MELANCHOLY AND THE METROPOLIS

Modernity and its Aftermath

FRAME
The industrial revolution of the 19th unleashed a number of forces which disrupted and disaggregated the organic unity of the city. New technological, economic and social constructions threatened the traditional life world in the city. The many urban theories, projects and practices immediately following this period were preoccupied with covering up the loss, trying to restore the organic unity of the city. They, however, rarely dealt with how this traumatic transformation has been experienced by the man of/in the crowd, the flaneur, the rappicker, the dandy, the beggar, the detective, who were critical of modernity and felt threatened by the accelerated urban development.

Melancholy, as Freud described it, is the inability to come to terms with loss. The goal here is to address the loss, which has been experienced during this traumatic period on the way to modernity and the transformation of the city into the metropolis. It is the intent of the seminar to investigate the effects of these transitions on the city’s inhabitants, not as a pathological condition but use melancholy as a refined, reflective emotion with its own qualities. The seminar intents to look how melancholy with its reflective trait found its way into cultural representations in literature, social studies, art, film, urbanism, where melancholy emotions serve as an explanatory model providing additional insight.
This seminar outlines changes in the discourse and practice of architecture following crisis or turmoil as an opportunity for new potentials, exploring the social, political, and economic context and their influences on architecture and urbanism. Most recently, the disruptive events of the last 12 years contribute to the latest Post Bubble era, with a dramatic financial collapse compounded by socio-political conflicts, and the realization of predictions in climate change. These crises and turmoil upended traditional notions of the typical processes of architectural production and question top-down and bottom-up hierarchies, public and private realms, ownership, and the architectural program. The course will study the current practices of the architecture of crisis as well as the the historical significance of previous post traumatic yet productive periods from post-World War II, the late 70s and early 80s, and other seminal moments that projected and shaped the modern environment.

Examining a selection of initiatives and their geographies, the course will investigate architecture in the context of the new economic landscape of post-bubble conditions, excess, neo-liberalism, vacancy, informal architecture, re-use, and resilience. The seminar will engage texts and projects from Roemer van Toorn, ANT Farm, Henri Lefebvre, Cedric Price, Teddy Cruz, Dana Cuff, Beatriz Colomina, Alejandro Aravena, and Reinhold Martin among others. The seminar will be comprised of lectures, readings, discussions, as well as a final project that will intervene in the existing context of selected cities.

Instructor: David Eugin Moon, dem296@cornell.edu
Course Time: Wednesday 10:10-12:05pm
Course Location:144 Sibley Hall
MEANWHILE... there seems to be a shift — largely undesigned — from a more or less fixed and scenographic approach to the design and inhabitation of the city to one that is looser, and more carnivalesque.

This course will investigate the concept of carnival: its laughter, its persistence, its subversions, and its transgressions. Using a combination of theories rooted in fashion, literature, and architecture, we shall focus on notions of costume, mask, parody, and the grotesque as they relate to urban fashion as well as to their fashioning of the city. We will look at the important roles played by the dandy, the quintrelle, the voyeur, the exhibitionist, the flâneur, the clown, the bohemian, and others. We will speculate on potential ways of occupying and using urban environments.

Of architectural interest [need it be said?] there are numerous forces that shape a city, from the individual to the collective, the intentional and the accidental. Today, there appears to be a slow, yet recognizable transformation in the usage of public space — of its operation and of its physique — especially as it relates to the appropriation and re-assignment of structures within the city. Perhaps, underlying all of this is a tendency for social groups to conspicuously resist an urban environment that is at times intimidating and alienating, and at other times coddling and domineering. The presence of gargantuan infrastructure, aloof and inaccessible, as well as dead industries, derelict properties, and the concrete carapaces of dubious deserted intentions, is beginning to elicit in the citizenry throughout the world — and especially in the Western world — an urge to ‘make sense’ of these things, to incorporate them into their lives as they have been forced to incorporate them into their worlds.

**CLASSWORK:**
- **Readings**: 1 or 2 per week, providing the foundation for discussions [15% final grade]
- **Mid-term Project**: Paper (10 pages) or Project (mask or costume design, with 1 page description) [35% final grade]
- **Final Project**: Paper (20 pages) or Project (an urban mask, masque, or costume, with 1 page description) [50% final grade]
Curatorship has become a focal point as much in the dissemination of architectural culture as in the production of architecture itself. Increasingly conspicuous, curating architecture both as a practice, but also as a field of research, seems to have reached a state of disciplinary legitimacy.

Simon Pennec

Premise: This course examines the role of architecture exhibitions within discourse, their history and design. We will consider how exhibitions function in terms of establishing critical and research agendas, the rise of the architecture biennale, and the establishment of architecture departments within museums. The use of models in diverse formats will be a central focus throughout the semester; the display of drawings, maps, projections and ephemera will also be treated. Broadly, exhibitions themselves will be viewed as models of a kind, as vehicles to communicate complex ideas in accessible formats. Students will interrogate how exhibitions prompt questions of narrative, culture, pedagogy, activism and professional identity.

A final paper in the form of an exhibition catalog will give students the chance to curate an imaginary exhibition, but one rooted to real objects, architects and venues that they select.

Key texts:
Sarah Chaplin and Alexandra Stara, *Curating Architecture and the City* (Routledge, 2009)
Henry Russell Hitchcock and Philip Johnson, *The International Style* (MoMA, 1932)
Arch 3308/6308
Special Topics in Theory
Wednesday 10:10-12:05pm
Sibley 142

Iñáqui Carnicero
Elements, Principles, and Theories in Japanese Architecture and Gardens

For early 20th century architects like Bruno Taut, Walter Gropius and Frank Lloyd Wright, visiting Japan and imbibing Japanese design sensibility was both a revelation and a confirmation of much of their thinking regarding the direction of their own work. The course is an introduction to and an analysis of the architecture and gardens of Japan. Interpreting the unique geopolitical situation of Japan, as a sheltering archipelago longing for continental sophistication, will suggest how isolation and borrowings continue to shape the forms of Japanese architecture and gardens. In a related context we will investigate how the revered and ethereal craft of shaping paper, wood, stone and water has transformed the simplest of materials into archetypical constructions. Cultural phenomena such as *ma* (space-time continuum) *oku* (the inner depth) *yohaku no bi* (the beauty of extra whiteness), *shakkei* (borrowed landscapes), and others will be explored to reveal the forces shaping structure and space. Since an understanding of the evolution of social and political discourse in Japan is necessary to fully comprehend the unique meaning of its constructed environment, additional attention will be given to these aspects of the culture—especially the spiritual—as they exert an influence on various expressions of form. Class format will consist of lectures, films, discussions and readings. Two exams will be given during the semester. In addition, each student will be required to complete either a project that represents an exploration of a concept, form, characteristic or influence associated with Japanese architecture and gardens, or a research paper.
This seminar explores the relationship between the economies of emerging cities and the urbanization of fundamental historical ecologies. The seminar focuses on the geographical context of the Brazilian Amazon and the conditions of its urbanization, occasionally in dialogue with ongoing political processes in neighboring Bolivia.

The urbanization that is characteristic of the Amazon is an extraordinarily complex phenomenon. It involves dimensions extending from the pole of industrial resource extraction and the resultant formation of advanced capitalist economies in the heart of the forest, to the fragile continuity of the traditions of indigenous societies whose economic structures and spatial environments are experienced as fundamentally intertwined with rural, communitarian, and mythic horizons. In order to interrogate the urban driven form of spatial and territorial expansion in the Amazon, the seminar will inquire into the political economies that motivate it, and thus the orienting ontology, specifically, the ontological assumptions about the meaning and significance of the natural world.

By considering ontological plurality at the level of spatial practices and technologies, the seminar aims to explore the tensions between the global capitalist tendency toward urbanization and “modernizing” and the local traditional orientation toward “ecologizing” as the basis for an imagined political economy that is at the same time a politics of nature.

The seminar will be organized in a series of clusters with an interdisciplinary focus combining elements of architecture, ethnography, anthropology, cartography, political economy, and political philosophy. Clusters include theories of urbanization; nature/culture and human/nonhuman dualisms and critique; life-world and intentionality; commune, community, and state; primitive accumulation and neoextractivism; geophilosophy and cognitive mapping; human ecology and the anthropocene.

Course Instructors: Bruno Bosteels (Professor of Romance Studies, College of Arts & Sciences) and Tao DuFour (Visiting Critic of Architecture, College of Architecture, Art & Planning). Meeting Time: Thursdays, 2:30 - 4:25 PM.

Applications must be submitted via http://urbanismseminars.cornell.edu/apply/ by December 2, 2015.
AAP NYC
Arch 6308
Special Topics in Theory

Joan Ockman
Arch 4509/6509
Special Topics in Visual Representation

Screens

Thursday 10:10-12:05pm
205 Rand Hall

John Zissovici
"We are searching for some kind of harmony between two intangibles: a form which we have not yet designed, and a context which we cannot properly describe."
- Christopher Alexander, Notes on the Synthesis of Form, 1964

ARCH 4509/6509: Sp. Tp. in Visual Representation:

ON FIGURES AND FIELDS

Sasa Zivkovic
Tuesday from 10:10 am to 12:05 pm
142 Sibley Hall

Figures are inherently object-like. The figure is mostly self-referential, it has a distinct boundary, and produces idiosyncratic shapes generally best recognizable in section. Figures are potentially totalitarian, semiotic, homogeneous; they imply and constitute architectural archetypes such as statues, monuments, or other singular architectural reference points. Fields are inherently non-objectual and surface-like. The field is generally understood as a form of non-hierarchical organization, it is expansive, possibly indefinite, and has sublime qualities. Fields are potentially democratic, adaptable, heterogeneous; they imply and constitute architectural archetypes such as grids, scaffolding, envelopes, or infrastructural networks.

Digital tools and processes have long transformed our understanding of the complex relationship between figure and field. Associations have become obscured while intricacies multiplied. As we enter post-digital debate (including OOO and neo-postmodernism), an interest in primitive figure, facade, shape, and meaning emerges within our discipline. Simultaneously, exploration of material systems, envelope, ornamentation, surface, and performance continues to thrive. A re-evaluation of the implied dependence between figure and field - touching upon ideas of figure-ground, gestalt theory, field condition, form and metaphor, language in architecture, syntax, notation, performance of either surface or form - seems imperative and is de-facto long underway.

This course poses the following questions: How do we define the roles of figures and fields in the production of architecture today? What is the agency of field? What are the politics of figure? How does either provide an organizational framework for architecture? Where does reciprocity start and estrangement begin? Is it time for fresh provocations? How do we prompt new figure-field relationships?

During the course of the semester, students will be introduced to digital drawing tools such as Grasshopper (& affiliated plug-ins) and Processing coding language. Weekly research and design exercises will be accompanied by readings which illustrate significant hypotheses and allow for debate and discussion within the classroom. This seminar will focus heavily on the development of drawings as tools for the expression of architectural ideas. Knowledge of digital parametric design tools such as Processing or Grasshopper is not a prerequisite for this course.

For questions regarding this course please contact me via email: sz382@cornell.edu / Readings will include: Allan, Alexander, Rowe & Koetter, MOS, O.M. Ungers, Eisenman, O’Brien, Lynn, Reiser + Umemoto, Picon, Mitchell, Hays, Martin, Chu, among others.
The paradoxical concepts of *Retreat* demonstrate the polarities of the inhabited coastal condition. The coast as a space for leisure, attraction, a “get away” through the seaside resort and second home is in sharp contrast to *managed retreat* where vulnerable coastal neighborhoods move away from the water’s edge motivated by the danger, uncertainty and fear that the contemporary coast infers. The simultaneous desire for and fear of the coast is both a historical and social construct as well as a political and economic strategy.

*Retreat 02* is an investigation and re-drawing of the spaces constructed for leisure. This space, reliant on its environment for success, yet often dismissive of its own destructive nature, is caught in a dangerous irony – a desire for both natural beauty and ever-increasing popularity.

This course will locate the spaces of leisure; those that rely on “pristine” environments and simultaneously on a growing number of human visitors and escalating consumption to survive. Students will systematically measure and critique both the standard and extreme practices deployed in search for a “resort” typology that use its most valued commodity – its environment – as a guiding principle.

An in depth analysis through drawing current resort models and patterns of use in conjunction with documenting less tangible matter - environmental, economic and historic transformations of their respective sites will serve as a base to explore additional spatial ironies including but not limited to Extreme Resorts (nested artificial environments), Managed Retreats (conversion of coastal buyouts to public space), Botox Beaches (sand infused beaches) and Ecotourism (exploring untouched land).
Furniture and architecture are related intentional design activities that share many attributes, including history, theory, and materiality. They also share the potential to have significant impacts on the natural, non-human world. This course will explore the relations of furniture design to architecture through the lens of ecological literacy to enable a sustainable, culturally relevant practice of creating furniture.

2 x 4 Challenge
Objective:
“If you see in any given situation only what everybody else can see, you can be said to be so much a representation of your culture that you are a victim of it”. (S.I. Hayakawa)

The purpose of this project is to experience the resistance and reward of the non-conventional path, in a formal sense as well as an ethical one.

Description:
This project consists of two components. The first component is to acquire an 8’ length of 2x4 piece of dimensional lumber meeting the greatest number of sustainable criteria as possible. Write up and present the results of your research and procurement efforts, listing the satisfied criteria and justifying your decisions.

The second component of the project is to invent a piece of furniture using all of the wood contained in the 8’ length of a 2 x 4 piece of dimensional lumber. A secondary material element is allowed. The furniture can be designed for any interior surface.

Glass Furniture
Prototype - Digital Fabrication
Strategies of Lamination
Bent Ply
Prototypes - Digital
Fabrication Strategies

Schedule:
Mandatory Organizational Meeting: Feb. 2
Tuesday, 2:30-4:25 p.m. in 205 Rand Hall
Course Description

This one-credit course is designed to give an outline of Italian Cinema and to study of the characteristics of Italian culture. Through the analysis of some of the most representative films, students will be able to explore the peculiarities of Italian cinematography, in particular how it has always reflected and influenced Italian society in an attempt to develop new cinematic languages capable of dealing with the tradition and at the same time reflect and comment upon the transformations of Italian society.

Students are required to watch four to six films and discuss them in class with the instructor. The films can regard various aspects of historical and social developments of Italy, from the end of Fascism until today. Class discussions will be based on the analysis of the films viewed and relevant aspects of Italian society and history.

Emphasis will be given to Neorealism during the post-war years, the golden age of Italian cinema during the economic boom in the 60’s, intellectuals and Italian political cinema of the 70’s, and contemporary Italian cinema.
AAP NYC
Arch 6509
Special Topics in Visual Representation

Matthew Bannister, Leah White + Christa Hamilton
COLLEGE OF ARCHITECTURE, ART & PLANNING

DEPARTMENT OF ARCHITECTURE

BUILDING TECHNOLOGY ELECTIVES

Spring 2016
GLASS ENCLOSURES
ARCH 4605/6605: Special Topics in Construction
Cornell University, AAP Department of Architecture, Spring 2016
Day/time/location: TBD
Instructor: Patrick P. Charles, pcharles@cornell.edu

Left: detail of the pedestal of La Croix des Verriers (the glassmakers’ cross) in Boisses-Penchot, Aveyron, France, 1861, showing the stacked sheets of glass construction. Middle: Detail of connection between the steel glass-holding frame and the exoskeletal primary steel column in Mies van der Rohé’s Farnsworth House, 1951. Right: Detail of the clamp fitting securing 4 sheets of glass in the Juilliard Alice Tully Hall, NYC, 2008, Diller Scofidio +Renfro Architects.

“(…) glass has provided one of the earliest, and still rare, examples of controlled use of science at the nanolevel in a well-established gigatechnology. ”
Rustum ROY

This course explores several of the many facets of glass as a material and its use in building enclosures of various kinds.

How is glass made, artisanally, industrially and naturally? What place does glass occupy in our collective imaginary, and in various artists’ vision? How does it shape our daily life? What linkages exist between the science-based ancestry of glass (in the form of lenses in microscopes and telescopes) and its contemporary industrially-produced counterpart? How does glass behave; what are its properties? How do coatings and other treatments modify its properties? What are its size limitations? How is glass transformed and finished? Can glass be bended? How does it break?

How is glass assembled, fastened and jointed? How does glass relate to other materials and generate new design worlds? What can we learn from experimental glass structures?

What role does glass play in building enclosure? How can glass’ transparency and opacity at different wavelengths of the solar spectrum be harnessed in building enclosure design? What other considerations should the designer take into account when designing a transparent enclosure? What tools are available to help choose the “right” glass?

What are new areas of research in glass today? What new aesthetic possibilities profile themselves with the introduction of new glass-based products? How does our evolving notion of transparency informs architectural design and building envelope design?

The course strives to cast light onto these and other questions and, by doing so, aims to equip students with fundamental knowledge they can actuate in the design arena, as well as to nourish their reflection on the role glass plays in contemporary architectural debates. The course intends to mix hands-on, analytical, research- as well as design-based learning.
MATTERS OF RESISTANCE is primarily concerned with challenging disciplinary paradigms about the role of structure in contemporary design practice. The course will investigate the operative potential of structural performance and its capacity to generate distinctive material, formal and spatial organizations. These ideas will be researched in the context of the pioneering work of a small group of architects, engineers and master builders in Latin America during the 20th century.

During the semester students will produce speculative models, drawings and diagrams implementing aspects of their research to advance the discourse around form and structure in architecture.
*typo*

Jean-Nicolas-Louis Durand.

**Typo**

Special Topics in Visual Representation, Spring 2016  
Visiting Critic, Michael Jefferson  
mnj23@cornell.edu

Type in the field of architecture engenders many readings. At once it may suggest that which is common, dominant, a model to follow, or an ideal. It may be abstract and conceptual or concrete and literal. Oscillating between these readings, Typo will explore the method and study of type (otherwise known as typology) as an operative procedure for architectural production. Specifically, techniques of misreading and error will be presented and encouraged.

The course will be structured in two sequences. In its first phase, we will question what constitutes “typical” in architecture and contemporary articulations of it (Graphic Standards). Lectures will delve into the evolution of typology from the historical interpretations of Jean-Nicolas-Louis Durand and Antoine-Chrysostome Quatremère de Quincy to contemporary definitions of Peter Carl and Christopher C.M. Lee. Using the common understanding of type as defined by programmatic use, students will develop a taxonomy that classifies buildings according to their use with an intent toward creating their own definition of typological attributes through rigorous analysis.

The second phase will look for error in typology and develop representational techniques for formal invention. Lectures will explore representation and causes of variation, specifically: zoning laws (Hugh Ferriss), programmatic repurposing, and climatic degradation (deformations to coastal housing caused by alterations to code). Inherent in the analysis of type is the serial understanding and development of a cumulative knowledge that lends itself to surpassing type and proposing a new or alternative model. To further encourage differentiation, the course will introduce strategies of misreading to promote the intentional production of error. Techniques of appropriation, recombination, and superimposition will be used in conjunction with representational strategies of drawing (axonometric) and building (model) that transform 2-D to 3-D and vice versa.
Arch 4605/6605
Special Topics in Construction

Wednesday 10:10-12:05pm
202 Rand Hall

Lorena del Rio
Furniture and architecture are related intentional design activities that share many attributes, including history, theory, and materiality. They also share the potential to have significant impacts on the natural, non-human world. This course will explore the relations of furniture design to architecture through the lens of ecological literacy to enable a sustainable, culturally relevant practice of creating furniture.

2 x 4 Challenge
Objective:
“If you see in any given situation only what everybody else can see, you can be said to be so much a representation of your culture that you are a victim of it”. (S.I. Hayakawa)

The purpose of this project is to experience the resistance and reward of the non-conventional path, in a formal sense as well as an ethical one.

Description:
This project consists of two components. The first component is to acquire an 8’ length of 2x4 piece of dimensional lumber meeting the greatest number of sustainable criteria as possible. Write up and present the results of your research and procurement efforts, listing the satisfied criteria and justifying your decisions.

The second component of the project is to invent a piece of furniture using all of the wood contained in the 8’ length of a 2 x 4 piece of dimensional lumber. A secondary material element is allowed. The furniture can be designed for any interior surface.

Schedule:
Mandatory Organizational Meeting: Feb. 2
Tuesday, 2:30-4:25 p.m. in 205 Rand Hall
**ARCH 4621 Sustainable Architecture: The Science and Politics of Green Building**

**Rationale:**
This purpose of this course is to place the topic of sustainable architecture in a broad context that includes politics as well as building science.

**Course Aims and Objectives:**
Students will examine the five basic components of sustainable building design (site/location, water, energy, materials, and IEQ), first from a historical perspective, and then as implemented through the LEED/USGBC rating system, in each case placing the issues raised by building and environmental science in the political/economic context within which they are considered.

More information:  ochshornDesign.com/cornell/courses.html

Tuesdays 2:30 - 4:25 pm
Jonathan Ochshorn
Today, design cultures and practices involve searching for new insights, methods, and inspirations in the digital realm. In this course, we explore the digital and physical as seamless and complementary ecologies rather than as dichotomies. Digital tools and practices will be unpacked (problematized), taking into consideration aesthetic, material, social, ethical, and political questions.

The learning objective is to promote critical thinking about the challenges, opportunities, and shortcomings of new media tools and social networking practices. Among the issues examined are digital fluencies, media ethnographies, digital divides, and cultural probes with new media tools through readings, discussion and individual and collaborative projects. Guest speakers, hands-on workshops, and special collections like the Rose Goldsen Archive of New Media Art will be important parts of the course.

Students design and carry out qualitative and/or quantitative research projects as a basis for future design and intellectual work. Thus pre-thesis and thesis students are especially welcome to test ideas and methods in the safe space of this course.
This course examines the development of landscape architecture as a distinctive expression of the American experience from the early sacred and communal land manipulations of the Native Americans through to Thomas Jefferson and on into the present. The course traces the intersecting influences of the physical landscape, the cultural attitudes and assumptions of democracy, technology and Capitalism, and the immigrant baggage of memory on the form of urban parks, world’s fairs, private and corporate estates, campuses, suburban and public housing, transportation planning, recreation grounds and other contemporary aspects of open space design in which landscape architects have made significant contributions.

Course requirements include 1) a midterm and a final exam; 2) a sketchbook documenting the work of a significant American landscape architect, a typical genre associated with the American tradition and a specific landscape detail/ or a carefully documented research paper.

Tues/Thurs, 12:20 – 1:10

Leonard Mirin

3 Credits
Sensational Space: Architecture and the 7 Senses
4 Credits, Arch 6819
Fridays/219 W Sibley/10:10-12:05
Prof. D. Medina Lasansky
Today when we can download entertainment any time to devices we carry in our hands or pockets what does it mean to be entertained with others in the streets or in buildings? Beginning with children’s toys and games, this seminar explores spaces appropriated, repurposed, and created expressly for play and pleasure in Haiti, India, Germany, and the United States from the past and present. What kinds of creativity and performativity are engendered or resisted by spaces where we amuse ourselves and are amused? What happens when play and pleasure become politicized, industrialized, and corporatized? Can these spaces and architectures of play and pleasure craft new identities and reaffirm traditional ones for individuals and communities? Guest speakers include historians LeGrace Benson and Elissa Sampson on Haitian Ra Ra bands and Lower East Side Yiddish theaters respectively. Vani Subramanian (New Delhi film maker currently working on a documentary about Indian cinema halls with Woods) will be a visiting critic participating in readings, discussions, and student projects. Subramanian’s visit is made possible by the generous support of the Clarence Stein Institute, Cornell University.
AAP ROME
Arch 3820
Special Topics in HAUD

J. Gadeyne
AAP ROME
Arch 3823
Special Topics in HAUD

J. Blanchard
Curatorship has become a focal point as much in the dissemination of architectural culture as in the production of architecture itself. Increasingly conspicuous, curating architecture both as a practice, but also as a field of research, seems to have reached a state of disciplinary legitimacy.

Simon Pennec

Premise: This course examines the role of architecture exhibitions within discourse, their history and design. We will consider how exhibitions function in terms of establishing critical and research agendas, the rise of the architecture biennale, and the establishment of architecture departments within museums. The use of models in diverse formats will be a central focus throughout the semester; the display of drawings, maps, projections and ephemera will also be treated. Broadly, exhibitions themselves will be viewed as models of a kind, as vehicles to communicate complex ideas in accessible formats. Students will interrogate how exhibitions prompt questions of narrative, culture, pedagogy, activism and professional identity.

A final paper in the form of an exhibition catalog will give students the chance to curate an imaginary exhibition, but one rooted to real objects, architects and venues that they select.

Key texts:
Sarah Chaplin and Alexandra Stara, Curating Architecture and the City (Routledge, 2009)
Cynthia Davidson and Tina DiCarlo, Log 20: Curating Architecture (Anyone Corp., 2010)
Henry Russell Hitchcock and Philip Johnson, The International Style (MoMA, 1932)
Elements, Principles, and Theories in Japanese Architecture and Gardens

For early 20th century architects like Bruno Taut, Walter Gropius and Frank Lloyd Wright, visiting Japan and imbibing Japanese design sensibility was both a revelation and a confirmation of much of their thinking regarding the direction of their own work. The course is an introduction to and an analysis of the architecture and gardens of Japan. Interpreting the unique geopolitical situation of Japan, as a sheltering archipelago longing for continental sophistication, will suggest how isolation and borrowings continue to shape the forms of Japanese architecture and gardens. In a related context we will investigate how the revered and ethereal craft of shaping paper, wood, stone and water has transformed the simplest of materials into archetypical constructions. Cultural phenomena such as ma (space-time continuum) oku (the inner depth) yohaku no bi (the beauty of extra whiteness), shakkei (borrowed landscapes), and others will be explored to reveal the forces shaping structure and space. Since an understanding of the evolution of social and political discourse in Japan is necessary to fully comprehend the unique meaning of its constructed environment, additional attention will be given to these aspects of the culture—especially the spiritual—as they exert an influence on various expressions of form. Class format will consist of lectures, films, discussions and readings. Two exams will be given during the semester. In addition, each student will be required to complete either a project that represents an exploration of a concept, form, characteristic or influence associated with Japanese architecture and gardens, or a research paper.