

### **Week XI: Social Justice, Social Concerns and Architecture's Role**

Darren Walker, "Are You Willing to Give Up Your Privilege? Uncomfortable Questions," *The New York Times*, Sunday July 5, 2030, page 4.

Mabel Wilson, "Black Bodies, White Cities: Le Corbusier in Harlem," *ANY*, No. 16 on *Whiteness: White Forms, Forms of Whiteness*. Page 35-39.

Kimberly Dowdell, "Mabel Wilson is Updating the Narrative of American Architecture to Include Black Architects," *Metropolis*, May 18, 2020 (interview).

Kimberly Dowdell, "Racism is Built into U.S. Cities. Here's How Architects can Fight Back," *Metropolis*, June 3, 2020.

Reinhold Martin, "Fundamental#13 Real Estate as Infrastructure as Architecture," *Places Journal*, May 2014.

Mimi Zeiger, "Opinion: Koolhaas May Think We're Past the Time of Manifestos, but That's No Reason to Play Dumb," *Dezeen*, December 12, 2014.

Darell Fields, "Toward a Black Formalism," *The Aggregate* website, March 2015.

Irene Cheng, "Race and Architectural Geometry: Thomas Jefferson's Octagons," *J19, The Journal of Nineteenth-Century Americanists*, V.3, No. 1 Spring 2015.

### **Week XII: Criticism in a Computerized Global Age**

Michael Speaks. "Design Intelligence and the New Economy," *Architectural Record*. January 2002, 72-79.

Robert Somol and Sarah Whiting. "Notes Around the Doppler Effect and Other Moods of Modernism." *Perspecta 33: The Yale Architectural Journal*. 2002, pp. 72-77.

George Baird. "Criticality and its Discontents." *Harvard Design Magazine*. Fall 2004/Winter 2005. pp.1-6.

**Week XIII: Student Critiques**

Each student will select a building or an interior in New York to criticize and present during the last class. The selection must be approved by the instructor.