

ARCHITECTURE 823: SEMINAR IN ARCHITECTURAL HISTORY AND THEORY ARCHITECTURE, PRINT CULTURE, AND THE PUBLIC SPHERE

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Ever since Alberti and the Renaissance treatise writers, architects have published their advice about how buildings and cities should be made. Yet it was especially in the 19th and 20th centuries that many came to view themselves as cultural authorities and even culture heroes. Figures like Downing, Gropius, and Wright played multiple roles as designers, educators, reformers, theorists, and journalists, intervening in public conversations not only about their craft, but also about aesthetics, social change, family order, and the relation of art to democracy and industrial capitalism. How and why did architects claim the role of public intellectuals? What ideas, institutions, and social conditions supported their efforts to shape politics and civil society? What effect did such public engagement have their aesthetics and ambitions? This seminar will explore the history of architecture as a form of public culture.

In exploring these questions, we will touch on the emergence of the design profession and the trajectory of theory—staples of architecture history courses. Yet the focus of the seminar will be different. It will link developments in design theory, practice, and writing with the creation of a public sphere and a print culture that made architectural essays, planbooks, manifestoes, taste-making texts, and journalistic criticism into important media of public debate. Readings will mix canonical and lesser-known architects and commentators, social theorists such as Habermas and Rousseau, and architectural historiography. The following readings are available at Shaman Drum Bookstore:

Benedict Anderson, Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origins and Spread of Nationalism
Andrew Jackson Downing, The Architecture of Country Houses
Jurgen Habermas, The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere
Vaughan Hart (ed.), Paper Palaces: The Rise of the Renaissance Architectural Treatise
Henry-Russell Hitchcock and Philip Johnson, The International Style
Jane Jacobs, Death and Life of Great American Cities
Eric Mumford, The CIAM Discourse On Urbanism
Robert Venturi, Complexity and Contradiction In Architecture
Michael Warner, Letters of the Republic

WEEKLY SYLLABUS

Jan 6: “This Will Kill That”: Thinking About Architecture and Writing

Frank Lloyd Wright, “The Art and Craft of the Machine”

I. ARCHITECTURAL WRITING AND THE RISE OF THE PUBLIC SPHERE (TREATISES)

Jan 13: Renaissance Italy and the Invention of the Architectural Publication

Vaughan Hart (ed.), Paper Palaces: The Rise of the Renaissance Architectural Treatise

Spiro Kostof (ed.), The Architect: Chapters In the History of the Profession, 96-160

Andrea Palladio, The Four Books of Architecture (1738 Isaac Ware edition, Dover reprint)

Jan 20: Ancien-Regime France and the Politics of Public Culture

Jurgen Habermas, The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere

Keith Michael Baker, “Defining the Public Sphere in Eighteenth-Century France: Variations On a Theme By Habermas,” in Habermas and the Public Sphere, 181-211

Sylvia Lavin, “Re-Reading the Encyclopedia: Architectural Theory and the Formation of the Public In Late-Eighteenth-Century France,” JSAH 53 (June, 1994), 184-92

Leora Auslander, Taste and Power: Furnishing Modern France, 141-185

Thomas Crow, Painters and Public Life in Eighteenth-Century Paris, 1-22

Jan 27: Print Culture and Nation Building in the Early American Republic

Michael Warner, The Letters of the Republic: Publication and the Public Sphere In Eighteenth-Century America

Benedict Anderson, Imagined Communities: Reflections On the Origins and Spread of Nationalism

II. PLANS, TASTE, AND THE EDIFYING OF CIVIL SOCIETY

Feb 7: Prescriptive Writing and Social Order in the Early 19th Century

Dell Upton, “Pattern Books and Professionalism: Aspects of the Transformation of Domestic Architecture In America, 1800-1860,” Winterthur Portfolio 19 (Autumn, 1984), 107-50

Leora Auslander, Taste and Power: Furnishing Modern France, 186-224

David Schuyler, Apostle of Taste: Andrew Jackson Downing, 1815-1852, 1-155

Andrew Jackson Downing, The Architecture of Country Houses

Feb 10: Taste and Social Reform In the Late 19th Century

C. Thurston Chase, A Manual on School-Houses and Cottages For the People of the South

Catherine Beecher and Harriet Beecher Stowe, The American Woman’s Home

David Scobey, “What Shall We Do With Our Walls? The Philadelphia Centennial and the Meaning of Household Design,”

Diane Favro, “The Pen Is Mightier Than the Building: Writing on Architecture, 1850-1940,” in The Sex of Architecture, 295-308

Feb 17: Urban Planning and the Politics of Design At the Turn of the 20th Century

Robin Bachin, Building the South Side: Urban Space and Civic Culture In Chicago, 1890-1919
Daniel H. Burnham and Edward H. Bennett, Plan For Chicago

III. CULTURE-HEROES AND MANIFESTOES: THE PUBLIC SPHERE OF MODERNISM

Feb 24: The Lives of the Architects

Louis Sullivan, The Autobiography Of an Idea
Peter Blake, The Master Builders

Mar 3: NO CLASS— WINTER TERM BREAK

Mar 10: Prophecies of the Modern Sage

Louis Sullivan, Kindergarten Chats
Frank Lloyd Wright, “Architect, Architecture, and Client” and “In the Cause of Architecture”
Walter Gropius, “Apollo In the Democracy”
LeCorbusier, Towards a New Architecture

Mar 17: Liberating Architects: Politics and Pedagogy in the Bauhaus

Barbara Miller Lane, Architecture and Politics In Germany, 1918-1945

Mar 24: The Architect As World-Maker

Eric Mumford, The CIAM Discourse On Urbanism

Mar 31: Canonizations

Henry Russell Hitchcock and Philip Johnson, The International Style
Alvin Rosenbaum, Usonia: Frank Lloyd Wright’s Design For America

IV. AFTER THE FALL: THE ARCHITECTURAL PUBLIC SPHERE AFTER MODERNISM

Apr 7: After Modernism

Robert Venturi, Complexity and Contradiction In Architecture
Jane Jacobs, Death and Life of Great American Cities

Apr 14: After Catastrophe

Paul Goldberger, Up From Zero: Politics, Architecture, and the Rebuilding of New York