COURSE DESCRIPTION

The survey course is composed of two weekly lectures that trace the idea of modernity from the Enlightenment to the present. It examines modernity as an aesthetic imperative in architecture, the visual arts and urban culture, and as a set of cultural transformations affecting society at every level: social mores and beliefs, philosophical inquiry, scientific impulse and technological innovation. The course is focused on the Modern Movement in the pre-war period (The Bauhaus, Russian Constructivism, De Stijl, Le Corbusier, etc.) and post-war period (CIAM, Brutalism, Metabolism, International Style, etc.), although we will also examine pivotal developments in the 19th century and postmodernism.

As this course aims to demonstrate, Modernity, as an idea and as an ethos, is not confined to any one epoch, nor is it restricted to a precise set of norms, codes or beliefs. In fact, if we are to agree with French poet Charles Baudelaire, it is precisely modernity’s fleeting and ephemeral quality, its capacity to evade norms, to defy strictures and to shake up static orthodoxies that has made it a lasting and persuasive catalyst for change. However difficult it may be to identify a precise point of origin for this unprecedented cultural transformation, the historical arc of modernity doubtlessly precedes the modern movement (Modernism) in art and architecture, just as it has arguably outlived postmodern culture.

The first three decades of the twentieth-century witnessed the rise of the modern movement in the arts and in architecture. Our analysis of this key period will move from painting and sculpture, where a new,
non-objective abstraction was taking hold, to music (the atonal music of Arnold Schoenberg, for instance),
to theatre and film. Architecture held a very special role in the modern movement, understood as it was
through the lens of nineteenth-century aspirations for a total work of art. We shall examine the work of the
key this period’s decisive protagonists: Walter Gropius, Mies van der Rohe, El Lissitzky to Le Corbusier
and Theo Van Doesburg.

By the mid-1930s, the modern movement’s calcification could be discerned in the attempts to
institutionalize its main tenets, whether by the Congrès Internationale de l’architecture moderne (CIAM) or
the Museum of Modern Art. What had begun as a movement of “vital disorientation” (to use Ortega y
Gasset’s term) was increasingly becoming codified as a system of formal traits or packaged to an
international clientèle as a marketable style. We will see throughout the semester that a large number of
the attacks on modern architecture, whether by the pluralist architects of the 60s and 70s or by
postmodernist and post-structuralist architects of the 80s, had in mind a caricatural image of modern
architecture that had little relation with its incipient thought and form. Accordingly, one of the main aims of
this course will be to examine the theoretical and practical basis of modernism in order to better assess
the pertinence of the post-war, postmodernist and post-structuralist critique of it.

Our attention will then turn to post-war architecture. With the dust from the Second World War not yet
settled, European architects proclaimed a new era in which the technological prowess of pre-war
modernism would be mitigated by a humanistic concern for symbolic expression. Two cities created
ex-nihilo epitomize the value paid to monumentality in architecture after the war: Le Corbusier’s plan for
Chandigarh, a city created out of the partition of British India and Lucio Costa and Oscar Neimeyer’s
design for the Brazilian capital, Brasilia. Despite the architects’ best intentions, these cities and the
innumerable urban housing projects built on the outskirts of historic European cities in the post-war years,
would draw attention to the problems at the heart of the modernist (and CIAM inflected) vision of
architectural planning.

The 1960s and 1970s witnessed an extremely wide range of architectural approaches. Some architects
(Situationist, Metabolist and architects of the Megastructures) believed in a more flexible and
decentralized, albeit highly dramatic resurrection of the utopian project, while others (Venturi, Rossi and
later Postmodernists) actively denounced modernist excesses and sought to reconnect architecture to
historical and everyday forms and practices. If we are to take the opinion of postmodern architect Charles
Jencks, the final blow to modernism came in April 1972 in the form of a widely-televised 1972 demolition
of the Pruitt-Igoe housing project, symbol of nearly a century of rapid social, technological and aesthetic
reform.

The last series of lectures will focus on architects of the 1980s and 1990s who proposed alternative
solutions to the question of the legacy of modern architecture. Despite their diverse perspectives, the
architects and theorists examined in the last three weeks (Post-Structuralist, Deconstructivist,
Phenomenologist, etc.) demonstrate that in order to come to terms with modernity, one need engage
(and for some, “deconstruct”) its underlying premises and expose its internal contradictions. In contrast to
the postmodern populist and classicist return to pre-modern architectonic forms and archetypes, the
architects explored in these sessions often employed modern elements and representational techniques
in repetitive, redundant, and often disorienting ways. Finally, we will end the course by briefly looking at
contemporary digital architecture and the post-theory (often referred to as post-critical) debates. The
claims made by a growing number of post-theory theorists of the digital revolution are provocative. Many
argue that the new technological means amount to nothing less than the dissolution of an entire century
of modern and post-modern thinking. An entire semester of readings, lectures and discussions on the
nature of modern and post-modern theory and architecture will help us identify the stakes and examine
the trajectory of contemporary practice.
COURSE REQUIREMENTS
For this lecture course, students are expected to complete the following requirements:

1. Lectures: Lectures will be given twice weekly, on Mondays and Wednesdays from 2:40pm-3:55pm. Students are required to turn off all electronic devices with the exception of a laptop for note-taking. Use of the internet during class lectures is forbidden. The slideshows for the lectures will be posted on canvas.

2. Attendance: You are expected to come to class having completed your assigned readings. Attendance to all course meetings is mandatory. An attendance sheet will be distributed at each meeting. If you have a good reason for missing class, please inform the professor by email beforehand. You may be asked to provide a doctor’s note or a message from a class dean.

3. Readings: There will be approximately 80-100 pages of reading a week. All readings must be completed before the relevant lecture. Students are required to purchase two architectural history survey books listed below. The remaining required readings are available through courseworks.


4. Writing Center: I strongly recommend that students visit the Barnard or Columbia Writing Center before handing in assignments. [http://writing.barnard.edu](http://writing.barnard.edu), [https://www.college.columbia.edu/core/uwp/writing-center](https://www.college.columbia.edu/core/uwp/writing-center)

5. Course Assessment and Grading:
   **Weekly Reading Responses: [20 summaries x 2 points each = 40%]**
   • There are 25 lectures in this course and you are required to submit reading responses to 20 lectures of your choice. The length of reading responses will be 200-250 word (no less, no more). Use short, succinct sentences.
   • Late papers will not be accepted unless a valid reason is accompanied by a note from a doctor or class dean.
   • Collaboration on the Reading Responses is not allowed. See the The Barnard Honor Code.
   • Weekly reading responses are due at midnight the night before each lecture. I will set up online discussion boards on canvas where you will submit your responses. You will be able to see your classmates’ responses only once you have added your own response to the forum. Once you have added your response, I recommend that you read some of the other responses on the forum.
   • Reading Responses should briefly summarize the main thesis/argument of each reading except for the readings from the survey books (Bergdoll and Frampton). Your reading response should begin or end by relating the main thesis of the readings to the broader theme of that lecture as elaborated in the survey books (Bergdoll and Frampton). Summaries in note form will not be accepted.

   **Mid-Term Take-Home Exam: [30%]**
   • The take-home exam will be distributed in late February. You will have one week to complete three of the five questions on the exam. The questions will focus on issues discussed in the lectures and will draw on required readings for the course. The exam essays should reflect standard scholarly practice. Use the *Chicago Manual of Style*, 16th or 17th edition for citations. When citing readings on the syllabus, you may simply use the name of the author, the title of the work, and the date, as noted in the Lecture Schedule portion of the syllabus.
   • Format for the Mid-Term Exam: Please use 1 1⁄2 spacing, 11pt., Times New Roman font. Do not include a cover page. You Mid-Term Exam should have with your name, week, and date at the top right hand corner of the first page.
Final Exam: [30%]
- The final exam will be written using your laptop or using a pen or pencil. The final exam is open-book and open-notes but you may not use the internet. Your wifi signal must be turned off. Failure to turn off your wifi will result in a failing grade on the exam.
- The exam is based on the material covered over the entire semester, although the second part of the semester’s material will be more heavily weighted. The final exam will be based on the required readings for the course AND on the material presented during the lectures. It is therefore essential that all students take notes during class. The date of the final exam will be announced in class as soon as possible.
- Format for the Final Exam: A couple of weeks ahead of the final exam, a list of approximately 6 possible exam themes will be distributed. For the final exam, I will transform a random selection of 3 of these themes and write them as questions. Below each question on the exam will be 3-4 images. 2-3 of these images will be chosen by you and will form the basis of your response. The images you choose will need to be identified by architect, name of building, approximate date (give or take a decade) and location (if built).

Student Learning Outcomes:
Upon successful completion of this reading and writing intensive course, the student will be able to:
- identify, analyze and explain the major nineteenth and twentieth-century architectural and urban movements, theories and projects in relation to their cultural framework.
- gain an understanding of the historical development of modernity in culture and of modernism in architecture and urbanism.
- become familiar with visual and verbal vocabularies of modern architecture and urbanism and coherently communicate these architectural and urban ideas in written form and oral forms.
- further develop research, writing, and critical thinking skills through the research and writing of a series of reading summaries, a midterm exam essay, and a final exam that state a meaningful thesis specific to the various architecturally significant buildings and concepts identified in class and in the readings for the course.

The Barnard Honor Code: The Barnard Honor Code applies to all students in this class regardless of academic affiliation. Approved by the student body in 1912 and updated in 2016, the Code states: We, the students of Barnard College, resolve to uphold the honor of the College by engaging with integrity in all of our academic pursuits. We affirm that academic integrity is the honorable creation and presentation of our own work. We acknowledge that it is our responsibility to seek clarification of proper forms of collaboration and use of academic resources in all assignments or exams. We consider academic integrity to include the proper use and care for all print, electronic, or other academic resources. We will respect the rights of others to engage in pursuit of learning in order to uphold our commitment to honor. We pledge to do all that is in our power to create a spirit of honesty and honor for its own sake. The Columbia College Honor Code and the Faculty Statement on Academic Integrity can be viewed here: https://www.college.columbia.edu/honorcode https://www.college.columbia.edu/faculty/resourcesforinstructors/academicintegrity/statement

Barnard Wellness Statement: It is important for undergraduates to recognize and identify the different pressures, burdens, and stressors 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. For more information about available resources:
Click on Health-Wellness, Columbia GS Students: https://gs.columbia.edu/health-and-wellness, Columbia SEAS Students: http://gradengineering.columbia.edu/campus-resources

Academic Accommodations Statement: If you are a student with a documented disability and require academic accommodations, you must visit the Office of Disability Services (ODS) for assistance. Students requesting eligible accommodations in their courses will need to first meet with an ODS staff member for an intake meeting. Once registered, students are required to visit ODS each semester to set up new accommodations and learn how to notify faculty. Accommodations are not retroactive, so it is best to register with ODS early each semester to access your accommodations. If you are registered with ODS, please see me to schedule a meeting outside of class in which you can bring me your faculty notification letter and we can discuss your accommodations for this course. Students are not eligible to use their accommodations in this course until they have met with me. Barnard ODS is located in Milbank Hall, Room 008. Columbia ODS is located in Wien Hall, Suite 108A.
# LECTURE SCHEDULE

## WEEK 1

**W 1/17**

Introduction

## WEEK 2

### ORIGINS OF MODERNITY

**M 1/22**

The Rise of a Scientific Worldview
- Raymond Williams, “Modern,” in *Keywords*, 1976, pp. 208-209.

**W 1/24**

The French Enlightenment

## WEEK 3

### INDUSTRIALIZATION AND ITS DISCONTENTS

**M 1/29**

Historicism and the Challenge to the Academic Ideal
- Victor Hugo, “This Will Kill That,” in *Notre-Dame de Paris*, 1837, pp. 161-176

**W 1/31**

Nationalism and Industry: Gothic Revivals in France and England
- William Morris, “Art and Socialism,” 1884, pp. 1-14

## WEEK 4

### METROPOLIS AND CAPITAL

**M 2/5**

Paris, Capital of the Nineteenth Century
- Walter Benjamin, “Paris, Capital of the Nineteenth Century,” 1935, pp. 3-14

**W 2/7**

Vienna and the Fin-de-Siècle Metropolis
- Georg Simmel, “The Metropolis and Mental Life,” 1903, pp. 11-19

## WEEK 5

### GLOBALIZATION AND EMPIRE

**M 2/12**

Saint-Simonians

**W 2/14**

Orientalism and French Colonial Conquest

## WEEK 6

### THE GARDEN IN THE CITY

**M 2/19**

Utopian and Progressive Urbanism
- François Choay, “The Progressist Model,” pp. 31-32, 97-110
- Charles Fourier, “The Phalanstery” (1848), pp. 240-245

**W 2/21**

America, City and Suburb
- Frampton, Pt. 2, Ch. 2, 3 (pp. 51-63)
- Louis Sullivan, “The Tall Office Building Artistically Considered,” 1896, pp. 1-4
- Frank Lloyd Wright, “In the Cause of Architecture,” 1908, pp. 1-11
WEEK 7
M 2/26
MODERNISM AND MANIFESTO
Adolf Loos
Frampton, Pt. 2, Ch. 8 (pp. 90-95)
Adolf Loos, “The Poor Little Rich Man,” 1900, pp. 18-21

W 2/28
Cubism and Futurism
Frampton, Pt. 2, Ch. 7 (pp. 84-89)
Antonio Sant’Elia and Filippo Marinetti, “Futurist Manifesto,” 1914, pp. 49-53

WEEK 8
M 3/5
MODERNISM AND MASS PRODUCTION
De Stijl and Russian Constructivism
Frampton, Pt. 2, Ch. 16, 19 (pp. 142-148, 167-177)
Theo Van Doesburg, “Towards a Plastic Architecture,” 1924
Kasimir Malevich, “Suprematist Manifesto Unovis,” 1924

W 3/7
Deutscher Werkbund and The Bauhaus
Frampton, Pt. 2, Ch. 12, 13, 18 (pp. 109-129, 161-166)
Hermann Muthesius, Henry Van de Velde, “Werkbund Theses and Antithesis,” 1914, pp. 28-31
Walter Gropius, “Programme of the Staatliches Bauhaus in Weimar,” 1919, pp. 49-53
Walter Gropius, “Principles of Bauhaus Production,” 1926, pp. 95-97

THU 3/8
MIDTERM EXAM DUE / 10PM BY EMAIL

WEEK 9
SPRING BREAK

WEEK 10
L’ESPRIT NOUVEAU
M 3/19
Jeanneret to Le Corbusier
Frampton, Pt. 2, Ch. 17 (pp.149-160)
Le Corbusier, Towards A New Architecture, 1923, selected pages

W 3/21
Le Corbusier and Utopian Urbanism
Frampton, Pt. 2, Ch. 20, 25 (pp. 178-185, 224-230)

WEEK 11
POST-WAR MONUMENTALITY AND REFORM
M 3/26
Global Modernisms and the New Monumentality
Frampton, Pt. 3, Ch. 1 (pp. 248-261)
Sigfried Giedion, “The Need for a New Monumentality,” 1944, pp. 25-51

W 3/28
Brutalism and Team 10
Frampton, Pt. 3, Ch. 2 (pp.262-179)
Alison Smithson, “How To Recognise and Read Mat-Building,” 197, pp. 573-590
WEEK 12  
POST WAR / COLD WAR

M 4/2  
Organizational Man: Post-War America and Suburbia
   Henry Russell. Hitchcock, Philip Johnson, The International Style, 1932, pp. 142-151
   Elizabeth Gordon, "The Threat to the Next America," 1953, pp. 286-287

W 4/4  
Organizational Man: Skyscraper and City
   Frampton, Pt. 2, Ch. 26 (pp. 231-238)
   Mies van der Rohe, "Inaugural Address at the Armour Institute of Technology," 1938
   Richard Buckminster Fuller, "Accommodating Human Unsettlement," 1978, pp. 51-60

WEEK 13  
LATE MODERNS

M 4/9  
Pop and Cybernetic Utopias
   Frampton, Pt. 3, Ch. 4 excerpt (pp. 280-290)
   Guy Debord, "Theory of the Derive," 1956, pp. 50-54

W 4/11  
American Modern
   Kenneth Frampton, "Louis Kahn: Modernization and the New Monumentality," pp. 209-246
   Timothy Rohan, "Canon and Anti-Canon: The Fall and Rise of the A + A," pp. 24-31

WEEK 14  
POSTMODERNISM

M 4/16  
The Many Faces of Postmodern Architecture
   Frampton, Pt. 3, Ch. 4 excerpt (pp. 290-313)
   R. Venturi, Denise Scott Brown, Steven Izenour, Selection from Learning from Las Vegas," 1972

W 4/18  
FILM: The Pruitt-Igoe Myth

WEEK 15  
MODERNISM RECONFIGURED

M 4/23  
Post-Structuralism and Deconstruction: Peter Eisenman, Bernard Tschumi
   Peter Eisenman, Descriptions of Projects in the 80s, 2 pages

W 4/25  
Rem Koolhaas, Daniel Libeskind
   Rem Koolhaas, excerpt from Delirious New York, 1978, 20 pages
   Daniel Libeskind, "Three Projects," pp. 27-39
   Daniel Libeskind, "The Jewish Extension to the German Museum in Berlin," 1990, pp. 62-77

WEEK 16

M 4/30  
TBA