SEMINAR: BUILT ENVIRONMENT DESIGN AND THEORY

This is a required course for first-year Ph.D. students. Other graduate students may enroll, with priority given to Option 1 students. Enrollment is strictly limited to 12 students. Graduate students who wish to enroll should contact Howard Davis at hdavis@uoregon.edu

The seminar will meet for two 2-hour sessions each week: Tuesdays 10-12 and Wednesdays 6-8.

The seminar is intended to introduce major currents of architectural thought over history, putting them into the context of their contemporary social, aesthetic, technological and philosophical contexts, and connecting them to the design of buildings and cities that occurred as a result (or in spite of them). Emphasis will be given to contemporary issues in the production of the built environment, as follows:

- Construction, craft and digital technologies;
- Political economy, urbanization and social equity;
- Sustainability seen from multiple points of view;
- Practice, expertise, and professional power; and
- Beauty and the affective attributes of buildings and places--each of these issues being manifested at different scales of region, city, building, and construction.

While the seminar will emphasize contemporary issues, it will do so within the background of historic and modern ideas and movements, including:

- Pre-Enlightenment theories (e.g. Vitruvius, medieval scholasticism, Renaissance, Alberti)
- Enlightenment (e.g. Durand, Quatremere);
- Romanticism and nineteenth century reactions to industrialization (e.g. Goethe, Morris, Ruskin);
- Modernism and science (e.g. Le Corbusier, Gropius);
- Critical schools (e.g. Adorno, Benjamin);
- Phenomenology and experience (e.g. Heidegger, Norberg-Schulz, Alexander, Lynch, Jacobs);
- Structuralism and typology (e.g. Rossi);
- Post-structuralism and deconstruction (e.g. Eisenman, Koolhaas, Hadid); and
- Contemporary syntheses of the environment, person & nature, and urban life

The seminar will use three kinds of discussions, all initiated and run by students:

- Discussions based on analysis of readings and of case study projects in architecture and urban design
- Discussions based on progress presentations of students' own research / position papers
- “Great debates” in which students will be asked to argue a particular point of view or from the vantage point of a particular thinker or architect

Readings will be taken from the following books, and other sources:

- Ulrich Conrads and Michael Bullock, eds., Programs and Manifestoes in Twentieth-Century Architecture
- Adrian Forty, Words and Buildings: A Vocabulary of Modern Architecture
- Richard T. LeGates and Frederic Stout, eds., The City Reader
- Neil Leach, ed. Rethinking Architecture: A Reader in Cultural Theory
- Harry Mallgrave, ed., Architectural Theory: An Anthology from Vitruvius to 1870
- Harry Francis Mallgrave and Christina Contandriopoulos, eds, Architectural Theory Volume II: An Anthology from 1871 to 2005
- Robert Scharff and Val Dusek, eds., Philosophy of Technology: The Technological Condition-An Anthology

Students will be required to complete an extensive set of readings, actively participate in discussions, take part in leading reading discussions, play a part in the “great debates,” and write a final paper on a topic to be worked out between student and instructor.