

# AMERICAN ARCHITECTURE AND URBANISM

AMST 197, YALE UNIVERSITY, SPRING 2019

These are lecture notes for AMST 197b, “American Architecture and Urbanism,” taught by Elihu Rubin at Yale University during the spring of 2019. These notes are not official, and have not been proofread by the instructor for the course. They live in my lecture notes respository at

<https://github.com/jopetty/lecture-notes/tree/master/amst-197>.

If you find any errors, please open a bug report describing the error and label it with the course identifier, or open a pull request so I can correct it.

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“This Land is Your Land”

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Sharon Jones and the Dap Kings

The course covers a wide field of different themes, including:

- Buildings
- Architects and Designs
- Urban Development
- City Planning
- The Production of Space
- Cultural Landscapes
- Storytelling

### *Knights of Columbus Tower*

Rather stark example of Brutalism, or maybe Modernism. Looks a lot like Kline Biology Tower. The pillars are made of brick and the steel structural beams extend outside of the habitable space. The stairways, bathroom, and storage areas are moved to the pillars to keep the habitable center open. Made of poured concrete with slip forms. Built for the Knights of Columbus, a Catholic fraternal organization (like the Masons or the Elks) and an insurance organization (mostly for Catholics who were being discriminated against). This building wasn't the first occupant of the land — much of the city was torn down to create it during periods of Urban Renewal. Much of the U.S. is still in the hangover of urban renewal. The way the buildings are design inform and are informed by the transportation infrastructure adjacent to the them. How do these buildings play into the division of neighborhoods and gentrification?

### *Michigan Central Station*

Built by the same architects as Grand Central Station, now serves as a ruin in Detroit. Ironically, financed by the money which came from the industry which destroyed trains, and then the building was sold to Ford as their center for electric car development. Built in the Beaux-Arts Classical style.

### *Themes*

1. **The Social Production of Architecture** — Who besides the architect is responsible for the buildings? Are the makers homogenous? How can we enrich the stories we tell and diversify the cast of characters who tell it?
2. **Work** — What is the function of the building? How are buildings designed for work?

3. **Dwelling** — How are places constructed for living? How are they changed with time? How are communal dwellings different from private dwellings?
4. **Mobility and Infrastructure** — How are buildings connected from one another? How are they accessed? How does infrastructure influence buildings and how do buildings influence infrastructure?
5. **Expression** — How do buildings take on individual identities? How do buildings fit together to form a pattern? How do buildings reflect the scale and pattern of human life?