

CourseNo: ARCHA8905_001_2015_1

Meeting Time: T 04:00P-06:00P **Meeting Location:** [AVERY HALL 300](#)

Instructor Information:

[Jorge Otero-Pailos](#)

Ph.D. Seminar

The Aesthetics of Decay

From the Romantic picturesque to contemporary Ruin Porn photography, decay has functioned as a powerful aesthetic category through which architects, artists and intellectuals have articulated social and political agendas. This seminar critically examines the aesthetics of decay, paying special attention to its rhetorical role in shaping the understanding of historiography, modernity and postmodernity within architectural discourse and related disciplines.

The seminar format is structured discussions. Students will conduct independent research and present their ongoing work at two junctures during the semester, the first time to frame a collective class discussion, and the second time to present their findings to the group. Each student is also expected to write a research paper not to exceed 6000 words (excluding footnotes).

Readings

Jan 20

Karen Lang, "The Dialectics of Decay: Rereading the Kantian Subject," in *Art Bulletin*, n. 3, v. 79 (September 1997), 413-439.

Jan 27

Alexander Nagel and Christopher S. Wood, *Anachronic Renaissance*, (New York: Zone Books, 2010).

Feb 3 (rescheduled to Feb 10)

Elizabeth Wanning Harries, *The Unfinished Manner: Essays on the Fragment in the Later Eighteenth Century*, (Charlottesville, VA: University Press of Virginia, 1994).

Feb 10 (rescheduled to Feb 17)

Nick Yablon, *Untimely Ruins: An Archaeology of American Urban Modernity, 1819-1919*, (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2010).

Feb 17 (rescheduled to Feb 24)

Mike Gubser, *Time's Visible Surface: Alois Riegl and the discourse on history and temporality in fin-de-siècle Vienna*, (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 2006).

Feb 24 (rescheduled to Mar 3)

Rudy Koshar, *From Monuments to Traces: Artifacts of German Memory, 1870-1990*, (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2000c).

Mar 3 (rescheduled to Mar 10)

Nicola Lambourne, *War Damage in Western Europe*, (New York: Oxford University Press Inc., 1996).

Mar 10 (rescheduled to Mar 24)

Guy Debord, "Editorial Notes: The Meaning of Decay in Art (1959) ," and "Editorial Notes: Once Again, on Decomposition (1961) ," in *Guy Debord and the Situationist International: Texts and Documents*, ed. Tom McDonough, (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2002).

Robert Smithson, "Entropy and the New Monuments," and "A Tour of the Monuments of Passaic," in *Robert Smithson: The Collected Essays*, ed. Jack Flam, (Berkeley, Los Angeles, and London: University of California Press, 1996).

Kai Vöckler, "The disappearance of architecture as an artistic theme," in *Modernism as a Ruin: An Archeology of the Present*, (Nürnberg: Verlag für Moderne Kunst; Wien : Generali Foundation, 2009).

Mar 17—SPRING BREAK

Mar 24 (rescheduled to April 7)

Pamela Lee, *Object to be Destroyed: The Work of Gordon Matta-Clark*, (Cambridge, MA and London: The MIT Press, 1999).

Mar 31—(Rescheduled to April 14)

Apr 7

MAKE UP: Pamela Lee, *Object to be Destroyed: The Work of Gordon Matta-Clark*, (Cambridge, MA and London: The MIT Press, 1999).

Apr 14—Paper presentations DOUBLE CLASS 2-6pm.

Apr 21—Paper presentations

Guest speaker presentation.

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Conn, Steven. *Museums and American intellectual life, 1876-1926*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1998.

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