

INSTRUCTOR: Nidhip Mehta
CONTACT: nmehta@njit.edu 201-932-9924
OFFICE HOURS: By appointment only

INTRODUCTION

In this course, students will explore critical theoretical dialogues that have impacted the discipline of architecture from antiquity to contemporary times. The ideas generated from these dialogues – whether through books, articles, essays, or other forms of media – have shaped architectural thinking, movements, styles, and trends over time. Students will explore theories in ten broad categories, first as an overview and subsequently in more detail. These theories and, eventually, provocations arising from them, will be presented and discussed in class, encouraging critical discourse, debate, and reflection.

WEEKLY SCHEDULE

(Subject to change, refer to Canvas for updated info)

Week	Date	Class Activities	Assignments
1	Tue 16 Jan	Introductions and first impressions	Start Reflective Journal
	Mon 22 Jan	<i>Last day to add/drop a class</i>	
2	Tue 23 Jan	Discussion of Overall Topics and Critical Theories	
3	Tue 30 Jan	Topics 1+2 Overview: presentation and discussion	
4	Tue 6 Feb	Topics 3+4 Overview: presentation and discussion	
5	Tue 13 Feb	Topics 5+6 Overview: presentation and discussion	
6	Tue 20 Feb	Topics 7+8 Overview: presentation and discussion	
7	Tue 27 Feb	Topics 9+10 Overview: presentation and discussion	
8	Tue 5 Mar	Special Topic Presentation and Discussion	MIDTERM REFLECTIVE JOURNAL DUE - 10 MAR TOPIC PRESENTATION AND REFLECTION DUE - 10 MAR
	Tue 12 Mar	<i>Spring Break: No class</i>	
9	Tue 19 Mar	Provocations 1+2 Overview: presentation and debate	Start Speculative Report
10	Tue 26 Mar	Provocations 3+4 Overview: presentation and debate	
11	Tue 2 Apr	Provocations 5+6 Overview: presentation and debate	
12	Tue 9 Apr	Provocations 7+8 Overview: presentation and debate	
13	Tue 16 Apr	Provocations 9+10 Overview: presentation and debate	
14	Tue 23 Apr	Special Topic Presentation and Discussion	FINAL REFLECTIVE JOURNAL DUE - 1 MAY PROVOCATION PRESENTATION AND REFLECTION DUE - 1 MAY
	Sat 11 May	<i>Final grades uploaded to Banner</i>	

CLASS STRUCTURE AND TEACHING MODE

Classes will be held in one session per week: Tuesdays, 6:00pm to 8:50pm and will meet in Kupfrian Hall, Room 106. The teaching will be seminar-based with few lectures and more discussions. Student engagement and participation is a must and class sessions will involve student-led presentations, discussions, and debates to better understand the topics. Reflection will also be an important component and students will be required to regularly maintain an ongoing reflective learning journal to be submitted at the midterm and end-semester.

At the start of the semester, students will choose among ten overall topics that relate to broad categories of critical theories of architecture, both archaic and contemporary (see topics below; work may be group or individual based on the number of students in the class). Suggested readings and resources for each topic will be provided by the instructor, but students are expected to look beyond and find their own additional resources.

In the first half of the semester, students will lead class discussions with a broad overview of each topic, with cursory attention paid to various sub-topics within the overall category. Each student will prepare a short slide presentation on the topic and then lead a class discussion (with prompts from the instructor). At the end of each topic, the students will reflect and the assigned student will consider which subtopic to take forward in more detail.

In the second half of the semester, students will repeat the sequence but will now choose a single sub-topic and focus on a critical issue for in-class debate. The issue should be presented as a provocation that leads to a formal debate amongst other students. Prompts will be provided by the instructor.

The topics are as follows. Students will choose their topic in the first class session.

- 1. The Body, Movement, and Interaction in Space:** The scale of the human body in relation to how it occupies architectural space. Movement and motility through spaces in small and large numbers. Interaction between bodies and objects (furniture, screens, etc.). Discuss critical
- 2. Building Form and Order:** The formal arrangement of a building in plan, section, elevation, and 3D. Order and lack of order. Order related to style and movement with focus on proportion and scale. Rhythm, sequence, symmetry, balance, axes, juxtapositions.
- 3. Construction, Structure, and Architectonics:** Issues arising from the construction of buildings, and structural principles relating to architectural ideas. The assembly of parts, and the relation of parts to whole. Materials, methods, sequence, safety, etc.
- 4. Drawing, Imaging, and Presentation:** Issues relating to the representation of architectural ideas, both old and new. The evolution of drawing, modeling, rendering, imaging. Software and technology issues. Photorealism vs. abstraction. New media, social media, etc.
- 5. City, Suburb, Town, and Country:** The architect's role in planning of urban, suburban, and rural agglomerations of people and buildings. What makes cities work and issues relating to density. The role of zoning and master plans in the context of historical city planning trends.
- 6. Transport and the Automobile:** The impact of transport and its relation to architecture and planning. Roads, streets, vehicles, mass transit, parking, travel, commuting, and traffic.
- 7. Ecology and Environment:** Issues relating to sustainability, eco-sensitivity, environmental context, and climate change in relation to architecture and building science. Focusing on material production, waste, carbon footprint, fossil fuels, emissions, and the disposal of architectural materials.
- 8. Inclusivity and Bias:** Issues relating to race, class, income, orientation, age, gender, disability, etc. Equality and equity, social justice, and how architecture has succeeded or failed to address social problems.
- 9. Architectural and Design Education:** The evolution of education, training, and licensure of architects. The role of universities, NCARB, and NAAB in teaching and learning. The availability and suitability of degrees, diplomas, certificates. The university design studio in context of other courses. Relation to other disciplines. Profession and industry preparedness. Infrastructure, faculty, students, parents, employers, etc.
- 10. Business, Practice, and Governance of Architecture:** The evolution of the practice of architecture (master builder, master architect). Earning a livelihood, dealing with clients and networking. Project management, billing, employees, entrepreneurship, partnership, internship. The role of the AIA, state boards, and reciprocity with other states and countries.

COURSE LEARNING OUTCOMES

Students of this course will be expected to fulfill specific learning outcomes that demonstrate measurable knowledge and skills obtained from the course content and activity. The following outcomes are directly tied to course assignments and activities, and will be assessed for the final grade:

- ☐ Engage in group discussion to personally reflect on the chosen topics and subject areas related to architectural theory.
- ☐ Conduct research on selected topics based on critical architectural theories and display an in-depth understanding of the selected topic parameters and context.
- ☐ Respond critically to the discussion topics, formulate questions, and postulate ideas and alternatives.
- ☐ Use regular reflective writing to refine an individual and personal viewpoint on the different topics discussed in the course.
- ☐ Explore and demonstrate leadership attributes in group work scenarios and contribute towards collaborative learning through participatory research, presentation, and provocation.
- ☐ Develop and demonstrate empathy and an ethical approach to a diversity of viewpoints, opinions, and impacts of the topics on the discipline of architecture and architectural practice.

NAAB SHARED VALUES CRITERIA

The National Architectural Accrediting Board accredits NJIT's architecture program. The NAAB has Shared Values of the Discipline and the Profession that must be covered by any architectural curriculum to attain their approval. This course satisfies the following shared values:

Design: Architects design better, safer, more equitable, resilient, and sustainable built environments. Design thinking and integrated design solutions are hallmarks of architecture education, the discipline, and the profession.

Environmental Stewardship and Professional Responsibility: Architects are responsible for the impact of their work on the natural world and on public health, safety, and welfare. As professionals and designers of the built environment, we embrace these responsibilities and act ethically to accomplish them.

Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion: Architects commit to equity and inclusion in the environments we design, the policies we adopt, the words we speak, the actions we take, and the respectful learning, teaching, and working environments we create. Architects seek fairness, diversity, and social justice in the profession and in society and support a range of pathways for students seeking access to an architecture education.

Knowledge and Innovation: Architects create and disseminate knowledge focused on design and the built environment in response to ever-changing conditions. New knowledge advances architecture as a cultural force, drives innovation, and prompts the continuous improvement of the discipline.

Leadership, Collaboration, and Community Engagement: Architects practice design as a collaborative, inclusive, creative, and empathetic enterprise with other disciplines, the communities we serve, and the clients for whom we work.

Lifelong Learning: Architects value educational breadth and depth, including a thorough understanding of the discipline's body of knowledge, histories and theories, and architecture's role in cultural, social, environmental, economic, and built contexts. The practice of architecture demands lifelong learning, which is a shared responsibility between academic and practice settings.

ASSIGNMENTS AND ASSESSMENT

Grade evaluation will be given at mid-semester and end-semester as outlined below. Students will be evaluated on the basis of assignments/projects as well as on engagement. The categories of assessment are as follows:

1. Topic Overview: Each student will prepare a short slide presentation that researches and outlines the history and evolution of their chosen topic as it reflects upon the discipline of architecture. The presentation is meant to be a prompt for discussion and should be a broad overview of the topic, with multiple subtopics highlighted and explained. Following this, the student will lead a class discussion on the topics presented, encouraging questions, comments, and debate. They should be able to provide a relatively neutral and objective viewpoint during the discussion, allowing opinions to be raised by other students. At the conclusion, the student will complete a one-page reflection on the discussion and outcomes, if any. The slide presentation and reflection will be uploaded to Canvas by the mid-term deadline.

2. Provocation: Following each student's Topic Overview and discussion, they will choose a single subtopic that arose from the dialogue that seems most relevant and impactful, and they will research that subtopic in more detail. A second presentation will occur, presenting the subtopic as a provocation or call to action – a statement representing a specific point of view (even if the point of view is contrary to the

student's own perspective on the topic). This provocation will be presented as a slide presentation and the student will follow up leading a structured debate amongst other students in the class, providing prompts. Once again, the student is expected to conclude with a one-page reflection on the presentation and debate. The slide presentation and reflection will be uploaded to Canvas by the end-term deadline.

3. Reflective Journal: In addition to the Topic Overview and Provocation, each student must also maintain a personal reflective journal on the ideas, thoughts, and opinions that emerge from the class discussions/debates initiated by their classmates. The journal should be maintained on a weekly basis, reflecting on that week's class activity and thoughts arising from it. It is primarily a collection of reflective writings, mostly textual in content but can also include images, sketches, and diagrams. All students will submit their journal in PDF format at midterm (for Topic Overviews) as well as endterm (for Provocations) for evaluation.

4. Engagement: Students will also be evaluated on the engagement with the course in two broad categories. First, on participation in class discussions and debates, general attendance and enthusiasm, asking and responding to questions, providing critique to peers, and generally how eagerly you engage with the class, instructor, and each other. Second, you will be evaluated anonymously by your classmates on your topic presentation, discussion leadership, debate leadership, etc. Both of these will be assessed at midterm as well as at endterm.

Grading will be weighted as follows, out of total of 100 points:

Assessment category	Type	Format	Midterm Points	Endterm Points	Final Score
1. Topic Overview	Individual	Slide presentation	10	-	30
	Individual	Class discussion	10	-	
	Individual	Personal reflection	10	-	
2. Provocation	Individual	Slide presentation	-	10	30
	Individual	Structured class debate	-	10	
	Individual	Personal reflection	-	10	
3. Reflective Journal	Individual	Journal document - Overviews	10	-	20
	Individual	Journal document - Provocations	-	10	
4. Engagement	Individual	Class Participation	5	5	20
	Peer evaluation	Group Collaboration	5	5	
Total			50	50	100

Grading Scale for Undergraduate Courses

Grade	Scale	Description
A	90-100	Superior
B+	86-89	Excellent
B	80-85	Very Good
C+	76-79	Good
C	70-75	Acceptable
D	60-69	Minimum
F	59 or below	Inadequate
AUD		Audit

Grade	Scale	Description
I *		Incomplete*
W		Withdrawal
S		Satisfactory
U		Unsatisfactory

* Incomplete is given in rare instances to students who would normally have completed the course work but who could not do so because of special circumstances. It is expected that coursework will be completed during the next regular semester. If this grade is not removed before final grades are due at the end of the next regular semester, a grade of F will be issued.

SUBMISSION AND UPLOAD OF DIGITAL COURSEWORK

Students should upload all coursework in digital PDF format to Canvas at reasonable file sizes (preferably below 10MB). Please login to the course page on Canvas at: canvas.njit.edu/. Additional Instructions for each assignment will be provided on Canvas in advance of the assignment announcement. All other assignments, announcements, resources, documents for the course will be distributed exclusively on Canvas, so be sure to set your notifications accordingly to stay up to date with announcements and changes in the schedule.

Kepler Archiving: Students must upload copies of their assignments to the new KEPLER 5 system found under the KEPLER tab in CANVAS "Modules". CANVAS assignments folders are automatically ported to KEPLER, although students will need to initiate a separate KEPLER upload. The new KEPLER has an improved interface for easier batch uploading. Any file, regardless of file size, or type can be uploaded, although .pdfs and .jpegs are recommended to ensure viewability. KEPLER no longer has individual student folders. Rather, student work is now available for review in either "List View" organized by student or "Gallery View" with thumbnails of all work in an assignment folder viewable at once.

CLASS ABSENCES AND LATE SUBMISSIONS

In general, design education has a built-in approach to students' absenteeism – since the classroom and studio are places to receive feedback and guidance, missing class ultimately works to the detriment of student projects and coursework. This course is no different. Since class time is mostly comprised of discussion and class activities, missing class will directly result in poor quality work. Naturally, there are valid reasons for occasional absences and late or missing work, and students may refer to the [Dean of Students](#) for any absences that may have occurred for valid reasons such as medical issues or University-sanctioned activity, and such absences may be excused provided adequate documentation is provided via the office of the Dean of Students. Factors such as traffic jams, transportation delays, bad weather, and personal issues are *not* valid reasons for excused absences. Such things are generally foreseeable and time allowances can be made. Students are thus expected to make their best effort to attend classes and minimize any factors that are beyond their control. Attendance will be recorded and logged on Canvas.

Elective courses sometimes take a lower priority in architecture school than Studio/Design courses, although this should not be so. Students should be able to balance their Studio work, submissions, reviews, and juries with the work required for elective and other courses. Although the instructor can sometimes make provisions for intense periods of Studio activity, requests to make major changes in due dates, presentation dates, etc. will not be entertained. Absences or late arrivals due to Studio pinups, reviews, etc. will also not be excused.

The consequence of repeated or recurring absences will be a partial or full deduction of grade points in the Engagement grading category, at the discretion of the instructor. Students may end up receiving zero points for Engagement – even if they are otherwise participating – if repeated absenteeism is observed. So please be mindful and make your best effort to attend every class session.

Punctuality is also critical because, in seminar-type courses, late arrivals can disrupt or disturb the flow of discussion and learning and is especially disrespectful when guest speakers are invited. Therefore two (2) late arrivals beyond a reasonable time (more than 10 minutes late) will count as one (1) absence, and points will be deducted from the grade accordingly.

Finally, if students are running late or expected to be absent, a quick text message to the instructor in advance would be appreciated.

REQUIRED READING AND RESOURCES

There is no required textbook for this course. However, certain resources will be shared on Canvas from time to time, some required and some suggested. These may come in the form of: book excerpts (which will be uploaded), articles, blog entries, research papers, essays, journals, videos, etc. Please check Canvas every week for updated resources, documents, and links. Students are also encouraged to share their own relevant resources on Canvas as and when they find them.

LEARNING AND TEACHING CULTURE POLICY

In addition to the overarching values and ethics of the university, the New Jersey School of Architecture (NJSoA) is dedicated to optimism, diversity and solidarity, professional conduct, constructive evaluation and instruction, collaborative community, health and wellbeing, time management and school-life-work balance, respectful stewardship and space management, and well-rounded enrichment. The pedagogy of architecture and design is as complex as it is rewarding, and as dynamically evolving as the people who learn and teach it. This understanding resides at the core of the NJIT Learning and Teaching Culture Policy: <https://design.njit.edu/learning-and-teaching-culture-policy>.

ACADEMIC INTEGRITY, REFERENCING, AND PLAGIARISM

Academic integrity and honesty are of paramount importance. Cheating and plagiarism will not be tolerated. The NJIT Honor Code will be upheld, and any violations will be brought to the immediate attention of the Dean of Students. All students are responsible for upholding the integrity of NJIT by reporting any violation of academic integrity to the Office of the Dean of Students. The identity of the student filing the report will remain anonymous. All students are expected to adhere to the University Code on Academic Integrity:

<https://www.njit.edu/dos/academic-integrity>

and to the Code of Student Conduct:

<https://www.njit.edu/dos/policies/conductcode/index.php>.

The work for this course is not an academic dissertation; however rules for plagiarism and referencing still apply. There will be zero tolerance for plagiarism in any assignment. If even a small amount of plagiarism is seen, your work will be marked as zero and returned for immediate correction and resubmission followed by an automatic 10% reduction in grade. If the resubmitted work is still found to be plagiarized, then the zero grade will remain for the assignment. Students who wish to refute the claim of plagiarism can make an appeal to the Dean of Students as per the Academic Integrity Policy linked above. This will apply to any other form of cheating, copy, or academic dishonesty. Egregious acts of plagiarism or cheating will be referred to the Dean of Students directly and action taken appropriately, including possible failure of the course, suspension, or expulsion from the University.

In academics, plagiarism is big no-no. If you are unfamiliar with what plagiarism is, and how to avoid it, I suggest you visit the website: <https://plagiarism.org>. Especially read these three important articles:

<https://plagiarism.org/article/what-is-plagiarism>

<https://plagiarism.org/article/plagiarism-facts-and-stats>

<https://plagiarism.org/article/preventing-plagiarism-when-writing>

Anything that you are quoting should be cited (as in-text citation) and included in a bibliography. Even if you haven't directly quoted or cited something, and if you have only generally used a source as a reference, it should still be included in your bibliography. The amount of cited material from other sources should not exceed 10% of the text of your report. The amount of uncited material from other sources should be 0%.

There are a number of ways to do referencing properly, and there are several established standards. For this class, we will use MLA (8th edition). For more details and information about referencing (it can be complex) you can consult this excellent website sponsored by Purdue University Online Writing Lab (OWL), which explains how to do referencing using different standards. You will be able to find out how to reference almost any source (article, book, video, blog, interview, etc.). The Purdue OWL can be found at:

https://owl.purdue.edu/owl/purdue_owl.html.

HCAD librarian Maya Gervits has also assembled excellent resources for students use on using images, citing, and plagiarism:

<https://researchguides.njit.edu/c.php?g=671665&p=4727920>.

Some referencing errors can be overlooked, but we cannot be tolerant of any plagiarism. If you're unsure about how to reference something and are concerned that it might be seen as plagiarism then the simple solution is to just not include it. Write your research report as much as possible in your own words. We don't want to see entire paragraphs, pages, or even sentences copy-pasted from the internet.