Spring 2013

ARCH 5120: History of Architecture II
Gargus

History of architecture from ancient to contemporary: historical inquiry, physical and cultural influences, theories, and analytical techniques. Continuation of 5110.

4 credit hours

ARCH 5290: An Interrogation of Le Corbusier’s “Practice”
Oubrerie

Le Corbusier’s “method” approached through the study of several projects of the last period (1958/65) in L-C’s Studio i.e: Venice Hospital, Strasbourg Conference Center, Visual Art Center Boston, Zurichorn, Firminy Church and complex etc. and their relationship to precedents in Le Corbusier’s own work. For example the sequence: > Esprit Nouveau Pavilion 1925 > Immeubles Villas > Villa Stein in Garches > Villa Shodan>Mills Owners, both in in Ahmedabad and by extension Unite Marseille. We will examine also some of his projects and their re-interpretation in contemporary research. For example: Strasbourg and the Governor Palace in Chandigarh> Rem Koolhaas’s Morocco Convention Center etc.

It was specific of Le Corbusier process, while he was slowly establishing his own language, to not be closed to external influences as well as internal ones in elaborating a particular project on the basis of elements provided by his own “inventions” (he uses to define himself not as a researcher but an “inventor” not so far from Picasso’s famous “I do not search , I find...”), to also explore the possibilities of “demonstration” of the validity of his language by selecting a large variety of programs, of conditions, in order to produce new spaces, new spatial organizations, new “typologies” based on, finally the square and Maison Domino.

Today it seems that most of contemporary architecture, in certain spheres where a real research exists, pretends to have abandoned any formal reference to its past. A new-realism of a kind takes place, based not on the appearance of things but on their structure like the one of plants, or micro-organizations , or physical phenomena : like movement of fluids, etc. a sort of naturalist quite, “organic” referential apparently completely independent from what in architecture has allowed these developments (represented here by L-C) but also in art.

However, and contrary to what they usually say themselves, the most talented architects that we know today have all a solid knowledge of this presence of the recent past. It can be demonstrated with Koolhaas as well as many others. They very often entertain a certain level of “dialog” with specific works, ultimately with their discourse. Lets argue that the “real” discourse of an architect is constituted
by his/her projects, but also in a most extended way by his/her practice. It is where his/her intentions, culture, dreams come to reality, fixed, frozen. The objective of the seminar through the interrogation of projects – here using Le Corbusier as support of study – to attempt to discover this real discourse which is always constituted once the projects are really elaborated. Is this discourse and its consequences strictly limited to the problem of the “object” as it seems very often to restrict itself today…?

Pre-reading: “Space, Knowledge and Power” Interview of Michel Foucault by Paul Rabinow in “Foucault Reader” Paul Rabinow edition Pantheon Publisher ISBN 0-394-71340-0. Ten Canonical Buildings Peter Eisenman Rizzoli, Chapter on Strasbourg, and his article in Oppositions (collected essays of different issues by different authors) “Maison Domino and the self –referential sign”

Prereq: Enrollment in Arch major or permission of instructor.

3 credit hours

ARCH 5290: Lookin’ Amazing

Livesey

Although in some quarters formal analysis is thought to be dead, it is alive and well and can be used both to understand and produce architecture. Recent publications such as Peter Eisenman’s TenCanonical Buildings 1950-2000 purport to give “close reading of critical architectural ideas”. The trouble is that the book is filled with inaccuracies and therefore misreadings. He just is not “reading” close enough. So in this class we will give up reading, in favor of just “lookin’”. We will use “lookin’” to understand why things are the way they are and as a device for postulating particular forms and organizations. Students will learn to recognize analytical approaches that apply to any building and can be used for design strategies.

In each class there will be an analysis of at least two canonic buildings. The instructor will analyze six divergent buildings in the first three classes. In the remaining classes, using the instructor’s approach as a model, each student will be responsible for presenting and analyzing one building of his or her choice and making a rebuttal to two other buildings presented by the other students. Therefore, each building reviewed will have 3 presenters. However, all students will need to review the material (provided by the presenting student) and be prepared to discuss the qualities of all the building in class. The emphasis of the analysis will be on the projection of a system of operations that gives a possible explanation for the forms of the building. The subtext of the class is to discover analytical systems that can be used as generators of architectural form in the students’ own work.

Prereq: Enrollment in Arch major or permission of instructor.

3 credit hours
ARCH 5290: The Digital Architectural Rendering as Symbolic Form: A research Seminar

Kipnis

In 1927, Erwin Panofsky published his landmark essay, “Perspective as Symbolic Form” in which he puts forward the argument that that the system of pictorial perspective that had dominated Western Art history since the 15th century constituted an ideologically determined instrument of cultural construction rather than an objectively valid system for faithfully representing the structure of human vision, the position held by E. H. Gombrich and others. At the core of Panofsky’s argument was the claim that representation always occurred within and in the service of a cultural world view and, more importantly, that representation was an active participant in the evolution of and construction of new world views. In short, according to Panofsky’s argument, we see and shape our world only with our mind, never with our eye.

The seminar will begin with a thorough study of Panofsky’s text and related studies on representation as symbolic form in the writings of Robin Evans, Stan Allen and others. Then we will undertake to research the groundwork for considering the digital rendering in similar terms by examining the philosophical underpinnings of the cultural history of realism and hyperrealism in painting, film and photography; and the technological and application history of the digital rendering in architecture. Each student will have independent topics of research, and these will be directed toward the goal of the class to construct a timeline of key developments, archive seminal achievements, an assessment of the state of the art and a set of conjectures on the possible futures of the digital rendering in architecture.

Prereq: Enrollment in Arch major or permission of instructor.

3 credit hours

ARCH 5590: Information Territories: The Geography of Networks, Processes and Flows

Lewis

This seminar will investigate the topic of networks as a tactic for designing the contemporary urban landscape. The territory established by networks contradicts the traditional image of the city. Rather than rely on significant architectural objects or highly figured spaces, networks are characterized by flexible, indeterminate geographies governed by the transfer of information, services, mobile capital, transportation, and economic exchange. This seminar will investigate how these information infrastructures invigorate urbanization with instrumental and operational agency while “avoiding the twin cul-de-sacs of historicism and typology.”

Each student in the seminar will research the topic of information territories with three tools: design, writing, and research. Students will situate geographic concepts and theories of networks as defined by post-modern urbanists (Koolhaas, Moshen, Allen, Corner, Berger, et al.) through readings, short papers and class discussions. Simultaneously, and most significantly, students will transform the theoretical
discourse of the seminar through an original research project that draws, maps and diagrams a selected
network relevant to the Midwest. Using current strategies of representing information, students will
experiment with representing information territories by focusing on maps over plans, the flow of matter
over subjects, and the concept of environment over that of space-time.

Prereq: Enrollment in major within the Knowlton School of Architecture, or permission of instructor.

3 credit hours