

COURSE SYLLABUS

ARCH 7211 — CONTEMPORARY THEORY

Fall 2021 Issue Date — August 24, 2021 — subject to revision

Section 001 9:40 to 11:05am — Tuesday & Thursday — Jones Hall 307

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| Instructor | Thomas Provost (<i>he/him</i>) |
| Office | JO 408 |
| Office Hours | Virtual by appointment |
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CATALOG DESCRIPTION

Critical study of contemporary theoretical writings and related architectural production; contemporary issues informing current architectural discourse; emphasizing 1968 to present.

OVERVIEW

This course situates works of theory (philosophy, design, sociology, the arts, media, etc) within the expanded field of architectural thought. It is a broad survey of the adjacent histories, theories, and methodologies connected to the study of the discipline of architecture. We will cover thematic shifts in architectural thought by drawing upon exemplar works of theory and design from a range of contexts. Class discussions throughout the semester are a primary space for speculation on the meaning, purpose, and role of architecture in our culture today. You will be required to efficiently distill concepts and arguments from a number of weekly readings in order to actively participate in class discussion. Articulation of complex ideas is perhaps the most prized ability in our discipline, along with curiosity and a willingness to engage with new ideas. Course work involves writing, spoken word, presentation, analysis, and design thinking.

LAND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

We recognize and acknowledge that we are on the historic Homeland of the Chickasaw Nation of which they inhabited. Memphis, and all of Tennessee, was the long established territory for many indigenous peoples prior to their forced removal and unforeseen extinction.

We have a responsibility to acknowledge the peoples and histories of these lands. Our ability to live here is the result of direct coercion, forced dispossession, and deliberate colonization. To ignore that is to perpetuate injustice to populations of people that no longer exist in this state, yet, have established major societies elsewhere in this country.

The City of Memphis respects the diverse communities it touches, including those who occupied this territory originally, those brought to it by force, and those who settled here in search of better circumstances. We understand that territorial acknowledgement is only a gesture, but it represents the beginning of our commitment to justice and reconciliation in the United States.

DEPARTMENT POLICIES

1. The guidelines for studio conduct outlined in the Department of Architecture Studio Rules shall be observed at all times.
2. Attendance at all course sessions and full participation in sessions are required in accordance with the Department of Architecture Attendance and Participation Policy.
3. Cellphones must be off during class. Exceptions may be granted in advance for special circumstances.
4. Students are expected to complete all assignments in a timely and professional manner.
5. Each assignment must be submitted in its original form and will be retained by the Department of Architecture. All projects are to be photographed by the student for possible inclusion in portfolios. A CD of images of each project must be submitted at the end of the term for retention by the Department. A studio book containing representative projects is also required.
6. Posting information on-line shall be considered the same as an in-class or other handout. The venue(s) for on-line posting will be outlined by the instructor.
7. Transmittal of information via e-mails shall be considered the same as a handout or announcement in class. The University of Memphis e-mail address will be used.
8. Reasonable and appropriate accommodations will be provided to students with disabilities who present a memo from Disability Resources for Students (DRS). Students who request accommodations without a memo will be referred to DRS.
Summary of Legal Requirements for Higher Ed
9. Faculty and graduate teaching assistants are considered Mandatory Reporters under the University's Sexual Misconduct and Domestic Violence Policy.
10. Academic dishonesty: because architecture and interior design are professions regulated by state legislation and with a code of ethics governing professional conduct, similar rules and protocols are in effect in the design studios and classes as well as other education-related environments. The Honor Code of the University of Memphis Department of Architecture states: *"I will not lie, cheat, or steal nor tolerate those who do."* Students must also abide fully by the policies, rules, and regulations set forth in the Department of Architecture Student Policies Manual and the applicable documents of the University of Memphis. Among these are the Code of Student Rights and Responsibilities and the University of Memphis Code of Student Conduct – Academic Dishonesty. More information on these codes may be found at the following website: Code of Student Rights and Responsibilities

These codes directly discuss student responsibilities in regard to plagiarism, where plagiarism is defined as copying or paraphrasing, without proper acknowledgement, any material taken from other sources such as the Internet, journal articles, other students' work, textbooks, etc. Plagiarism can result in failing an assignment, failing the course, or being suspended or expelled from the University.

The policies, procedures, rules, and regulations contained in the Department of Architecture Student Policies Manual are incorporated by reference. The faculty and students in the Department of Architecture understand and value the impact of design studio on the overall educational experience. To enhance and preserve the effectiveness of the studio environment, the Department of Architecture Studio Culture Policy was developed and implemented.

The Department of Architecture Release / Hold-Harmless Agreement must be completed and signed by each student before taking any off-campus trips, including trips within Memphis. The Medication Release Form must be completed for any out-of-town trips. Students must print and complete the forms during the first week of classes and submit them to the instructor.

All students intending to use the Architecture Shop must receive proper training and complete the Department of Architecture Shop Health Safety Rules and Regulations Acknowledgement Form before being allowed to enter the Shop. This form may be found in the Student Policies Manual.

NAAB CRITERIA

This course addresses the National Architectural Accrediting Board (NAAB) Student Performance Criteria (SPC) in the following categories:

A1 — Communication Skills:

Ability to read, write, speak and listen effectively.

A2 — Design Thinking Skills:

Ability to raise clear and precise questions, use abstract ideas to interpret information, consider diverse points of view, reach well-reasoned conclusions, and test alternative outcomes against relevant criteria and standards.

A5 — Investigative Skills:

Ability to gather, assess, record, apply, and comparatively evaluate relevant information within architectural coursework and design processes.

A7 — Use of Precedents

Ability to examine and comprehend the fundamental principles present in relevant precedents and to make choices regarding the incorporation of such principles into architecture and urban design projects.

A9 — Historical Traditions and Global Culture:

Understanding of parallel and divergent canons and traditions of architecture, landscape and urban design including examples of indigenous, vernacular, local, regional, national settings from the Eastern, Western, Northern, and Southern hemispheres in terms of their climatic, ecological, technological, socioeconomic, public health, and cultural factors.

A10 — Cultural Diversity:

Understanding of the diverse needs, values, behavioral norms, physical abilities, and social and spatial patterns that characterize different cultures and individuals and the implication of this diversity on the societal roles and responsibilities of architects.

A11 — Applied Research:

Understanding the role of applied research in determining function, form, and systems and their impact on human conditions and behavior.

For more information: <http://www.naab.org>

SUPPLIES

Each student must provide all materials, tools, and supplies necessary to complete each assignment. In the Fall 2021 version of this course, a notebook and/or a sketchbook is required of all students. Use this to record concepts, thoughts, key ideas, etc, while reading and to record notes and thoughts while in-class discussions or presentations are happening. In addition to this basic method of recording and analysis, we will use Adobe InDesign for the purpose of presentations, graphic design, layout, and text design. Toward the end of the semester, each student will work on a theoretical project which may or may not involve a graphic or visual component. You may use any tools, software, means, and methods familiar and available to you.

TEXTBOOK AND READINGS

Readings will be provided as a PDF and shared via E-courseware or email when necessary. Students will have to purchase one book for coursework, to be discussed at a later date.

COURSE LEARNING OBJECTIVES

1. We will illuminate the network of ideas at play in contemporary architectural theory in order to empower students to use this working knowledge in their own practice.
2. We will make arguments and express perspectives through a wide range of media and performance (i.e. writing, narrative, storytelling, graphics, drawings, etc.)
3. We will efficiently distill concepts and arguments from a number of weekly readings and develop clear articulation of complex ideas.
4. We will examine critical histories, theories, events, and narratives throughout throughout the last century leading to both major developments and specific works of architectural theory.
5. We will develop a framework for future work on thesis topics.

INSTRUCTIONAL METHODOLOGY AND COURSE REQUIREMENTS

The principal course requirements consist of the following:

Lectures will be very infrequent and biased toward the beginning of the semester.

Discussion is the heart of this course. Questions, clarifications, positions, and debates are strongly encouraged throughout the semester whether during a lecture or presentation. At varying times, students will lead discussion and take on the role of instructor. I expect your confidence and effectiveness to increase throughout the semester. As a small graduate course, there is less hierarchy and more community. Consider this course an act of caring for a community of ideas.

Readings will be required for nearly every class. Tuesdays will feature a discussion on a single theme, topic, or work of theory. We will collectively discuss, find meaning, contextualize, and speculate. Thursdays will feature rotating student-led discussions on a given work of theory that will complement Tuesday's collective discussion. See course schedule and reading list.

Notes taken throughout the semester are required – these can be a combination of words, sentences, paragraphs, sketches, diagrams, etc. Take notes during discussions, presentations, and as you read through assigned works. Organized notes will help you with presentations.

Presentations will take place each Thursday on a rotating schedule. We will begin with three students per class and adjust as necessary. You will be expected to report back to the class on what you have read with a 15-minute verbal presentation. On the day of your presentation, a written summary will be due and shared with the class (pdf). This will include *key concepts*, 3 *discussion questions*, and an *annotated bibliography*. See handout for more info.

Theoretical Projects developed in the final half of the course will give students the opportunity to propose and work through an independent idea that stakes a position towards a contemporary architectural issue. This project will engage with concepts, dreams, the world-at-large, relevant contemporary discourse, articles, philosophies, places, or other written work. It is primarily a text of your own authoring, but you are encouraged to creatively engage with various forms of media such as collage, visualization, diagramming, hybrid representations, audio, video, animation, etc.

Exhibition and Publication of student projects in the first-ever student architectural publication at The University of Memphis will cap off our semester! We will discuss our constraints, ideas, preferences, and abilities at the appropriate time.

Examinations will not be given in this course.

EVALUATION AND GRADING

Final grades will be assigned based on the following:

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| Presentations | 30% final grade |
| Theoretical Project | 30% final grade |
| Annotated Bibliography | 20% final grade |
| Participation | <u>20% final grade</u> |
| | 100% |

Please contact me in advance regarding any extenuating circumstances beyond your control (e.g. illness, emergency, etc.) that necessitate a deadline extension or make-up exam. I am very understanding and accommodating, although I reserve the right to assess a one-letter grade deduction to any late submission without due notice, on a case-by-case basis.

Grading Scale: The University plus/minus grading scale will be utilized in this course except for Pass/Fail assignments as indicated.

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| A+ 97-100 | B+ 87-89 | C+ 77-79 | D+ 67-69 |
| A 94-96 | B 84-86 | C 74-76 | D 64-66 |
| A- 90-93 | B- 80-83 | C- 70-73 | D- 60-63 |
| | | | F 0-59 |

INCLUSIVITY

This is an Inclusive Classroom. I am committed to the creation and maintenance of inclusive learning spaces where you will be treated with respect and dignity and where all individuals are provided equitable opportunity to participate, contribute, and succeed. In ARCH 7211, all students are welcome regardless of race/ethnicity, gender identities/expressions, sexual orientation, socio-economic status, age, disabilities, religion, citizenship, nationality and other diverse identities that we each bring to class. Your success is enhanced by the innovation and creativity of thought that inclusive classrooms facilitate.

The success of an inclusive classroom relies on the participation, support, and understanding of you and your peers. I encourage you to speak up and share your views, but also understand that you are doing so in a learning environment in which we all are expected to engage respectfully and with regard to the dignity of all others. The University of Memphis seeks to understand and address issues regarding gender identity. I will gladly honor your request to address you by the name or pronouns that you choose to use. Please advise me of this preference early in the semester so that I may make appropriate changes to my records. As peers and classmates, it is your responsibility to maintain this environment of respect and refer to your classmates by specified names and pronouns.

I am also a member of a Safe Zone Ally community network, and I am available to listen and support you in a safe and confidential manner. As a Safe Zone Ally, I can help you connect with resources on campus to address problems you may face that interfere with your academic and social success on campus as it relates to issues surrounding sexual orientation and gender identity. My goal is to help you be successful and to maintain a safe and equitable campus.

ADA COMPLIANCE

This course is accessible to all students. Any student who anticipates physical or academic barriers based on the impact of a disability is encouraged to speak with me privately. Students with disabilities should also contact Disability Resources for Students (DRS) at 110 Wilder Tower, 901-678-2880. DRS coordinates access and accommodations for students with disabilities. I am happy to work with you to get your accommodations on file. Please let me know how I can help you succeed in this course, even with the most minor recommend for accommodation.

SEXUAL MISCONDUCT

The University is committed to ensuring equality in education and eliminating any and all acts of sexual misconduct from its campus. Sexual misconduct includes sexual harassment, sexual assault, dating violence, domestic violence and stalking. If you or someone you know has been harassed or assaulted, you can make a report to the Office for Institutional Equity at oiie@memphis.edu / 901.678.2713 or make a confidential report to the University Counseling Center, 214 Wilder Tower / 901.678.2068. Please note that if you make a report to me I am required to report it.

STUDENT HEALTH AND WELLNESS RESOURCES

Many students face difficult times during college. Unexpected life events, personal crisis, mental health struggles, or academic difficulties are all examples of challenges that can interfere with college success. Tiger Pantry, the Emergency Fund, and many other resources are available to help you. You can speak with me if you need a referral, or speak directly with the Dean of Students office at 359 University Center or by email at deanofstudents@memphis.edu.

Crisis information for an array of needs, such as: Clothing, COVID-19, Emergency Food, Emergency Funds, Emergency Housing, Emergency Mental Health, Employment Resources, Financial Literacy, Health Care Services, Legal Services, New and Expectant Parents, Sexual Assault & Domestic Violence, SNAP Assistance, Technology, and Transportation can be found here: <https://www.memphis.edu/deanofstudents/crisis/index.php>

COVID-19

Students who are experiencing symptoms such as: *fever, chills, cough, shortness of breath, difficulty breathing, fatigue, muscle aches, headache, sore-throat, loss of taste or smell, congestion, runny nose, nausea, vomiting, diarrhea, or a higher than normal temperature* should inform me via email so they can be excused from class and **stay home**. Students should contact their health care provider or the Student Health Center at <https://www.memphis.edu/health/>. Any student who misses class because of illness, a positive test, or quarantine will be excused from penalty but are responsible for course material they miss.

Students who have **tested positive** for COVID-19 or have come in close contact with a positive individual must contact the Dean of Students Office at deanofstudents@memphis.edu. Staff will guide the student through University protocols and provide any available resources. If students have questions regarding this protocol, they can email at deanofstudents@memphis.edu or call 901.678.2187. We will all need to quarantine if one of us tests positive.

All students, faculty and staff must wear **masks** in all public spaces, including our classroom per the COVID-19 policy. The first time a student enters a classroom without wearing a face mask, the student will be asked to leave the class until they return with a mask. If this happens twice, you will be referred to the Office of Student Accountability, referred for discipline under the Student Code and, if appropriate, immediately removed from campus by the Dean of Students. Neck gaiters are not masks. Double up surgical masks. Please take this seriously.

Please be mindful of others by practicing physical and **social distancing**. This applies within our classroom where airborne diseases spread easily. I expect everyone to maintain a distance of six feet from each other. Do not come within six feet of me.

In order to safely and comfortably return to in-person instruction, we must do our part by following the best practices for responding to COVID. This means, above all, ensuring our University community members are **vaccinated**. If you are not vaccinated, it is never too late! There is widespread availability of vaccinations without an appointment in our area. Please see: <https://www.memphis.edu/coronavirusupdates/vaccination/index.php>