Selected Topics in Architecture: Architecture from 1750 to the Present.

Instructor:
**Arindam Dutta**
Room #: 3-305B
Office Hours: Thursdays, 1-3
Phone: 3-1432.
e-mail: adutta@mit.edu

Teaching Assistant:
Patrick Haughey
e-mail: phaughey@mit.edu

Units: 3-0-6
Level: G

Course Description:
General study of modern architecture as responses to important technological, cultural, environmental, aesthetic and theoretical challenges after the European Enlightenment. Begins with the archaeological digs into a classical past (Rome, Greece, Egypt) as well as exploratory travels into the “others” of Europe to examine the modern origins of architectural history itself within the profession. Ends with the contemporary era of “globalization” and the politics of “development” in North and South and its relevance to self-titled trans-national practitioners such as Rem Koolhaas. The course will subsequently reprise the history of architecture through its use of contemporary ideologies, such as organicism and technology, its provenance within administrative and legal structures, the changing conditions of the practice in response to economic conditions and structures of production, and their role in shaping and understanding social and aesthetic processes at large. Topics cover a wide range of debates on colour, drawing, ornament, structure, construction, material, inhabitation, gender, class, race, nationalism, etc. in architecture. In setting up these constraints, the course will also focus on aspects of architectural theory, historiography, and design in their complicity and resistance with texts of power, specifically with regard to the immense transformations wrought in different cultural contexts by colonial, industrial and post-industrial expansions, and the complicity of the ideas of European modernism in securing these arenas. The course therefore seeks to establish new conceptual relationships between canonical themes of modernity framed within a certain “Europe” in relation to the emergence of a global modernity in the world at large. Explores modern architectural history through thematic exposition rather than as simple chronological succession of ideas.

Required of all first year M.Arch. Students.
Wednesday: September 5

Introduction: The History of Architectural History.

Recommended viewing: Seinfeld episodes:

1) Episode 78. The Marine Biologist: A woman Jerry and George know from college asks about George so Jerry tells her that he is a marine biologist. Famous line from George Castanza to Jerry, “Why did you tell her I was a marine biologist? Why couldn’t you tell her I was an architect. You know I’ve always wanted to pretend that I was an architect.” A Russian writer throws Elaine’s electronic organizer out the car window and hits a woman in the head. Golden Boy is Jerry’s favorite shirt but it doesn’t make it through the wash. Kramer hits golf balls at the beach.

2) Episode 148 – The Van Buren Boys: Official description: George interviews people for the foundation scholarship. Finds this kid who has terrible grades and wants to become an architect, fulfilling all of George’s fantasies. Towards, the end of the episode, the student decides he wants to become an urban planner instead, driving George mad. Mr. Peterman buys Kramer’s stories for his autobiography. Jerry dates someone who is socially challenged.

Week 1: Constructing the Past; Exploring Forth and Digging Under

Friday: September 7


Wednesday: September 12

Discussion

**Week 2: Prelude to an Architecture of Globalization: The Transatlantic Slave Trade**

**Friday: September 14**


**Wednesday: September 19**

Discussion
Week 3: Landscape; The Politics of Site

Thursday: September 21


Cronon, William: “Dreaming the Metropolis,” Chapter 1 in Nature’s Metropolis; Chicago and the Great West.

Wednesday: September 26

Discussion

Week 4: Architecture and Industrialism, Part 1: The Ghosts of Technology

Friday: September 28


**Wednesday, October 3**

Discussion

**Week 5: Architecture as Ornament**

**Friday, October 5 - Class meets early 8-9:30.**


Wednesday, October 10
Discussion

Week 6: Architecture and Industrialism, Part 2: Masses, Classes and Regions

Friday, October 12


Kwinter, Sanford: “La Città Nuova; Modernity and Continuity,” in Zone 1/2.


Wednesday, October 17
Discussion

Week 7: Domesticity; Gender in Space

Friday – October 19 – Reschedule – Monday, October 22


Wednesday, October 24

Discussion

Week 8: The Paper Architectures of the Avant-Garde

Friday, October 26


Hochman, Elaine S. Chapter 15, “Death and Transfiguration,” in Bauhaus; Crucible of Modernism. New


Gough, Maria. “In the Laboratory of Constructivism,” p.90 in *October,* No.84.


**Wednesday, October 31**

Discussion

Film: *Part of the Struggle: Art and Politics, Germany 1919-1933.*

**Week 9: Body Talk; Body as Metaphor in Architecture**

**Friday, November 2**


Grosz, Elizabeth. “Embodied Utopias: The Time of Architecture,” Chapter 8 in *Architecture From the Outside; Essays on Virtual and Real Space.*


Wednesday, November 7
Discussion

Week 10: Ludic Spaces; The Architecture of Play

Friday, November 9


Wednesday, November 14
Discussion

Week 11: Lines Across the City; Architecture and the State

Friday, November 16


Wednesday, November 21
Discussion.

Friday, November 23 – Thanksgiving Holiday

Film: The Underground (by Emir Kosturica)
Week 12: Post-War Narratives of “Development”

Wednesday, November 28


Friday, November 30

Discussion

Film: Taken For A Ride

Week 13: Semiotics / Signs

Wednesday, December 5


Giuliana Bruno. “Ramble City; Postmodernism and Blade Runner,” in October, #41.


**Friday, December 7**

Discussion

**Week 14: Globalization and Transnationalism**

**Wednesday, December 12**


