

20.222 History, Theory & Culture 2

Lead Instructor

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Course Description

Studies the essential interrelationships of architectural theory, history, and practice. Examines theoretical investigations not as specialised discourse relating exclusively to architectural production, but as essential and deeply relevant to diverse human social and economic activities, whether they be cultural, aesthetic, philosophical, or professional. Topics and examples are chosen from a wide range of materials, from classical antiquity to contemporary practice. Special topics relating to 21st century urbanization, emerging economies of China and India and ecological and environmental debates will be addressed.

Learning Objectives

The main learning objective will be the acquisition of an analytical understanding of the performance of building systems and a qualitative appreciation of the system dynamics of these systems within the larger construction and with regard to all other building systems.

- Identify and characterize broad themes in historical and theoretical work
- Synthesize perspectives that correlate streams of thinking from various cultures and disciplines
- Offer questions and paths for inquiry that develop into rich discussions, specific topics for further investigation and have the potential for results from deeper research effort

Measurable Outcomes

- Explain the relationship between philosophical discourse and other theoretical approaches that bear relevance on the built environment
- Demonstrate understanding of diverse streams of thought and intellectual regimes that have influenced the production of the built environment
- Relate current and ongoing debate in architectural theory, history and criticism with past schools of thought
- Apply the debates in environmental, ecological and economic circles with the currents in architectural history, theory and criticism

Course Syllabus

Instead of employing a chronological structure (ASD 20.221: History, Theory & Culture 1), this course and readings are grouped into thematic areas of exposition. Topics on autonomy, class, colour, construction, drawing, gender, nationalism, ornament, science, structure, and technology and how the complexities of these issues have created frameworks for architectural historiography, theory, and design in a variety of cultural contexts will be examined. Readings from key historical which, along with architectural theory and criticism, formed the discourse that shaped modern architecture.

The class will discuss architecture in relation to major paradigms of thought, artistic explorations in other media, and social transformations related to developments in politics, technology, science, religion and cultural exchange.