Architecture 617/Landscape Architecture 617, Winter 2016, Christina Bollo & Robert Ribe

ADVANCED THEORY SEMINAR

This is a required course for first-year Ph.D. students in both departments. Other graduate students may enroll, with priority given to MLA and MSARCH students. Enrollment is strictly limited to 12 students across both departments’ courses. Non-PhD students who wish to enroll should contact either instructor.

The seminar will meet for one 2.5-hour session each week – Wednesdays from 5:30 to 8:00.

OVERVIEW
The seminar is intended to introduce major currents of environmental design thought, put them into the context of their contemporary social, aesthetic, technological and philosophical contexts, and connect them to the design of buildings, landscapes 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:

• Ideas about applied, normative ecology and ideologies of sustainability;
• 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 places and buildings and how these issues are manifested at different scales of region, city, landscape, building, and construction.

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

• Discussions based on analysis of critical or theoretical readings in architecture, landscape architecture and urban design as directed by students’ diagrams of the arguments found therein;
• Presentations of students’ 300 word short theory/position papers;
• Presentation of students’ critical analysis and interpretation of case studies in light of class readings.

There will be four themes that organize the class:

• Aesthetics, Meaning, and Sustainability;
• Ecology, Context, and Sustainability
• Technology, Making, and Sustainability
• Social Sustainability, Use, and Whole Cities or Regions

REQUIREMENTS:
Students will be required to complete an extensive set of readings, actively participate in discussions, take part in leading reading discussions, write short theory position papers, and present case studies.” PhD students will also write a final paper critically reviewing theories related to their prospective dissertation topics.

GRADING
The class is pass-fail. Like any graduate level seminar, to pass, students are expected to read all assignments and produce all products on time and present or employ them in class with due diligence, enthusiasm and attention to the collective intent of the class, albeit from their own perspectives.