CRITICAL WRITING
ARCH 622 (4 credits)
Fall 2017
Prof. Annmarie Adams
Mondays 2:30-5:30
Macdonald-Harrington Bldg., Room 420

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Course description:
This course surveys research methods in architecture for students enrolled in
professional and post-professional programs in the School of Architecture. What
are the best interpretive tools for understanding the built environment? How do
we gather architectural information? What is an architectural research question?
What is design research? ARCH 622 is also a general introduction to the cultures
of academic research, touching on conferences, publications, peer review, and
funding applications.

Readings:
The textbook for the course is Ray Lucas, Research Methods for Architecture. A
second very helpful book is Alexandra Lange, Writing About Architecture, both
are available at The Word bookstore, 469 rue Milton. Other readings are posted
on MyCourses (need student volunteer to scan each week). If you have
absolutely no experience of research, I recommend perusing Wayne C. Booth et
al, The Craft of Research, available online,

Instructional method:
ARCH 622 emphasizes reading, writing, and discussion. Students are expected
to read the assigned material carefully and to come to class prepared to discuss
the contents as well as the methods used by the authors. Writing assignments
take students through basic exercises that lead to a major research project. The
assignments are linked directly to what we discuss in class.

Note we will use the first two hours of class for instruction and discussion. The
final hour is for small-group meetings, where questions about individual projects
can be raised.

Learning outcomes:
By the end of this course students should have a basic understanding of
research methods and be well prepared to undertake a major research project.

1 Formerly ARCH 627, Research Methods for Architects
Assignments:
Six minor assignments take students through the basic steps to conceive, present, and prepare to execute a research project. The seventh, major assignment for ARCH 622 is the research proposal. If applicable, students are encouraged to use the real Social Science and Humanities Council (SSHRC) application for this assignment. For info on SSHRC, see [http://www.nserc-crsng.gc.ca/ResearchPortal-PortailDeRecherche/Instructions-Instructions/CGS_M-BESC_M_eng.asp](http://www.nserc-crsng.gc.ca/ResearchPortal-PortailDeRecherche/Instructions-Instructions/CGS_M-BESC_M_eng.asp) A library of successful SSHRC applications (and related agencies) from the School of Architecture is available to students in this course.

Evaluation:
Minor assignments, 6 x 10%
Major assignment, 40%

Grading criteria: The most important criteria for grading in this course is to answer each assignment. The following are also significant: the protocols of academic writing including the acknowledgement of the work of others, good writing free of grammatical errors,

Late and absentee policy:
Grades for late work will be penalized at one grade level per day. For example, work graded as “A” but handed in one day late will receive an “A-”; work graded as “A” but handed in two days late will receive a “B+.” Late work receives no comments. In case of illness, religious holidays, or other special considerations, please refer to McGill’s statement on reasonable accommodation: [https://www.mcgill.ca/secretariat/files/secretariat/2016-04_student_assessment_policy.pdf](https://www.mcgill.ca/secretariat/files/secretariat/2016-04_student_assessment_policy.pdf).

Courtesy:
Please let me know if you are unable to attend class. Note that we will take a short break halfway through the class time. Please do not text during class.
Proposed Schedule

**Part I: Research Methods**

**Sept. 11**
What is architectural research?
*Lucas, Introduction*

[since we won’t have time to read these ahead of class, they are provided here as background reading on the role of research in architectural education]


**Sept. 18**
Library tour (2:30-4:00)
Meet librarian David Greene in McLennan Library lobby at 2:30
Literature review
*Lucas, Chapter 3-4*


*Assignment 1: write a critical review of one source relevant to your proposed thesis topic, due next week.*

**Sept. 25**
Research question
*Lucas, Chapter 1-2*

- Jacalyn Duffin, “How to research a question,” in *History of Medicine: A Scandalously Short Introduction* (simply substitute “architecture” for “medicine” and it works for us).
- Booth et al, chapter 3 (especially 3.3)

*Assignment 2: submit three distinct research questions on the same topic, due next week.*

**Oct. 2**
Fieldwork + interviews
Lucas, Chapter 5-6


Assignment 3: imagine your topic using a qualitative and then quantitative method. Write a paragraph on each, due Oct. 16.

Oct. 9 NO CLASS

Oct. 16
Design research

Assignment 4: write a 250-word abstract, including a tentative title, due next week

Part II: Guest Researchers discuss their methods

Oct. 23
David Theodore on technology

Assignment 5: state three distinct arguments that could be made with your data or sources, due next week

Oct. 30
Ipek Tureli on spatial justice
Architectural history *Lucas, Chapter 10*
Politics of space *Lucas, Chapter 11*


Nov. 6
Dianne Harris on race
- Watch the film “Crisis in Levittown, PA.” (1957):
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=oIPos4YYXnk

- Dianne Harris, “Introduction” and “Rendered Whiteness” in *Little White Houses*.

Nov. 13
Alberto Perez-Gomez on hermeneutics
*Lucas, Chapter 12*

Nov. 20
Martin Bressani on architecture as fiction
Case study: Pugin and Melodrama

**Part III: Additional Research Methods**

Nov. 27
Gender as a category of analysis

Assignment 6: interpret an object or place related to your thesis topic from a gendered perspective, due Dec. 4.

Dec. 4
Material culture *Lucas, Chapter 8*
Environmental psychology *Lucas, Chapter 9*
Dec. 7
User-based architectural history
*Lucas, Chapters 12-13*


**FINAL PROPOSAL IS DUE DEC 7, START OF CLASS.**