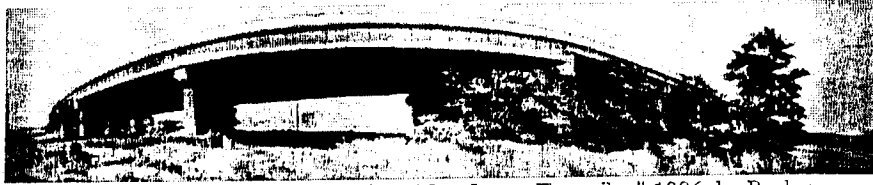


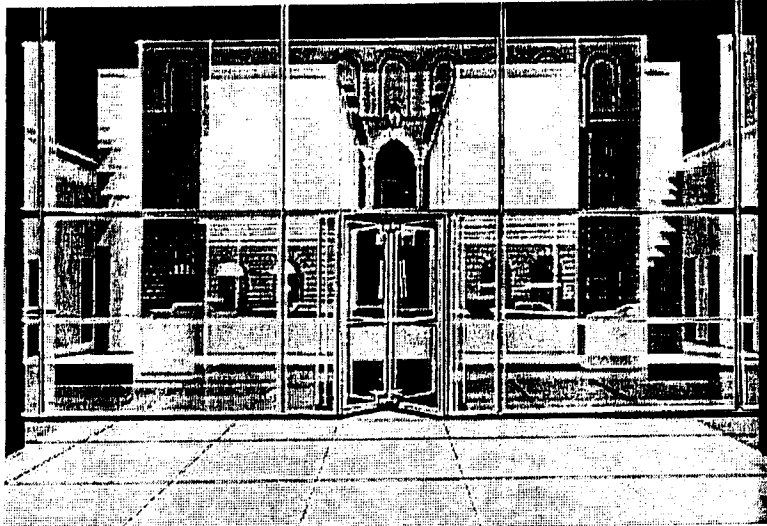
# POSTWAR ARCHITECTURE AND URBANISM IN THE UNITED STATES: DESIGN, POLITICS, AND HISTORY

Fall 2007 T/R 4:35-5:55

Arch 4821BF2/8821BF2



"S-Bend in an Elevated Section of the New Jersey Turnpike," 1996, by Rackstraw Downes (oil on canvas, 18 inches x 94 1/2 inches); collection of the artist



"Seagram Building," from the series *Urban Landscapes 1*, 1972, by Richard Estes (color screenprint, 50.8 by 71.1 cm); Fine Arts Museums of San Francisco

This course looks at the forces – economic, social, political, cultural, and technological – that shaped architecture and cities in the United States after World War II. Suburbs—propelled by highway construction, the GI Bill, and redlining—blossomed and fundamentally altered the demographics of American cities. Modernism, as a guiding paradigm, swept through the practice and discipline of architecture. Corporations, formerly suspicious of modern design, hired firms to build major urban office towers and suburban complexes in a modern style. In the mainstream media and popular culture the architect was presented as a figure of technical and artistic expertise. By the 1970s a reaction to the perceived orthodoxy of modernism helped propel an emerging eclecticism of styles generally regarded as post-modern. We will explore whether this visual diversity represented a significant shift in thought or process. Throughout the semester we will ask how the post-war era is likely to shape the coming generation of architects.

Course readings will draw from architectural history and theory, and interdisciplinary work on American cities. Readings will serve as the basis for weekly discussion and lectures. Grades are weighted as follows: attendance AND participation(50%), in-class presentations (50%).

# ARCHITECTURE 4821: POSTWAR ARCHITECTURE AND URBANISM IN THE UNITED STATES

T/TH 3:35-5:55  
Arch W 260  
Office hours: 9-10 am W

Prof. Benjamin Flowers  
Hinman 329  
[benjamin.flowers@gatech.edu](mailto:benjamin.flowers@gatech.edu)

The purpose of the course is to examine the history of architecture and urbanism in the United States since 1945. We will survey the major architectural developments, urban decline, and suburban growth, with a particular emphasis on the ways the political economy and culture have shaped these processes.

## READINGS

Below are the **REQUIRED** readings for the course; those noted in **BOLD** you should purchase for class, the remainder will be on e-reserve in the Library.

John Archer. *Architecture and Suburbia* (Minneapolis, 2005)

Peter Blake. *God's Own Junkyard: The Planned Deterioration of America's Landscape* (New York, 1964)

Clifford E. Clark, Jr. "Ranch-House Suburbia: Ideals and Realities," in Lary May, ed., *Recasting America: Culture and Politics in the Age of the Cold War* (Chicago, 1989)

Mike Davis. *City of Quartz: Excavating the Future in Los Angeles* (New York, 1992)

Erika Doss. "The Art of Cultural Politics: From Regionalism to Abstract Expressionism," in Lary May, ed., *Recasting America: Culture and Politics in the Age of the Cold War* (Chicago, 1989)

**Kenneth Frampton. *Modern Architecture: A Critical History* (London, 1992)**

David Harvey. *Spaces of Hope* (Berkeley, 2000)

**Dolores Hayden, *Field Guide to Sprawl* (New York, 2004)**

Dolores Hayden. *Redesigning the American Dream* (New York, 1984)

Jane Jacobs. *The Death and Life of Great American Cities* (New York, 1961)

Lewis Mumford, "Disappearance of Penn Station," *New Yorker* (7 June 1958)

Herbert Muschamp. "New War Memorial is a Shrine to Sentiment," *New York Times* (7 June 2001)

Leland Roth. *A Concise History of American Architecture* (New York, 1980)

Neil Smith. *The New Urban Frontier* (London, New York, 1996)

Thomas Sugrue. *The Origins of the Urban Crisis: Race and Inequality in Postwar Detroit* (Princeton, NJ, 1996)

Dell Upton. *Architecture in the United States* (Oxford, 1998)

Robert Venturi, Denise Scott Brown, and Steven Izenour. *Learning From Las Vegas* (Cambridge, MA, 1972)

William Whyte. *City: Rediscovering the Center* (New York, 1988)

Carol Willis. *Form Follows Finance: Skyscrapers and Skylines in New York and Chicago* (New York, 1995)

Tom Wolfe. *From Bauhaus to Our House* (New York, 1981)

In addition, the following texts are SUGGESTED resources for American architectural and urban history generally. They are not required for the course, but you may find them useful depending on your experience with and knowledge about the subject matter.

Steven Conn and Max Page, eds. *Building the Nation: Americans Write About Their Architecture, Their Cities, and Their Landscape* (Philadelphia, 2003)

Sarah Williams Goldhagen and Réjean Legault, eds., *Anxious Modernisms: Experimentations in Postwar Architectural Culture* (Montreal, Cambridge, MA, 2000)

Mary Corbin Sies and Christopher Silver, eds. *Planning the Twentieth Century American City* (Baltimore, 1996)

The following is a selection of the journals and magazines held in the collections of the Architecture library. These are just a few of those worth surveying occasionally throughout the semester (say once a month):

*Architectural Record*  
*Architectural Review*  
*Architecture*  
*Harvard Design Magazine*  
*Journal of Architectural Education*  
*Journal of Architectural Planning and Research*  
*Journal of Architecture*  
*Journal of Planning Education and Research*  
*Journal of the Society of Architectural Historians*  
*Metropolis*  
*Places*  
*World Architecture*

## ASSIGNMENTS AND GRADING

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For this class each student will complete one short paper, one in-class presentation of a design investigation, and a final project.

Grades are weighted as follows:

Undergraduate students:

attendance and participation(10%), short paper (3-5 pages) (20%), in-class presentation (25%), final project (10-12 pages, 45%).

Graduate Students:

attendance and participation(10%), short paper (5-7 pages, 20%), in-class presentation (25%), final project (15-20 pages, 45%). For graduate students, your short paper should serve as a proposal and bibliography for your final project.

## CLASS SCHEDULE

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<b>Architecture and History</b>		
T	8.22	Course introduction
TH	8.24	Pre-1945 architecture and urbanism overview
T	8.29	Upton, "Introduction," and "Nature"
TH	8.31	Doss, "The Art of Cultural Politics"
T	9.05	Upton, "Technology"
TH	9.07	Frampton, "Frank Lloyd Wright and the Disappearing City"
T	9.12	Willis, Form Follows Finance
TH	9.14	Willis, Form Follows Finance
T	9.19	Upton, "Money"
TH	9.21	Frampton, "Eclipse of the New Deal"
T	9.26	Upton, "Art"
TH	9.28	Frampton, "Mies van der Rohe and the Monumentalization of Technique"
T	10.03	Leland Roth, Pure Function, Pure Form, 1940-1970 Short Paper Due

**Suburban Dreams/Critiques**

- TH 10.05 Clark, "Ranch-House Suburbia"
- T 10.10 Elaine Tyler May, Homeward Bound
- TH 10.12 Dolores Hayden, Redesigning the American Dream
- T 10.17 John Archer, Architecture and Suburbia

**Urban Renewal/Decline/Preservation/Destruction/Design**

- TH 10.19 Lewis Mumford, "Disappearance of Penn Station"  
Jane Jacobs, "The Death and Life of Great American Cities"
- T 10.24 Venturi <et al>, Learning from Las Vegas
- TH 10.26 Peter Blake, Gods Own Junkyard
- T 10.31 Wolfe, From Bauhaus to Our House
- TH 11.02 Sugrue, Origins of the Urban Crisis
- T 11.07 Dolores Hayden, Field Guide to Sprawl  
Design Investigation Due

**Urban Analysis**

- TH 11.09 William Whyte, City
- T 11.14 Mike Davis, City of Quartz
- TH 11.16 Neil Smith, New Urban Frontier
- T 11.21 David Harvey, "Spaces of Hope"
- TH 11.23 No Class: Thanksgiving Holiday

**Recent Struggles Over Architecture and Urbanism**

- T 11.28 Herbert Muschamp, "New War Memorial is a Shrine to Sentiment"
- TH 11.30 (Last class)

Final Project Due during Finals Week, date to be determined.

By request of the Architecture Program Office, the following material is included in all syllabi:

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- 1) Students with disabilities requiring special accommodations are required to obtain an accommodations letter from the ADAPTS Office [[www.adapts.gatech.edu](http://www.adapts.gatech.edu)] to ensure appropriate arrangements.
- 2) Georgia Tech aims to cultivate a community based on trust, academic integrity and honor. Students are expected to act according to the highest ethical standards. For policy information on Georgia Tech's Academic Honor Code, please see [<http://www.honor.gatech.edu/honorcode/honorcode.html>].
- 3) All cell phones are asked to be turned off during class and when entering the Library.
- 4) Students are asked to complete the online course evaluation of all courses at Georgia Tech at the end of the term.
- 5) In case of emergency (i.e. fire, accident, criminal act), please call the Georgia Tech Police at 894-2500. Please note that Perry Minyard, IT Support Administrator is a firefighter and an Emergency Medical Technician (EMT) certified in performing CPR.
- 6) Student Academic Bill of Rights: [<http://www.registrar.gatech.edu/rules/22.php>]