



Fleaking Red Lead Paint. iStock: mollypix 2010

## Home is where the **TOXINS** are.

4605/6605, Fall 2020  
Marta H. Wisniewska  
Time and location TBA  
40% in-person, 60% remote  
3 credit points

Hoping for answers to the origins and cures of human diseases, the Human Genome Project was initiated almost two decades ago. Surprisingly, it revealed that genetic information accounts for only 10% of human illnesses, while the remaining 90% are caused by what we eat, what we wear and most of all which houses we live in. Contrary to general beliefs, many conventional building materials today contain harmful substances, most of which actually comply with regulatory frameworks. Part of the problem might be that the selection of materials during the design process is often subsumed under the rubrics of aesthetics, performance and price. This seminar seeks to retrieve the inherent values of materials by specifically focusing on questions of health ranging from the scale of the construction detail to broader social and political implications.

The aim of this seminar is to “peel away” the material layers of a domestic building in order to locate the hidden hazards within. In response to an investigation of specific housing precedents, students will “invent” alternative construction systems and test their implications on design strategies. The building technology course comprises input lectures, students’ presentations and discussions, as well as weekly guided exercises.