THE UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS AT AUSTIN

SCHOOL OF ARCHITECTURE,

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ARCHITECTURAL CRITICISM SEMINAR

ARC 386M, ARC 350R

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COURSE DESCRIPTION AND SYLLABUS

INTRODUCTION

Architectural criticism is as much an act of creation as architectural design. In a way, it reverses the design process by viewing the designed project, analyzing its parts and deducing the underlying intentions. The deduction of the underlying intentions is necessary especially in cases in which there is little communication from the designers with regard to their underlying intentions. With underlying intentions are meant all intentions including social and cultural ones. Frequently, architects express goals regarding cultural and ethical value systems, economic costs, technological performance, or they speak generally about the design's generating metaphors. Architectural criticism should be able to assess to which extent these aspects of value systems, costs, technological performance, generating metaphors etc. are factually realized in the designs. Beyond this comparative assessment, architectural criticism should also uncover the unspoken, suppressed or even unintentional qualities of a design. Architectural criticism is thus concerned with the context in which intentions are effectively translated into reality or not. As such architectural criticism is concerned with the degree of truth in the realization of conceptions, intentions, propositions, or theses into objectively analyzable, factual, physical materialization. Thus, while the individual act of architectural criticism concerns itself with a singular instance of design from conception to realization, a collection of architectural criticism reveals the ethical stance that this body of built work both constitutes as well as represents.

Architectural criticism is essential in enabling architects and the general public to evaluate architectural designs, preferably ahead of their realization. In the context of the broader debate on sustainability, buildings need to achieve a long lasting overall design quality which includes the broadest level of public acceptance as a means by which interest, care and maintenance become cultivated. Architectural criticism thus requires both a comprehensive approach to the political and physical context, design conception and material realization of a built phenomenon as well as a precise, concise, incisive analysis of these issues themselves. The seminar in architectural criticism introduces students to a method that encompasses description, analysis and evaluation. Architectural criticism, at its best, is neither exhaustive nor should it be exhausting, but an act of synthesis, thus paralleling the act of design.

The class meets according to mutually convenient times (twice a week during the presence of the instructor, see calendar attached).

OVERVIEW OF CLASSES AND ASSIGNMENTS

The seminar is structured in five components of classes and assignments. In part, these overlap in time and space.

1 Introductory presentation of a theory of architecture and a methodology of criticism

2 Case studies exemplifying the method

3 Task 1: Summaries and critical commentaries

4 Task 2: Student Architecture Award, Preparation of Award Ceremony for the end of the semester

5 Task 3: Student seminar presentation, preparation and submission of final paper

All of the three tasks involve an analysis of value systems requiring each student to individually pursue their own research (independent inquiry), laying out a specific thesis regarding the analyzed subject with a set of reasoned and deductive statements (qualitative reasoning), synthesized in a clearly structured verbal (seminar presentations) and written discourse (writing: summaries, critical commentaries and term paper).

1 Introductory presentation of a theory of architecture and a methodology of criticism

The first two seminar presentations will provide an outline for an architectural theory and for an architectural criticism. This outline may be adopted and adapted by students of the seminar for their own subsequent critical presentations of a single building of their choice to the class.

2 Case studies exemplifying the method

A number of in-depth case studies will be presented reviewing one building per seminar presentation. Each building will be presented in terms of the architect's ideas, cultural and ethical value systems. Each presentation will analyze the relation between ideas/concepts, cultural and ethical value systems with their factually recognizable spatial and formal, compositional and material embodiment.

3 Task 1 : Summaries and critical commentaries

Each student chooses a recent volume of a journal/newspaper/blog. A volume constitutes the output of one year. Gather information on this medium (readership, circulation, etc.). Select two essays from this single medium, the first should be an architectural criticism, the second should be a more general essay,

for example on issues of the environment, sustainability, historical context, design or technical innovation, etc.

Prepare a short summary of no more than one single double-spaced typewritten page; this is to be verbally presented to the seminar and submitted for short comments. Then, prepare an evaluation and criticism of each text. Following questions should be answered:

. a How does the author describe the building/the architecture/the issue? What are the means by which this description is undertaken? Is there an implicit/explicit descriptive/analytical system? Is the author using common metaphors?

. b How does the author evaluate the subject? What is the author's value system?

. c How critical is the author? Is the author repeating the designer's statements? Is the author pointing out other aspects, that relativize or even contradict the designer's statements?

. d Do you agree with every reflection of the author?

. e What has the author omitted or neglected?

. f What would you have said in the author's place?

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4 Task 2: Student Architecture Award

As there have not been architectural criticism seminars in the last three years, there will be four UT Austin Student Architecture Awards for the years from 2015 to 2018 given to the best buildings completed in the previous four calendar years (cut-off dates 1 Nov – 31 Oct as dates of completion) in the Austin area.

The students in the seminar constitute the jury. If there is an odd number, then everyone has one vote. If there is an even number, the jury decides who has a casting vote in case of a tie. The jury also elects a secretary and a chair.

There is a selection process (long list, short list, probably a total of three rounds of voting) and visits to the short-listed buildings (ideally 3 buildings per year).

At the end of the semester, there is a reception with an official award presentation. This involves the design of a poster announcing the event, invitation of the clients and architects of the short-listed buildings, a video or PowerPoint presentation of images of the buildings visited, laudatory speeches and the presentation of the four bronze plaques that may be fixed to the winning buildings.

5 Task 3: Student presentations and preparation and submission of final paper

For the final task, each student selects one building that she or he has visited. There is no restriction on the age of the building, however, important data such as statements by the client and the architect on the reasons for the building, its conception, are more likely to be found with more recent buildings.

Each student is to prepare a seminar presentation lasting 30 min (maximum 45 images). The seminar presentations should include verbal/written description, evaluation and criticism of the selected building.

The criticism may also be in the manner of redesigning aspects of the building in question, using Photoshop, etc. as a presentation tool. The seminar's focus is on the in-depth analysis of individual pieces of architecture, ultimately allowing for the discussion to broaden to other buildings and socio- cultural issues.

1.0 Introduction: The origin of architecture

Architecture has its origin in the division of responsibilities between the commissioning, designing, supervising and constructing of a building. Before, or in the absence of the division of responsibilities, that is, when the act of commissioning, designing and constructing are executed by a single person, there is no need to externalize any thoughts or decisions. From mind to eye to hand, all actions are contained without any communication.

As soon as there is a division in responsibilities in the process of constructing a building, decisions about the constitution and representation of that building have to be communicated between the commissioner and the executers, the latter may include a person or group of persons in charge of giving shape to the commissioner's preferences. An exchange of ideas takes place that requires premeditation and reflection of these ideas. Premeditation and reflection call for the mental act of conjecture or projection. Ideas are thought out in the mind, a design is construed ahead of the act of construction, a building is projected into another medium prior to the real, practical process of construction: an abstract or theoretical process of ordering a series of decisions regarding the preferences of the commissioner are undertaken to give shape to the latter's commission.

The larger and more complex a building is, as compared to for example a hut or house, the more likely its realization presupposes the division of responsibility so as to ensure that such a complex building may be realized in a given period of time.

With size and degree of complexity of a building come aspects of its practical realization that cannot be adequately accounted for without preparation.

1.1 The need for architectural criticism

If the architectural profession is honest with itself, it will acknowledge that only a small proportion of the entire building activity results in structures that are of an appropriate level of design quality. This is true regardless where one might look.

Architectural criticism is needed so that proportion of appropriate design quality can be significantly raised, regardless whether the design quality is related to large complexes, individual buildings or work to existing structures. Architectural criticism is necessary because, if the vast majority of the urban complexes and buildings lacks the appropriate level of design quality, then these structures also lack the sympathy and care needed to ensure their long life; and thus, they are more likely to be demolished within a few decades of their completion. We can see this happening all around us to buildings of the immediate post-Second World War years.

Urban design and individual buildings of an inappropriate or even poor level of design quality are a burden on society and the environment. They are the underlying cause for individual disaffection from society. They are part of the cause for the collective disruption in the fabric of socio- ecosystems. Their early and untimely demise puts a severe strain on resources such as human labor, finances and materials. Inappropriately and poorly designed urban fabric and buildings are therefore not sustainable. Architectural criticism is thus more urgently needed than ever before.

Ideally, just as urban and architectural design projects are submitted to planning and building departments for technical and legal scrutiny, every building activity should be scrutinized for its appropriate level of design quality. Better to scrutinize, criticize and improve a proposed design over and over again than to build badly once. However, there are severe constraints on the practice of effective architectural criticism. Particularly in commissioned criticism such as for professional journals or monographs, criticism is often unable to voice its real concerns. Architects or clients, whose buildings receive or are threatened to receive a poor critical evaluation, often threaten editors of journals with future retaliation, not to mention legal redress. Architectural criticism is also hampered by the false respect professionals pay to each other for fear of either becoming the recipient of poor critical evaluation oneself or involving oneself in potential libel cases. Even close colleagues shy away from giving their honest evaluation of their friends' work for fear of upsetting them with potentially hurtful truths. It seems that the most frank architectural criticism is expressed in schools of architecture, sometimes in competition or award juries, the latter behind closed doors. All of these constraints and difficulties reduce the likelihood that a design for a new urban quarter or an individual building can attain the best possible level of design quality.

The unwillingness of many design professionals to face these facts is a cause for the lack of standing of the design profession amongst the public. It is high time that we have a more strongly regulated design profession that ensures that urban design and buildings are of the best possible level of design quality. These are central issues of professional ethics that each architectural critic has to confront and answer for herself/himself. As for any other act of criticism, the most important value that a critic has to uphold is that of an intellectual independence so as to establish an unassailable ethical position.

Besides this argument, it is imperative that the design profession does not once again allow the technocrats to control the debate on sustainability, as sustainability is not achievable through technical means alone. The modern movement has shown that a one-sided reliance on economic rationalism has led to disaster in the urban design and architectural fields. For this reason, the design profession must resist the selective occupation of the issue of sustainability by technocrats and large corporations. This is only achievable if the design profession demonstrates that design quality is indivisible: that design quality is dependent on as much the aesthetic as the technical aspects.

From this point of view, the need to specify what architectural criticism is, how it is constituted and that it is supported by a wide majority of the design profession, becomes a criticial matter for the survival of the design profession.

1.2 The purposes of architectural criticism

Architectural criticism serves a variety of purposes. These can be defined firstly in terms of a number of points of view, secondly by the different modes of understanding of the object under discussion, and thirdly by pointing to the specific media used in the communication of the architectural criticism and in turn by identifying the audiences that are thus constituted by the specific medium. These can stated as follows:

From the point of view:

1 the designing architect as critic
2 the professional critic, that is, non-architect or at least, not actively designing architect, such as a member of a jury for a competition or award, or author of texts for blogs, journals and newspapers; or as a design teacher
3 the client, the owner, the investor
4 the user
5 the member of the general public
6 the government representatives such as politicians, members of a building consent authority, conservation department, etc.

observing the object:

1 as a complete, static, autonomous object
2 as an object that is part of a local, regional, global (physical) context
3 as an object within a local, regional, global discourse
4 as an object with a range of qualities and consisting of a number of elements which themselves are part of a physical context and/or global discourse
5 as an open-ended, dynamic, changing phenomenon that is subject to transformations, adaptation, changes in use, demolition, recycling
6 as a catalyst or vehicle for associative discourse

using the medium:

1 of the spoken word in direct speech during academic, professional or other evaluative juries
2 of the spoken word in telecommunication (radio, tv, web sites, etc.)
3 of the written word in printed media (weblogs, newspapers, journals, books, etc.)
4 of the built idea, that is, architectural criticism through the built fact

addressing the criticism at the following:

1 oneself as the designer
2 other designers, including colleagues, students
3 other clients, owners, investors
4 users
5 those interested in architectural criticism, including a lay public
6 other politicians, public administrators, etc.

Architectural criticism can therefore be multidirectional, multivalent, if not to say diffuse. Of course, it can also be very precisely rooted in a conscious critical source, mediated through a specific design phenomenon and directed towards a precisely circumscribed recipient or audience. Given the often raised doubt about the possibility of "objective" criticism, the fact that it is possible to specify the different

purposes of architectural criticism, that it is possible to identify the point of view, the way the design phenomenon is seen, in which medium the communication takes place and to whom the message is to be conveyed, seems to me to provide the analytical basis for deconstructed and therefore objective criticism.

In this connection, it is possible to categorize architectural theories. Most of the earlier architectural theories were developed by architects for the design profession (eg. Vitruvius, Alberti, Perrault, Schinkel, Guadet, van der Laan et al). In these theories, the way architecture is defined and discussed is seen from the point of view of the designing architect. The thrust of the theory is directed towards the act of design, the act of construction and the resultant's effect, where the notion of effect is not to be understood as the more modern term of "reception", but rather the more traditional aesthetic dimension of sensory effect.

The questions at the forefront of architectural theoreticians' considerations have traditionally been: How does design come about? What are its constituent elements? Which effects do certain compositions have?

More recently, architectural theoreticians, that is, in general non-practicing architects or art historians writing in the field of architecture as well as other writers on architecture, have also sought to establish theories of architecture, with greater or lesser impact on actual practice. The reasons for this greater or lesser impact on actual practice lies in the diffuse nature of communication, the great number of media, the widespread dissemination of ideas and the absence of a consensus on a basis for a general architectural theory, fueled particularly by the much coveted desire by architects to maintain design freedom, or to put it more clearly, the fiercely defended right to free and individual design expression.

The fact that these two aspects – the existence of a consensus on a basis for a general architectural theory and the freedom of self-expression – are not co-dependent, does not prevent many architects or architectural students from vehemently objecting to any notion of a general architectural theory.

However, it does appear to me to be possible to deduce a general architectural theory that is able to provide the basis for a broadly comprehensible method of architectural criticism. Therefore, to lay the foundations for this method, here is a definition of what architecture is.

1.3 A definition of architecture

Architecture, as distinct from building, is consciously concerned with the material constitution and associated representation of a set of cultural, social and ethical values in forms and spaces for a specific need, a given site and culture.

The act of building, however, or more precisely put, the vernacular act of building, is concerned with the sub-conscious representation of a set of values within an unquestioned repetition of forms and spaces.

These intangible values find their translation in an equivalent set of morphological qualities, including those of an aesthetic dimension.

Is architecture an art or a science, a scientific art or none of these? Architecture is an autonomous form of knowledge with its own language and discourse.

By means of its material and spatial components and compositions it constitutes its own compositional logic or language.

The discourse in architecture is open to universal comprehension as to its basic expression regardless of prior conscious knowledge on behalf of the observer. Thus, architecture is closer to music in its capacity to be meaningful and to be universally understood. Beyond meaning, architecture has the ability to create reality through its own elements. Distinct from the other arts, it relies on its effectiveness and meaningfulness on its material and spatial presence, thereby establishing ambience and character.

Architecture does not need to rely on words, though these are often used to give it value; it does not need literary references, though some architects and critics seem to depend on these to claim values and qualities for a design that it may or may not possess; it does not need any other form of legitimation, though this is often dominant in the public media. There is clearly a discourse about architecture, which is in written or spoken form. That is to say, there is a linguistic aspect to architecture.

Every architectural element contains its own history of the knowledge about that element. That is to say, besides the linguistic aspect, there is an epistemological aspect to architecture, relating to all of its morphological elements. However, above all, architecture exists in its own right, it is constituted by means of its own morphological elements. Architecture is able to carry meaning primarily through these elements, although other objects have made an appearance within architecture such as cladding materials, graphics and technological components.

It is this ontological dimension that gives architecture the possibility of universal comprehensibility. From this, architecture derives its credibility: material presence and constructive clarity are the ontological foundations of architecture.

1.4 Architectural values

Without entering into a differentiated philosophical discussion of value, the use of the term "value" is understood as the intention, the desire or the volition behind the realization of an architectural design. I would suggest that in any given architectural design it is possible to trace values that are preferred by clients and architects.

By embracing a value, a judgment is being made, amongst others, in ethical, ideological, social, or aesthetic domains. Values themselves express what individuals see as ethically better or worse. In architecture, the values of simplicity or honesty, the preference for either industrial production or traditional craftsmanship, the importance placed either in social accessibility or in exclusion, may pervade the one or the other design consideration: from siting to detail.

In aesthetic terms, we find the sublime and the picturesque as recurring values throughout.

1.5 Architectural qualities and their assessment criteria

The way the word "quality" is used, it seems that it already stands for something exceptional, excellent. However, from a more general point view, quality is an inherent characteristic, no more and no less. Every phenomenon has different qualities. A quality is an element in the identity of a phenomenon. It assists in defining or distinguishing a phenomenon in contrast to other phenomena. But it is not by itself already a mark of outstanding distinction: "quality time" and "quality architecture": these are by no means synonymous with appropriate or good quality. There is good and bad design quality, there are architectural elements that are more appropriate than others in terms of the underlying conception of a design, in terms of the relationship to an immediate or greater context.

The notion of quality is merely an index of a level of conceptual and compositional resolution measured against explicit criteria. The setting of these criteria can be defined from three fundamentally different points of view:

First, as observers, we may each bring our own, more or less personal set of criteria; that is the subjective perspective.

Second, we might equally set aside our own criteria, or not have any particular set of preferences, and allow our sensibilities to compare one phenomenon in the context of similar phenomena, and therefore come to an assessment as to the differences and identities that constitute the preferred version. It is like trying an unknown recipe in different versions. We might refer to this as the discursive perspective.

Third, we might fix our view on the ontological dimension of a piece of architecture and try to understand

the morphology on its own account; this we could call the immanent perspective.

By differentiating these perspectives, we are able to make explicit personal approaches and preferences, but also acknowledge the existence of an immanent and ontological aspect of architecture.

Making explicit these three perspectives helps to overcome the reservation that "beauty lies in the eyes of the beholder" only, and that there can never be any common ground in the qualitative comparison of anything. Architectural designs can be assessed, can be criticized with regard to their components as well as the resulting overall effect.

1.6 Which architectural values and qualities?

Which values or qualities might be sought in any single instance of architecture and how would these be best achieved?

The qualities that architecture might embody range from the determination of daily habits, social values, ethical beliefs, personal comfort, collective memories, privacy, monumentality, the sublime, flexibility, resource efficiency, durability, etc.

By embodying certain values or qualities, a building expresses a will, an intention. To a certain extent, by no means in all instances, are these values and qualities impressed upon the building's users. The process of impressing these values ranges from the active and instantaneous perception of the users to their slow, subliminal, subcutaneous absorption, the ingestion by habit.

In this way, an architectural design attains a distinctive quality or set of qualities, qualities that determine a cultural identity through the material embodiment of a discursive idea.

2.0 A general definition of architecture as the basis for a descriptive method

The general definition of architecture proposed here concerns itself with the conception, intention, composition, meaning, effect, character and value of built phenomena.

For this purpose, it is important to begin with the description of the visible and invisible elements of architecture, that is, it is necessary to derive a descriptive method, much as it exists for most other human communication systems. The visible elements of architecture are the spaces and forms, the invisible aspects include the quality and meaning of the individual elements as well as that of the overall composition. Therefore, here is the implication that any built phenomenon has a material and spatial presence and that it stands for something else, that is, that it embodies an intention. Thus, this definition of architecture presupposes that architecture is a form of communication, a language system.

On this basis, a descriptive method is developed that consists of five axioms: the first deals with the criteria for identifying a phenomenon in the first place. the second deals with the nature and structural relations between identified elements. the third deals with the definition of elements and their relation to a whole. the fourth deals with the idea of the concatenation of a whole of one morphological category to the part of another morphological category. the fifth deals with the relations of part to the whole and content to form. The first two axioms are adaptations of Paul Frankl's work published in *Das System Kunstwissenschaft (*1938).

2.1 The Identifiability of a phenomenon: Identity, Differentiation, Definition

The first axiom establishes the morphological basis that enables the identification of a phenomenon in the first place.

2.1.1 The identifiability of a phenomenon

Only through the relative isolation of a phenomenon can it be identified. Thus, a phenomenon has identity if it differs from the ground against which it is experienced (see for instance the discussion of figure-ground in Gestalt theory). A dot in space is an instance of a figure against a ground.

2.1.2 Differentiation

Phenomena can also be identified through the act of differentiation where no dominant and subdominant phenomena are involved. Thus, the meeting of two co-planar surfaces along a visible line is an instance of the act of differentiation.

2.1.3 Definition

The observed phenomenon does not need to be sharply outlined, as described in the previous example. An gentle undulation in a plane, even though there is no rupture in the surface of the plane, can again be identifiable as a figure through its subtle definition from the ground.

2.2 Morphological variables

The second axiom establishes the abstract structural relationships of phenomena to each other, described as a resultant. Five variables can be identified to adequately describe the range of abstract structural relations which figures would have vis-à-vis one another:

definitiveness heterogeneity/homogeneity Distributiveness/arrangement iterativeness/rhythmic seriality proportion/scalar relation

2.2.1 Definitiveness

The degree to which figures in themselves are more or less clearly defined with regard to the ground is covered by the first axiom. Given that figures are at all defined, the first morphological variable describes the degree of definition vis-à-vis other figures and therefore the degree of clarity of the resultant structure or pattern.

2.2.2 Heterogeneity/homogeneity

The figures of a structure or a pattern may not all be identical. In the case that they are, the resultant is a homogeneous abstract structure. In the case that all figures of a structure only occur once, the resultant is a heterogeneous abstract structure. Mixtures exist between these two poles.

2.2.3 Distributiveness/Arrangement

Figures of a structure or pattern have neighborly relationships with each other. Thus, there may be "structures" without any clear neighborly relationships at all, these structures are freely distributed. Figures can be found to be arranged in such a way that they always have two neighbors, one on either side, these structures are closed series. An open series is one in which two figures only have one neighbor, namely the first and the last in the series.

Structures or Patterns in which with at least one figure is in the neighborhood of three other figures are grouped. These groups can be open, if the other three figures do not form a series themselves, or closed, if they form a series.

2.2.4 Iterativeness/Rhythmic Seriality

Structures and patterns consisting of different figures may constitute recurring sub-patterns, which in turn establish an orderly description that is independent of the variety of figures that constitutes the sub-pattern or the overall pattern. Thus a pattern "a b a b a" is identical in its iterativeness or rhythmic seriality to "abc yx abc xy abc".

2.2.5 Proportion/Scalar Relation

Without defining absolute dimensions, figures within a structure or pattern may stand in scalar relation to each other. Figure "x" is a proportional factor of "y".

2.3 Morphological elements

The third axiom relates concepts and their labels to an abstract geometric typology of forms and spaces. The abstract geometric types are the point, line, plane, cube. These basic types find their equivalents in each of the five morphological categories.

While of course the relationships between a formal or spatial element, its concept and its label, cannot be pinned down with absolute precision, research shows that there are domains of certainty that allow forms and spaces to be more clearly associated with their concepts and labels (ills.). These relationships are relatively straight forward, if not to say banal. However, the graphic representation serves as a reminder, that forms and spaces, concepts and words ought to be used carefully and with precision.

On this analytical basis, it is possible to establish a thesaurus of elements, relating their cognitive labels to their geometric-proportional definitions.

Inasmuch geometric axioms begin with points, lines, planes and volumes, the abstract geometric transposition to the realm of building gives the equivalents as the block, the bar, the slab and the cube. From this, a range of phenomena in the realm of building can be defined in abstract geometric terms.

2.4 Morphological categories

The descriptive method and its precise application is the foundation for a close and accurate analysis of designed phenomena. Obviously it is insufficient to merely describe individual elements. Of fundamental importance in architecture is the interrelationship of different elements, elements of different orders of magnitude and further, relationships to phenomena and value systems outside the architectural phenomenon itself (ill.). Based on the constitution of a built phenomenon itself, there is a constituent

relationship between an element and its constituting parts.

The fourth axiom adopts the notion of part to whole to the phenomena of building. The notion of part to whole, the concatenation of elements of a lower category to elements of a higher category:

- constructional
- tectonic
- compartmental
- configurational
- contextual

Using the notion of part to whole, of parts forming other wholes, it is possible to understand the conceptual structuring of the phenomenon of building into five morphological categories. From construction, tectonic, compartmental, configurational to contextual, each category contains elements, that are constituted from elements from previous categories (with the exception of the category of construction).

Given this, there are interpolating relationships between elements of the same order and those of a higher morphological category. For example, by placing bricks together – elements of the constructional morphological category – it is possible to form an element of the next morphological category, namely that of a tectonic category such as a wall (ill.). In turn, placing a number of walls together, it is possible to create an enclosure, or a compartment.

Each morphological category interfaces with social, iconographic, scientific, economic, material, aesthetic domains of reality. Thus, for instance, the constructional category engages issues of social organization, economy, statics, and building physiology.

Taking the use of bricks in a building allows an understanding of the knowledge required in its production, transport and laying; the origins of the clay and its excavation and thus the economic and legal dimensions to the process of extraction; the human and energy resources necessary to produce, deliver and assemble the bricks, means of production; the building physiological performance of bricks, their levels of toxicity and their ability to be recycled; the sensuous dimension of bricks, etc.

This constructional element can be compared across time and space with any other constructional material such as limestone blocks, titanium sheeting, Corten panels, triple glazing panels, etc. Each use of a material allows an architectural critical statement to be made, given the understanding of the context and the points of view of the evaluation criteria.

In the morphological category of construction, for example, existing research on resource flows as relating to energy and emissions can be easily integrated, as can be standard economic models of construction cost.

In the morphological category of compartments the analysis of abstract planimetric relationships in terms

of topological adjacencies and their social values which they embed can be carried out (Hillier & Hanson, 1984).

In short, the differentiation of building phenomena into these five morphological categories initially provides for the clear inclusive structuring of other, existing particular analytical models or future research and ultimately allows for the review of the various operative analytical criteria.

2.5 Relations as rhetorical figures

The fifth axiom relates compositional figures and conceptual figures to rhetorical figures (figures of diction and figures of thought). The notions of form to content and part to whole.

The theory, imitation and practice of rhetoric sets out terms by which to understand the art of communication. Rhetorical analysis structures communicative phenomena into

the character of discourse (eg. solemn/stately, matter-of-fact, relaxed) leading to the notion of character of reality (see Dagobert Frey, "Realitätscharakter" (Engl. character of reality)) the consistency of discourse (eg. appropriate choice of elements within the composition, conscious or unconscious errors in composition - i.e. "shabby chic" compositional figures (see for instance *Ad C. Herennium*) for instance: duplication, repetition, inversion, suppression, substitution, elimination conceptual figures, for instance metaphor, metonymy, onomatopoeia, synecdoche, allegory

While not every term used in rhetorical analysis is applicable to the field of building, there are many rhetorical figures which shed clarifying light on the question of the judicious choice of ideas, communicative elements and their appropriate composition.

In this regard, it is of interest to look more closely at the relationship of parts to a whole. Such compositional relationships are comparable to some rhetorical devices. For example, looking at the stone column with flutes at the Temple of Hatshepsut, Deir-el-Bahari, we can identify the components of the shaft, the individual drums of varying heights. The procurement of stones, whether during the times of the Egyptian Pharaohs or ancient Greeks, probably did not allow for pieces of identical volume. Thus, their heights vary. The faceting of the drums and thus of the column shaft or even more so the carving of flutes reduce the visual impact of the irregular occurrence of horizontal joints. Each shaft appears uniform, of a single shape. Thus, one could speak of the individual constituting elements of the shaft, each drum, being suppressed in their presence at the benefit of the tectonic form of the column shaft. The rhetorical act is that of suppression of the part in favor of the whole.

Similarly, in more recent times, the use of a single material or color for an entire building is often intended to strengthen the visual presence of the whole, while occasionally allowing the constituting parts to

remain visible, even if these are very small indeed (Kunstmuseum Liechtenstein). Color, Joint lines, the flush set glazing, the presence of the constituting components may altogether be selected and detailed in such a way as to maximize the presence of the resultant whole, and conversely, require the minimization of the presence of the parts. In this sense, the rhetorical act requires a maximum effort at creating what is otherwise known as minimalism.

This relationship between visible – the maximized presence of the whole – and invisible aspects of the architecture – the effort that has been expended on the building's design – is equally open to architectural criticism and analysis.

3.0 Architectural criticism

While any form of analysis can be thorough, complete and exhaustive (in both senses of the word), with practice and experience come increased precision with regard to the identification of key issues in a design. Practice and experience allow the architectural critic to establish a data base, an instrument, so to speak, with which to probe a design in question. However, this may not always lead to satisfactory conclusions.

Returning to the issue of architectural qualities and their assessment criteria, three points of view were identified, that each gave rise to their own assessment criteria: the subjective, the discursive and the immanent. Practice and experience may sharpen the architectural critic's mind, but they should not prevent the critic from superficially glancing at a design in question; that would leave out the immanent dimension.

As there are developments in other fields, so there are new architectural concepts and intentions which may find an unusual set of forms and spaces at a smaller or larger scale of realization. Altogether, a design may offer unfamiliar elements for analysis and criticism, thereby calling for more precise interrogation of the visible and invisible elements of an architecture.

3.1 Inductive understanding

Some of the possible outcomes of the in-depth investigation of the architectural object itself might be the anticipation, the presaging, the sensing of a distinct idea of a compositional order. At the simplest level, such anticipation happens when one stands in a space, whose extent cannot be fully seen, but following sources of light, acoustics or the spatial envelope over a visual barrier, as in Baroque churches. The eye follows the curves of the surfaces, notices indirect light sources, adds one set of observed phenomena to another and conjectures into the void further suspected, anticipated, presaged envelopes, structures and forms. Here the senses follow inductive reasoning. At best, the result is an understanding of the built phenomenon in one's mind that closely models the actuality and even establishes the intentions, or the ideation behind the building's design.

3.2 Deductive understanding

Conversely, there is the reverse process of analysis or reasoning: after having visited and/or used a building, having studied its spatial and formal composition, its underlying conception may have become clear to the critical observer. Without necessarily having noticed every detail, the broad gestures in a piece of architecture have become obvious, allowing a process of deductive reasoning to take place.

Thus, for example, the Villa Müller in Prague by Adolf Loos reveals itself as an overlapping of a tri- partite, static, Palladian syntax with a dynamic, rotational, spatial movement à la Loos. The Villa Müller thus stands as the culmination of a research in bourgeois central European domestic architecture. Or, another example, the Alvar Aalto's Cultural Centre in Wolfsburg can be understood as a facility to accompany an individual's artistic and cultural development from the days as a young child attending public readings to adult education classes, including the exploration of the fine arts, the latter as the apogee of Aalto's understanding of civilization's highest point of development.

Both the Villa Müller and Wolfsburg's Cultural Centre can therefore be thoroughly analyzed and criticized without an exhaustive investigation into every single detail, even though that would also be an educational experience.

3.3 Synthetic criticism

The practical reality of architectural criticism sees a combination of all of these aforementioned points of view and paths of reasoning. Each of us will always maintain something of a personal, subjective position. And then, some of us find it easier to act as neutral observers of phenomena. The discursive point of view, the dispassionate or Kantian disinterested approach to criticism is more readily taken with advanced age and experience, not to speak of disillusionment. What does appear to be lacking a lot of the times in architectural criticism is the close and thorough look at an architectural design itself.

Most architectural critics find the personal experience of a building to be indispensable. Many things become visible that in the images and drawings remain hidden or unexpressed. What appears simple and even banal in some two-dimensional drawings in reality might turn out as a rich, complex three-dimensional statement. The opposite is equally true.

In the course of these visits and in the process of looking at other documents, reading or listening to other people's statements, a complete understanding of a building may not have been reached, but one might follow inductive reasoning to pose questions that lead further to the rendering of a complete picture. Finally, when the critic believes to be close to an understanding, a thesis is posed about the piece of architecture in question, thereby setting off a series of dialectic or deductive reasoning that may ultimately culminate in a synthetic understanding of the work of architecture.

One might say that a critic has grasped as much as is humanly possible when the world view the architect designed through the building is understood in the same way by the critic. In other words, the architectural design becomes a means by which the world as it is and as it is intended can be apprehended and comprehended. This understanding, apprehension and comprehension does not mean that the critic shares the same world view of the architect, but shows that the critic has pervaded the

architectural work as a materialized, spatialized conception.

Architectural criticism may then begin: from the design, its meaning to its contribution to the social and cultural reality, architectural criticism will evaluate how an architectural design achieves material, formal and spatial integrity, how it achieves unity between conception and realization, how values and qualities are established, and how, in the final analysis, the design seeks to establish a world view.

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6	Paul Frankl	*Das System der Kunstwissenschaft* Brünn/Leipzig: Rudolf M. Rohrer Verlag, 1938
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11	Niels Luning Prak	*The Language of Architecture* The Hague/Paris: Mouton & Cie, 1968
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14	Bill Hillier and Julienne Hanson	*The Social Logic of Space* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1984
15	Karsten Harries	*The Ethical Function of Architecture*, Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1996
16	Wolfgang Kemp	*Architektur analysieren: Eine Einführung in acht Kapiteln* Munich: Schirmer/Mosel, 2009

Essays

1	Thomas Fisher	"The Death and Life of Great Architectural Criticism", in: http://places.designobserver.com/feature/death-and-life-of-great-architecture-criticism/30448/
2	Paul Goldberger	14th Annual Vincent Scully Prize Lecture: http://www.nbm.org/media/video/scully-prize-paul-goldberger.html

SEMINAR SCHEDULE

30 Aug — Seminar 1: Introduction and overview to the seminar
Theory of Architecture and Criticism of Architecture Assignments I to III
Possible media for review:

Architectural Review	London
ARCHIS	Amsterdam
a&t	Vitoria-Gasteiz
Baumeister	Munich
Bauwelt	Berlin
Blueprint	London
Casabella	Milan
DOMUS	Milan
Metropolis	New York
New York Times	New York

Select one medium, preferably from a recent volume (eg. 2010).
Select one architectural criticism and one theoretical text from last year's production.
Summarize each text. Each summary should be no longer than one page.
Describe, analyze and criticize each text on another single page.
Prepare a 10-minute seminar presentation of your review.

Discussion on assignments 2 and 3:
Task 2: Student Architecture Award
Task 3: a building criticism, seminar presentation and paper.

04 Sep — Seminar 2: A Theory of Architecture and a Descriptive Method Part I
3 Student presentations of text summaries and criticisms
Discussion on the rules for the Student Architecture Award

06 Sep — Seminar 3: A Theory of Architecture and a Descriptive Method Part II
3 Student presentations of text summaries and criticisms

25 Sep — Seminar 4: Building Criticisms I
E.1027, Eileen Gray, Roquebrune-Cap-Martin, 1926-1929
Villa Mairea, Alvar Aalto, Noormarkku 1938-1939
3 Student presentations of text summaries and criticisms
Submission of proposals for the Student Architecture Award long list

27 Sep — Seminar 5: Building Criticisms II
Philharmonie, Hans Scharoun, Berlin 1957-1963
New National Gallery, Ludwig Mies van der Rohe, Berlin 1963-1968
3 Student presentations of text summaries and criticisms
Discussion of proposals for the Student Architecture Award long list
Discussion on the selection process

09 Oct — Seminar 6: Building Criticism III
St. Petri Church, Sigurd Lewerentz, Klippan 1963-1966
Thermal Spa, Peter Zumthor, Vals 1986-1996
Jury Session Long list
Presentation of buildings for the Student Architecture Award,
at least one proposal per student

11 Oct — Seminar 7: Student Architecture Award:

	Jury Session Short List Discussion of each proposal Vote for short-list of buildings Preparation for permission to visit buildings, itinerary, logistics
16 Oct	Seminar 8: Student Architecture Award: Jury Session, discussion, vote Site visit I to shortlisted buildings
18 Oct	Site visit II to shortlisted buildings Jury session, discussion, vote Preparation of laudatory statements and award ceremony Distribution of tasks for award ceremony: PowerPoint/Video
30 Oct	Student presentations I 2 presentations by seminarists of building criticisms Prepare a 30 minute presentation with maximum of 40 images Each presentation is followed by 20 minutes of discussions on the building and presentation
01 Nov	Student presentations II
06 Nov	Student presentations III
08 Nov	Student presentations IV
27 Nov	Student presentations V
29 Nov	Student presentations VI
04 Dec	UT Austin Student Architecture Award Ceremony 5 pm

GRADING POLICY

There are five equal components to the grade:

1 Summaries and critical commentaries
2 Participation in Student Architecture Award
3 Seminar presentation
4 Final paper
5 Regular attendance and participation in the seminar

Grade Descriptions

A/A-: excellent work Project surpasses expectations in terms of inventiveness, appropriateness, verbal and visual ability, conceptual rigor, craft, and personal development. Student pursues concepts and techniques above and beyond what is discussed in class.

B+/B/B-: good work Project is thorough, well researched, diligently pursued, and successfully executed. Student pursues ideas and suggestions presented in class and puts in effort to resolve required projects. Demonstrates potential for excellence.

C+/C/C-: required work Project meets the minimum requirements. Suggestions made in class are not pursued with dedication or rigor. (Note: C- does not meet the minimum grade to be counted toward the student's degree.)

D+/D/D-: poor work Basic skills including graphic skills, model-making skills, verbal clarity or logic of presentation are not level- appropriate. Student does not demonstrate the required design skill and knowledge base.

F: unacceptable work Minimum objectives are not met. Performance is not acceptable. Note that this grade will be assigned with excessive unexcused absences.

X: excused incomplete Given only for legitimate reasons of illness or family emergency. Incomplete assignments are not a cause for assigning this grade. An incomplete is assigned after consultation with the Associate Deans' offices. Incomplete coursework must be completed prior to the beginning of the following semester.

ALL GRADES ARE SUBJECT TO DEDUCTIONS FOR UNEXCUSED ABSENCES, LATE WORK AND LATE ARRIVALS.

Attendance

Attendance is mandatory. Participation is expected. Students with three (3) unexcused absences may be dropped from the course without further notice. The minimum penalty for more than three unexcused absences is a full letter drop in your final grade for the course. Please contact the instructor prior to class if you expect to be late or miss class.

Religious holy days sometimes conflict with class and examination schedules. If you miss an examination, work assignment, or other project due to the observance of a religious holy day you will be given an opportunity to complete the work missed within a reasonable time after the absence. You must notify each of your instructors as far

in advance as possible prior to the classes scheduled on dates you will be absent to observe a religious holy day.

By UT Austin policy, students must notify the instructor of any pending absence for reasons of the observation of religious holidays at least fourteen days prior to the date of observance of a religious holy day. If a student must miss a class, an examination, a work assignment, or a project in order to observe a religious holy day, the student will be given an opportunity to complete the missed work within a reasonable time after the absence.

Disabilities

Students with disabilities may request appropriate academic accommodations from the Division of Diversity and Community Engagement, Services for Students with Disabilities, 471-6259, http://www.utexas.edu/diversity/ddce/ssd/. Students with disabilities requiring special accommodations need to obtain a letter documenting their disabilities from the Services for Students with Disabilities area of the Office of the Dean of Students (471-6259 voice or 471-4641 TTY for users who are deaf or hard of hearing). This letter should be presented to the instructor in each course at the beginning of the semester and accommodations needed should be discussed at that time. Five business days before an exam the student should remind the instructor of any testing accommodations that will be needed.

Academic Dishonesty

UT Honor Code (or statement of ethics) and an explanation or example of what constitutes plagiarism (Link to University Honor Code: http://registrar.utexas.edu/catalogs/gi09- 10/ch01/index.html)

Evacuation in Cases of Emergency on Campus

The following recommendations regarding emergency evacuation from the Office of Campus Safety and Security, 512-471-5767, http://www.utexas.edu/safety/ :

- Occupants of buildings on The University of Texas at Austin campus are required to evacuate buildings when a fire alarm is activated. Alarm activation or announcement requires exiting and assembling outside.
- Familiarize yourself with all exit doors of each classroom and building you may occupy. Remember that the nearest exit door may not be the one you used when entering the building.
- Students requiring assistance in evacuation shall inform their instructor in writing during the first week of class.
- In the event of an evacuation, follow the instruction of faculty or class instructors.
- Do not re-enter a building unless given instructions by the following: Austin Fire Department, The University of Texas at Austin Police Department, or Fire Prevention Services office.
- Behavior Concerns Advice Line (BCAL): 512-232-5050
- Link to information regarding emergency evacuation routes and emergency procedures can be found at: www.utexas.edu/emergency