ARCH 540 Selected Topics in Architecture

KNOWLEDGE INSTITUTIONS AND THEIR ARCHITECTURAL NETWORKS

Term: Fall 2014
Instructor: Ipek Tureli

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Seminar meetings: Fridays 3:30-5:30 pm, Room 207.

- (2-0-7) Two hours of contact; seven hours of weekly work outside the classroom.
- No prerequisite
- 3 credits

Course Description:

Knowledge intuitions such as schools, college campuses, museums, archives, public libraries are particularly suited to studying “architectural networks” which consist not only of human actors (e.g. patron, financer, consultant, designer, builder, user groups) but also of non-human actors that mediate relations between human actors including material things (e.g. buildings) and concepts. This course is based on an understanding of architecture not just as a container of social action but as an actor of its own—one with agency.

Professional practice in architecture has long had an international component due to the expertise developed in knowledge institutions. Postwar architects such as Cedric Price conceived of using architecture and education for economic development. Beyond the conventional campus, they reimagined the city as a school (Hertzberger, Smithson, Candilis, Josic, Woods and Scheidhelm). In contrast to such utopian visions about what architecture and education can enable, powerful universities (e.g. Columbia University in Harlem) have caused their fair share of controversy by expanding aggressively in their immediate urban contexts as well as abroad. While knowledge institutions have emerged as key sites of architectural experimentation, defining parameters of
innovative global practice, they have also drawn condemning criticism for supporting autocratic regimes.

Among several types of knowledge institutions, schools and campuses are those that are most widespread and with seemingly altruistic ends. Yet, organized education was never intended to liberate society. It was always for pragmatic concerns, e.g. for disciplining society, inculcating ideology (e.g. religion or nation states) or maintaining social distinction. Today, commercial interests seem to steer the planning and design of knowledge institutions; from the Guggenheim Museum in Bilbao, Spain to new American campuses and museums in the Gulf States or in Singapore (Yale) and China (Liverpool). Whatever their initial motivations may be, contemporary institutions of transcultural learning can never be simply transplants of foreign formal attitudes or vehicles of imposed ideology, or “outposts of empire.” They are also constituted by locally driven change, and, as such, act as independent cultural agents that work transnationally.

Organized in three parts, the course first introduces key concepts that have defined the study of the museum, the archive, the library, and the school. In the second and third parts, histories of school buildings and college campuses are discussed in a loosely chronological ordering.

Invited guests, McGill Vice President Olivier Marcil and Associate Vice President Robert Couvrette, and School of Architecture’s Prof. David Covo, will discuss McGill’s past and future vision for the architectural design of the downtown campus.

**Course Structure:**

**Part I: Concepts**

W1  September 5  Introduction: ‘Architectural Networks’
W2  September 12  Carceral Archipelago and the Prison
W3  September 19  Exhibitionary Complex and the Museum
W4  September 26  The Library
W5  October 3  The Archive - CCA visit
W6  October 10  Cultural Capital

**Part II: Schools and Architecture**

W7  October 17  Educating the Public
W8  October 24  Educating ‘Others’
W9  October 31  Open plan and other experiments

**Part III: College Campuses and their Design**

W10 November 7  The Expediency of the Campus
W11 November 14  Modern University and the Modern City
W12 November 21  Postwar University and the Military-Industrial Complex
W13 November 28  The City as School and the Anti-University
Format and general requirements

Attendance and active participation are mandatory. This course takes shape as a roundtable where texts and ideas will be presented and debated. Each week, one specific theme will be presented and discussed. A roundtable is characterized by a principle of equality between the participants. In an effort to generate animated and meaningful discussion, students must complete required readings prior to the weekly seminars and come prepared.

Please note that the reading list is subject to changes and updates throughout the semester.

Communication and correspondence:

You can email the instructor for an appointment but refrain from discussing course topics over email. Use the online discussion forums so everyone can benefit.

McGill’s “My Courses” site will be used to post syllabus, and PDFs of required readings, and to host the discussion forum. “e-Portfolio” will be used to create webpages of student work—introduction to e-Portfolio will be provided during contact hours.

Discussion question submission:

Each week 24 hours before the class, the students will submit the to the discussion forum one question to be discussed in class, based on the readings, and visible to his peers.

Presenters’ role:

Each student will sign up to be the presenter and discussion leader for one week. The presenter’s role is to encourage class-wide participation and discussion through bringing provocative examples and asking thoughtful questions. She will consult the instructor during office hours at least one week before the presentation week. She will provide a clear summary and analysis of the given text(s) in a slide presentation; give brief background information on the text’s author as well as the context into which the text was published. Furthermore, if the author describes or references one or several projects, then the presenter must make a brief research on the project and prepare a series of images to be projected during the presentation.

Evaluation criteria

--- Attendance, reading and participation: 20%
--- Presentations: 25%
--- Discussion questions: 15%
--- Research paper (only PhDs) or Project (undergrads and masters)
    --- Paper: 40% (approval; draft development 20%; final 20%)
    --- Project: 40% (a chapter/walk in the McGill “Campus Guide”)
Please expect revisions to the readings. You will be informed two weeks in advance of any changes.

PART I: CONCEPTS

W1 September 5 Introduction: ‘Architectural Networks’

W2 September 12 Carceral Archipelago and the Prison


W3 September 19 Exhibitionary Complex and the Museum


W4 September 26 The Library


W5  October 3  The Archive - CCA Visit


W6  October 10  Cultural Capital


PART II: SCHOOLS AND ARCHITECTURE

W7  October 17  Educating the Public

Guest speaker: Tassos Anastassiadis


W8 October 24 Educating ‘Others’
Guest speaker: David Covo


W9 October 31 Open plan and other experiments

Brian Keating; T L Zani, “What is an open plan school?” and “Impact of Open Plan Schools,” In The Development of Open Plan Primary School Building Design in Australia (West Perth, W.A.: Education Dept. of Western Australia, 1977), 3-22; 40-44.


PART III: COLLEGE CAMPUSES AND THEIR DESIGN

W10 November 7 The Expediency of the Campus


W11 November 14 Modern University and the Modern City
Guest speaker: Robert Couvurette, Associate Vice-Principal (University Services)


Margaret Mary Grubiak, “Locating Religion on Campus” and “New Cathedrals for the Modern University,” White Elephants on Campus: The Decline of the University Chapel in America, 1920-1960 (University of Notre Dame Press, 2014), 41-66; 67-94.

W12 November 21 Postwar University and the Military-Industrial Complex
Guest speaker: Olivier Marcil, Vice-Principal (Communications and External Relations)


W13 November 28 The City as School and the Anti-University


**McGill Policy Statements**

- McGill University values academic integrity. Therefore, all students must understand the meaning and consequences of cheating, plagiarism and other academic offences under the Code of Student Conduct and Disciplinary Procedures (see www.mcgill.ca/students/srr/honest/ for more information).

  L'université McGill attache une haute importance à l'honnêteté académique. Il incombe par conséquent à tous les étudiants de comprendre ce que l'on entend par tricherie, plagiat et autres infractions académiques, ainsi que les conséquences que peuvent avoir de telles actions, selon le Code de conduite de l'étudiant et des procédures disciplinaires (pour de plus amples renseignements, veuillez consulter le site www.mcgill.ca/students/srr/honest/).

- In accord with McGill University’s Charter of Students’ Rights, students in this course have the right to submit in English or in French any written work that is to be graded.

- © Instructor generated course materials (e.g., handouts, notes, summaries, exam questions, etc.) are protected by law and may not be copied or distributed in any form or in any medium without explicit permission of the instructor. Note that infringements of copyright can be subject to follow up by the University under the Code of Student Conduct and Disciplinary Procedures.

- As the instructor of this course I endeavor to provide an inclusive learning environment. However, if you experience barriers to learning in this course, do not hesitate to discuss them with me and the Office for Students with Disabilities, 514-398-6009.

- End-of-course evaluations are one of the ways that McGill works towards maintaining and improving the quality of courses and the student’s learning experience. You will be notified by e-mail when the evaluations are available on Mercury, the online course evaluation system. Please note that a minimum number of responses must be received for results to be available to students.

- In the event of extraordinary circumstances beyond the University’s control, the content and/or evaluation scheme in this course is subject to change.