

The Imperatives of Urbanism

ARCHA6778_001_2014_1

Spr 2014

Fri 11a-1p

Avery 412

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Introduction

The lecture course will examine the urban problematics defined by architects from the 1970s to the present, inventorying the conditions they believe to impact urban form, disciplinary debates, and the role of the designer. From the Culture of Congestion to Landscape Urbanism, the course will probe the concepts architects have developed to give form to the city.

Objectives

This seminar will examine the imperatives offered by architects for large-scale commissions. The course will study the terms of their forms of reasoning, expressed through their texts and proposals. Upon completion of the course it is expected that students will have greater familiarity with the recent terms that architects have argued to be at stake in debate of urbanism and architecture.

Structure

Course meetings will consist of presentations of urban design and architecture case studies.

Issues and Themes

The course will introduce proposals from the 1970s to today that are representative of major themes in the field of urbanism, including: architecture (i.e., a single building) as an instrument of urban design; appeals of social improvement, such as enhancing a sense of collective identity and public stability; analytical reasoning as the basis of arguments to redefine urban programming; claims of the autonomy of urban form; the politics of urban form; and environmental imperatives including the advocacy of sustainable landscape architecture.

Course Requirements

1. Term Project Proposal

Propose an analysis of an urban project. Select one of the primary readings as an interpretive framework to analyze a project of your choosing. (It's best to choose a built project, since it will give you more raw material to work from.) Develop assertions that challenge the project's received understanding and provide an alternative interpretation of its form and organization. In order to do so, select a text that is an unlikely candidate for analyzing the project. And be conscious to pick a text that will yield new insight about the project's form. (At all cost, avoid referring to a text by Stan Allen to interpret a project by Stan Allen, for example.)

Please structure the proposal in the following format: in the first 1/3 thoroughly explicate or restate the text's claims; in the second 1/3 describe in detail the key formal attributes of the project; and in the final 1/3 use the text as a lens to develop an original interpretation of the formal features of the project.

The purpose of the exercise is to: (a) identify positive attributes to the design, (b) advocate the architect's proposal, and (c) offer new insights about urbanism as a practice.

A maximum of 1,500 words with annotated diagrams, submitted by email.

Due: 6p, 27 Feb

2. Presentation of Term Project Proposal – 28 Feb, 10 minute maximum

Presented from a written script with image slideshow including annotated diagrams

3. Presentation of Term Project – 18 and 25 April, 20 minute maximum

Presented from a written script with image slideshow including annotated diagrams

4. The term project will consist of an extended interpretation of the selected case study. A maximum of 2,500 words with annotated diagrams.

Due: Tues May 6, 6p.

It is a requirement of this seminar that all students submit course materials digitally by the end of term. Please follow this procedure in digitally submitting your work:

Email the proposal and final term project on their respective due dates. All required assignments must be submitted as .pdf files.

Readings

Readings will be available on the course site in advance of each meeting.

Note: Emphasis will be placed on the collaborative formulation of ideas. To promote the collective process and the sharing of concepts, please know that any insight, observation, or comment made in the context of the course will be considered to be authored by the group rather than any one person, and available for use and interpretation by all.

Course Schedule and Primary Readings

24 Jan **1. Introduction**

31 Jan **2. Obfuscation and Irrationality - OMA**

Rem Koolhaas, "Skyscraper Theorist," *Delirious New York* (New York:

Monacelli, 1994,), pp. 110-131.

Rem Koolhaas, "Europeans: Biuer! Dali and Le Corbusier Conquer New York," *Delirious New York* (New York: Monacelli, 1994), pp. 235-249.

7 Feb

3. Communication and Form – FOA, Reiser + Umemoto

Alejandro Zaera-Polo, "The Hokusai Wave," *Volume* 3, September 2005: 32-39

"Being RE," (interview with RE Somol), ed. Christopher Henry, *The Cornell Journal of Architecture* 8: RE, Mar 2011: 76-85.

R.E. Somol and Sarah Whiting, "Notes around the Doppler Effect and Other Moods of Modernism." *Perspecta* 33, 2002: 72-77.

Date TBD

4. Atmospheres - Herzog de Meuron, DS+R, R&Sie

Jeffrey Kipnis, "The Cunning of Cosmetics," *El Croquis* 84, 1997: 22-28

Mark Wigley, "The Architecture of Atmosphere," *Daidalos* 68, 1998: 18-27.

Jason Payne, "Hairesy," Interview. *Volume* 24, 2010: 128-131.

Neil Denari, Richard Foster's Willis, Faber & Dumas building, Interview. *Volume* 37, 2013

21 Feb

5. Large Buildings – Roche & Dinkeloo, SOM

Vincent Scully, "Thruway and Crystal Palace," *Architectural Forum*, March 1974

David Gissen, "The Architectural Production of Nature, Dendur/New York," *Grey Room* 34, Winter 2009: 58-79

Rem Koolhaas, "Bigness or the Problem of the Large," *S, M, L, XL* (New York: Monacelli, 1995), pp. 493-516.

27 Feb

Term Project Proposals Due 6p

28 Feb

6. Term Project Proposal Presentations

7 Mar

7. Autonomy – O.M. Ungers, Dogma

Piero Vittorio Aureli, "Toward the Archipelago," *Log* 11, Winter 2008: 91-119.

K. Michael Hays, "Critical Architecture: Between Culture and Form," *Perspecta* 21, 1984: 14-29.

Detlef Mertins, "Open Contours and Other Autonomies," in *Monolithic Architecture*, ed. Rodolfo Machado, Rodolphe el-Khoury (Pittsburgh: Carnegie Museum of Art, 1995), pp. 36-61.

28 Mar

8. Void and Incompletion - OMA

Rem Koolhaas, "Urbanism After Innocence, Four Projects: The Reinvention of Geometry," *Assemblage* 18, Aug. 1992: 82-113.

Jeffrey Kipnis, "Recent Koolhaas," *El Croquis* 79, 1996: 26-31.

Rem Koolhaas, "Whatever Happened to Urbanism," *S, M, L, XL* (New York: The Monacelli Press, 1995), pp. 960-971.

Wouter Deen, Udo Garritzmman, *Diagramming the Contemporary: OMA's Little Helper in the Quest of the New*, *Oase* 48, 1998: 83-92.

4 Apr

9. Pipes

Readings TK

11 Apr

10. Storytelling and Embedded Information – BIG, JDS Architect / Morphosis

Mark Wigley, "Storytime," *Assemblage* 27, August 1995: 81-94.

Rem Koolhaas, "White Briefs Against Filth," *Content* (Cologne: Taschen, 2004), pp. 236-239.

"Yes Man: An Interview with Bjarke Ingels," Interview. *Volume* 13, September 2005: 48-52

Stan Allen, "Thom Mayne's Informational Landscapes," *Combinatory Urbanism: The Complex Behavior of Collective Form* (Los Angeles: Stray Dog Café, 2011), pp. 53-61.

18 and 25 Apr

Term Paper Presentations

20 minute maximum. Presented from a written script with image slideshow including annotated diagrams

6 May

Term Paper Due 6p