

# **ARCHITECTURE 3304/6304** 3 credits

Professor Jerry A. Wells

FALL 2020 ONLINE ONLY

## **Column, Wall, Elevation, Façade: A Study of the Vertical Surface in Architecture**

Field and figure relationships (the interrelation of parts dominated by the general character of the whole) are the general themes used to study numerous issues relevant to the design of elevations and facades. Case studies from antiquity to the present, with an emphasis on Renaissance and Modern periods, are used.

The first part of the seminar traces the evolution of the elements of architecture, with the column being the primary element. The column is dealt with as an iconographic and decorative element; as a primitive marker of domain; as a structural device in the composition of facades. The geometric and spatial properties of column bays and grids, and the relationship of the column matrix to walls and wall-like structures, are differentiated.

The second part of the seminar deals with the wall, in particular, architectural walls as the fields upon which the elements of architecture are composed as figures (field and figure strategies). The role of the wall in architecture is discussed at length. Devices such as open versus closed composition; regulating lines; scale versus proportion; field versus figure; literal and phenomenal depth; transparency; architectural content; geometric properties of forms; and various systems of organization are discussed. A series of readings, including, for example, *The Provocative Façade: Frontality and Contrapposto*, by Colin Rowe, are discussed in class (readings vary).

The final series of lectures examine Venetian buildings as models, beginning with the "Ca' d'Oro," and concluding with a review of minor Venetian facades using *Venezia Minore* by Elge Renata Trincanato. These buildings are analyzed relative to the issues previously raised in the seminar. (Using the minor buildings of Venice, many façade issues can be addressed while leaving more famous buildings to be used by the students in their oral presentations and papers.)

In the seminar portion of the course, students are required to choose a subject building or group of buildings for their topic paper for the semester. Students make an oral presentation, which is thoroughly discussed, and write a final paper for the course.

The course is lecture/seminar format, third year through graduate level. Grades are based upon the quality of the oral presentations and the final paper.

Tuesdays 3:00 - 4:55 pm EDT