

A4374 GSAPP
Fall 2016
Wednesday, 1-3
Buell, room 300S
Mary McLeod

THE THEORETICAL TURN IN ARCHITECTURE: 1960-2000
STRUCTURALISM/POSTSTRUCTURALISM
Postmodernism, Deconstructivism, Folding, Blobs, and Post-Theory

This seminar examines some of the theoretical and critical approaches current in architecture debate from 1960 to the beginning of the twenty-first century. The course focuses in particular on the question of meaning in architecture, beginning with approaches influenced by semiology and structuralism to establish an architecture of greater signification, and concluding with recent trends influenced by poststructuralist theories that challenge the possibility of architecture meaning. The last class will address the current reaction against theory, and the emergence of anti-theoretical “theories” (technological determinism, Neo-Pragmatism, sensationalism, etc.). Certain classes will consider general theoretical approaches, usually originating in philosophy or literary criticism; others will examine specific currents in architecture in relation to these theoretical approaches. Seminars will be structured primarily around the assigned readings, which include: Roland Barthes, "The Eiffel Tower"; Jürgen Habermas, "Modernism: An Incomplete Project"; Jean-François Lyotard, The Postmodern Condition; Andreas Huyssen, "Mapping the Postmodern"; Jacques Derrida, "Structure, Sign, and Play in the Discourse of the Human Sciences"; Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari, A Thousand Plateaus, Alan Colquhoun, "Historicism and the Limits of Semiology"; Robert Venturi, Complexity and Contradiction in Architecture, Aldo Rossi, The Architecture of the City; Raphael Moneo, "On Typology"; Peter Eisenman, "Architecture and the Problem of the Rhetorical Figure"; Bernard Tschumi, "Six Concepts"; Marc Wigley, The Architecture of Deconstruction: Derrida's Haunt, and Greg Lynn, "The Folded, the Pliant, and the Supple" and "Animate Form."

Requirements:

Three brief papers (2 papers 3-5 pages; 1 paper 5-6 pages), discussing issues raised by the readings. Several informal seminar presentations. All assigned readings must be read before the appropriate class.

In addition, students will be asked to attend part (or all) of the symposium sponsored by the Museum of Modern Art, November 10-12 in honor of the fiftieth anniversary of Complexity and Contradiction in Architecture.

Enrollment:

Class size is limited to 15 students. Generally, third-year M.Arch., CCCP, Ph.D. students, and individuals with a background in history and theory will be given first priority if enrollment exceeds 15. Doctoral students will be expected to do additional readings

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Visiting Architects and/or Critics

There will be additional class meetings with contemporary architectural theorists or practitioners. For these class sessions, students will be expected to prepare questions in advance and arrange a discussion format.