

## **INTRODUCTION TO DESIGN THEORIES [EVDA 621]**

**Fall 2017**

Instructors: Robert Birch, rabirch@wustl.edu  
Josh Taron, jmtaron@ucalgary.ca [course coordinator]  
TA: TBD  
Class Time: Tu, Th 11:00-12:20  
Location: PF2160

### **OVERVIEW**

Introduction to Design Theories (IDT) is a required lecture/seminar course in the Master of Architecture program devoted to the examination of significant thematic developments in architectural discourse from 1900 through a contemporary lens. The course addresses the transition from singular and centralized models of authorship and control toward distributed models of interaction, collaboration and integration within complex ecological environments in order to prepare students for present and future challenges facing the built environment. Toward this end, the course emphasizes writing and critical diagrammatic analysis as a tool for learning, discovery and design. The course themes of formation(s), communication(s), production(s), and sensation(s) structure the course into four discrete sections that facilitate a discovery of the complex and contradictory problems that define the perpetually contested discipline of architecture. The course consists of the following components, each described in their own subsequent section in the course outline: lectures, critical evaluations, required readings, in-class discussion sessions, and term project.

### **CACB STUDENT PERFORMANCE CRITERIA**

The following CACB Student Performance Criteria is covered in this course at a primary level:

A1: Critical Thinking Skills; A2: Research Skills; A4: Verbal and Writing Skills; A6: Human Behavior; A8: History and Theory; A9: Precedents

The following CACB Student Performance Criteria is covered in this course at a secondary level:

A5: Collaborative Skills

### **OBJECTIVES**

1. Explore developments in 20<sup>th</sup> century architecture through a series of thematic lenses.
2. Develop an understanding of critical architectural discourse in order to recognize historical precedents and contexts for issues of contemporary concern.
3. Develop a general comprehension of and familiarity with historical architectural debates that have occurred over the course of the past century.
4. Develop an understanding of contemporary architectural works through an analysis of the theoretical views that motivated their development and production.
5. Develop the ability to understand, develop and participate in, and contribute to significant and sustained theoretical discussions while developing critical writing and diagramming skills.
6. Develop a sense of the critical issues that shape theoretical debates and cultural evolution in the visual and performing arts, humanities and science in relation to architecture.

## **CONTENT**

The development of topics allows for the capturing of movement through the 20<sup>th</sup> century into the present, with an emphasis on the impact of digital technologies and Continental philosophy upon architectural discourse + practice.

## **TEACHING APPROACH**

As mentioned above, the course is divided into four themes: formation(s), communication(s), production(s), and sensation(s). Each theme is explored through a series of lectures by the course instructors that investigate specific questions and problems.

Students are assigned weekly readings and write corresponding critical evaluations for each during the first half of the course. Additionally, each student undertakes a three-part term project where they will critically analyze a classmate's studio project throughout the semester. Through these aforementioned components, students are expected to learn about and contribute toward various developments in contemporary architectural theory and practice. All assignments, course announcements and supplementary material will be posted through D2L.

## **COURSE COMPONENTS**

### **Lectures**

Instructors will give a lecture in each class with the exception of *in-class discussion session* days. These lectures address specific questions and topics within a given theme thus serving to expand on problems touched upon in the assigned reading. Class participation during and/or following these lectures should be expected. Lectures will include an overview of the day's assigned reading, an expansion of ideas surrounding that text and a primer for the reading assigned for the following class. More nuanced and in-depth discussions are generally reserved for the *in-class discussion sessions*.

### **Required Readings**

Each class session corresponds with an assigned reading. Each student is expected to complete and familiarize themselves with that text prior to the beginning of the class session to which it is assigned. It is likely that one must read the text more than once in order to achieve the prescribed level of understanding. The research development tools are meant to aid in this process.

### **In-class Discussion Sessions**

In-class discussion sessions occur at the end of a given thematic section of the course. For these sessions, the class is broken down into smaller sections with each section's discussion moderated by either an instructor or a course TA (on a rotating basis). These discussions are wide-ranging and open-ended in nature so that students are given the opportunity to work out problems and ideas themselves that originate from the assigned texts and lectures. Participation defines the role of students in these sessions. Students are expected to come to the sessions prepared (bringing prepared questions, hard copies of readings, hard copies of IDT's). The role of the instructors in these sessions is to moderate the sessions while also taking note of each student's grasp of the topics – occasionally prompting the group with questions to facilitate further discussion.

## **COURSE COMPONENTS (cont.)**

### **RESEARCH DEVELOPMENT TOOLS**

Research Development tools (RDT's) are designed to improve students' critical thinking and writing skills throughout the course of the term. For the first half of the term, students will produce an RDT of some form for each of the assigned readings (8 RDT's in total). During the second half of the term, students will be asked to produce one RDT synthesizing a group of readings (2 RDT's in total). There are 5 different kinds of RDT's (listed below) each weighted as follows:

RS: .5% each; TI: .75% each; CP: 2% each; CE: 3% each; SP: 6.25% each

#### **Reading Summary (RS)**

This is a summary of the important points raised in the reading followed by your observations of the relevance of these points. The summary is not a description of what you read but captures relevant points and records your observations (not opinions). It should cover the entire text and consist of approximately 500 words (1 page). This tool is useful as a template to review literature relevant to the term project. Please make proper bibliographical references and record all necessary bibliographical information, page number, etc., (*The Chicago Manual of Style*).

#### **Theme Illustration (TI)**

Find several instances (two or more) in the reading that relate to the main theme in which reading is placed (formations, connections, productions, sensations). Illustrate the instance with a relevant quote and explain its link to the main theme and why you think this is important (300 words). This tool is useful to highlight and articulate, as you review relevant literature, theme(s) to be explored the term project. Please make proper bibliographical references and record all necessary bibliographical information, page number, etc., (*The Chicago Manual of Style*).

#### **Connection Pursuit (CP)**

Find connections between three previous readings and articulate them as issues/subtopics related to the relevant theme in which reading is placed (formations, connections, productions, sensations) or to other themes you find important. Explain how these issues relate to each other by comparing, juxtaposing or analyzing them (300 words). Analyzing the relevant literature in this way is a useful tool to develop an argument for the term project. Please make proper bibliographical references and record all necessary bibliographical information, page number, etc., (*The Chicago Manual of Style*).

#### **Critical Evaluations (CE)**

Each Critical Evaluation consists of a succinct (300 word max.) paragraph demonstrating a student's understand of its corresponding, required EVDA 621 reading. This is broadly achieved by identifying a critical moment/issue (or related set of moments/issues) in the text and producing a subsequent question (or set of questions) that critically engages a problem and its relationship to architecture.

#### **Synthesized Problem (SP)**

Each Synthesized Problem consists of a brief, 1000 word max. (2 page) essay that develops and questions a particular problem that spans across the 4 assigned readings of the theme. Consists of a variety of RDT types and techniques. Due at the beginning of the class after the fourth reading in the theme series.

**RDT's are not reading summaries** and students should not simply restate what the article is saying. They are also not a place to offer personal opinions or thoughts on the writings or their subject matter. They

are instead designed to develop an ability to understand and question the assigned texts in a rigorous, objective and critical way.

Please note that personal opinions are an important component of the course – but the course is structured such that they exist outside the realm of what is graded – no personal opinion is worth a higher or lower mark than any other. All RDT's are due on paper at the beginning of each corresponding class.

Some useful pointers:

1. Use the RDT's to demonstrate a rigorous and critical understanding of the text.
2. Clearly relate question(s) to specific and identified moments/issues in the text.
3. Write efficiently and succinctly.
4. In addition to improving reading comprehension and critical thinking skills, the RDT's are also designed to improve writing skills. This translates into developing clear structural organization, understandable language and proper grammar.

### **Term Project**

The term project is designed so that each student develops an in-depth knowledge of a classmate's current studio project. In addition to reporting on the general history and common understanding of the project, it is the responsibility of each student to generate a novel critical reading of the project itself. The term project is divided into phased assignments that will be due 1 week after each studio review.

## **SCHEDULE (subject to change prior Sept 6)**

Thursday, Sept. 06	COURSE OVERVIEW: On critical analysis
<b>Formation(s)</b>	
Tuesday, Sept. 11	MODERN FORMATION(S): Between the One & the Many (JT)
Thursday, Sept. 13	POSTMODERN FORMATION(S): On complexity & contradiction (RB)
Tuesday, Sept. 18	FORM, FUNCTION & BEYOND: On material and formal operations in architecture (RB)
Thursday, Sept. 20	NATURAL FORMATION(S): Between principled ideals & material behaviors (JT)
Tuesday, Sept. 25	DISCUSSION SESSIONS
<b>Communication(s)</b>	
Thursday, Sept. 25	Critical Analysis/Diagram Session (JT/RB)
Tuesday, Oct. 2	LIMITS OF COMMUNICATION: On signified aspects of architecture (RB)
Thursday, Oct. 4	INTERACTION BETWEEN BODIES: On program and violence (JT)
Tuesday, Oct. 9	MATERIAL COMMUNICATIONS: On spaces of possibilities (RB)
Thursday, Oct. 11	EXCESSIVE COMMUNICATIONS: On aesthetics and internalization (JT)
<b>BLOCK WEEK</b>	
Tuesday, Oct. 23	NO CLASSES
Thursday, Oct. 25	DISCUSSION SESSIONS
Thursday, Oct. 25	COURSE FEEDBACK SESSION
<b>Production(s)</b>	
Tuesday, Oct. 30	DYNAMIC SYSTEMS: From qualities to behaviors (RB)
Thursday, Nov. 1	ARCHITECTURAL PRODUCTS: On parts and populations (JT)
Tuesday, Nov. 6	ECOLOGICAL PRODUCTION: On letting go of nature (RB)
Thursday, Nov 8	TECHNIQUES OF GOVERNANCE: On managing scarcity and excess (JT)
Tuesday, Nov. 13	DISCUSSION SESSIONS
<b>Sensation(s)</b>	
Thursday, Nov 15	CONSTRUCTING ENVIRONMENTS: On programming spaces (RB)
Tuesday, Nov. 20	LIVED EXPERIENCES: On forming the whole of life (RB)
Thursday, Nov. 22	DISTRIBUTED SENSATION(S): Between agency and complicity (JT)
Tuesday, Nov.27	SENSORY BOUNDARIES: Between architecture and the city (JT)
Thursday, Nov. 29	DISCUSSION SESSION
Tuesday, Dec. 4	CLASS DEBRIEFING/GENERAL FEEDBACK
Thursday, Dec. 6	NO CLASS (time used toward finishing Final Assignment)
Friday, Dec. 7	<b>Final Assignment due by 4:30pm; submitted (and stamped) at EVDS front desk</b>

## READING LIST

### Formation(s)

- Thursday, Sept. 14  
Required Reading: (RS) MODERN FORMATION(S): Between the One & the Many (Taron)  
Le Corbusier, *Architecture or Revolution*, in *Toward an Architecture* (Vers un Architecture), Frances Lincoln, 2007, pp. 293-307.  
ISBN: 978-0711228085 (360 pages)
- Tuesday, Sept. 19  
Required Reading: (TI) POSTMODERN FORMATION(S): On complexity & contradiction (Birch)  
Rem Koolhaas, *What Ever Happened to Urbanism?*, in *S,M,L,XL*, The Monicelli Press, New York, 1995, pp. 959-971.  
ISBN: 978-1885254863 (1376 pages)
- Thursday, Sept. 21  
Required Reading: (CP) FORM, FUNCTION & BEYOND: On material and formal operations in architecture (Birch)  
Peter Eisenman, *Postfunctionalism*, in *Eisenman inside out: selected writings, 1963-1988*/Peter Eisenman, Yale University Press, New Haven, 2004, pp. 83-87.  
ISBN: 0-300-09008-0 (248 pages)
- Tuesday, Sept. 26  
Required Reading: (CE) NATURAL FORMATION(S): Between principled ideals & material behaviors (Taron)  
Sanford Kwinter and Umberto Boccioni, *Landscapes of Change: Boccioni's "Stati d'animo" as a General Theory of Models*, in *Assemblage*, No. 19 (Dec. 1992), MIT Press, pp 50-65.

### Communication(s)

- Tuesday, Oct.3  
Required Reading: Critical Analysis/Diagram Session  
Manuel De Landa, Deleuze, Diagrams, and the Genesis of Form,  
*Amerikastudien/American Studies* Vol. 45, No. 1, Chaos/Control: Complexity (2000)
- Thursday, Oct. 5  
Required Reading: (RS) LIMITS OF COMMUNICATION: On signified aspects of architecture (Birch)  
Robert Venturi, *Complexity and Contradiction*, in *Perspecta* Vol. 9, 1965, pp. 17-56.  
Article DOI: 10.2307/1566911
- Tuesday, Oct. 17  
Required Reading: (TI) INTERACTION BETWEEN BODIES: On program and violence (Taron)  
Bernard Tschumi, *Violence of Architecture*, in *Art Forum*, Vol XX (1), 1981, pp. 44-47.  
ISSN: 0004-3532 (75 pages)
- Thursday, Oct. 19  
Required Reading: (CP) MATERIAL COMMUNICATIONS: On the space of possibilities (Birch)  
Manuel Delanda, *Materiality: Anexact and Intense*, Intense, in *Lars Spuybroek NOX Machining Architecture*, Thames and Hudson, New York, 2004, pp. 370-377  
ISBN: 978-0500285190 (392 pages)
- Tuesday, Oct. 24  
Required Reading: (CE) EXCESSIVE COMMUNICATIONS: On aesthetics and internalization (Taron)  
Frederic Jameson, *Cognitive Mapping*, in *The Jameson Reader*, ed. Michael Hardt and Kathi Weeks, Blackwell Publishing, Malden, 2000, pp. 277-87.  
ISBN: 978-0631202707 (420 pages)

## Production(s)

- Thursday, Nov. 2  
Required Reading: DYNAMIC SYSTEMS: From qualities to behaviors (Birch)  
Cecil Balmond, *New Structure and the Informal*, in *Architectural Design Profile* 129, Vol 76 No 9/10, John Wiley and Sons Ltd, 1997
- Tuesday, Nov. 7  
Required Reading: ARCHITECTURAL PRODUCTS: On parts and populations (Taron)  
Walter Benjamin, *The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction* (parts I-XXII), trans. J. Underwood, Penguin, 2008, pp. 3-27.  
ISBN: 978-0141036199 (128 pages)
- Thursday, Nov. 9  
Required Reading: ECOLOGICAL PRODUCTION: On letting go of nature (Birch)  
Morton, Timothy, *Introduction: Critical Thinking*, in *The Ecological Thought*, Harvard University Press, April 2010, pp. 1-19.  
ISBN: 9780674049208 (163 pages)
- Thursday, Nov. 14  
Required Reading: (SP) TECHNIQUES OF GOVERNANCE: On managing scarcity and excess (Taron)  
Rem Koolhaas, *Junkspace*, in *October*, Vol. 100 Obsolescence (Spring 2002), MIT Press, pp. 175-190.

## Sensation(s)

- Tuesday, Nov. 21  
Required Reading: CONSTRUCTING ENVIRONMENTS: On programming spaces (Birch)  
Ohanian, Melik, and Jean-Christophe Royoux, "Foreword to the Theory of Spheres" (2004), *Cosmograms* (New York, NY: Lukas & Sternberg, 2005) 223-40, 8 Oct. 2006
- Thursday, Nov. 23  
Required Reading: LIVED EXPERIENCES: On forming the whole of life (Birch)  
McKenzie Wark, *New Babylon*, in *The Beach Beneath the Street: The Everyday Life and Glorious Times of the Situationist International*, Verso, 2011, pp. 123-134  
ISBN: 978-1844677207 (224 pages)
- Tuesday, Nov. 28  
Required Reading: DISTRIBUTED SENSATION(S): Between agency and complicity (Taron)  
Reza Negarestani, *Contingency and Complicity*, in *The Medium of Contingency*, Robin Mackay (ed.), Cornerhouse (2011), pp. 10-16.  
ISBN: 978-1905464395 (80 pages)
- Thursday, Nov. 30  
Required Reading: (SP) SENSORY BOUNDARIES: Between architecture and the city (Taron)  
Pier Vittorio Aureli, *Toward the Archipelago: Defining the political and the formal in architecture*, in *The Possibility of an Absolute Architecture*, MIT Press, Cambridge, pp. 1-46.  
ISBN: 978-0262515795 (252 pages)

## **EVALUATION**

The course evaluation is based on assignments completed during the term including: student group presentations, critical evaluations, in-class discussion sessions, and term project assignments 1-4. Each assignment must be completed by its assigned due date in order to pass the course. The following weights are applied to each assignment category:

Research Development Tools	25%
In-class Discussions	15%
Term Project Assignment 1	20%
Term Project Assignment 2	20%
Term Project Assignment 3	20%

Each assignment includes its own set of instructions and grading rubrics. Regular attendance is required. More than two unexcused absences may result in failure to pass the course. It is recommended that students consult with instructor(s) regarding the group presentation assignment approximately 2 weeks in advance of their scheduled date. Students are expected to submit all assignments on time. Late submission will result in a 10% grade penalty with exception of critical evaluations. In the case of critical evaluations, late submissions are not accepted. Failure to submit assigned critical evaluation will result in 0 points for the missed reading. Revisions of the course schedule may occur during the term in which case revised schedules will be provided. It is the student's responsibility to make certain they are using a current schedule and reading list.

## **SUPPLEMENTARY TEXTS**

The following books are suggested as supplementary reading for the course:

Eco, U., *How to Write a Thesis*.

### **Selected Readers**

Harrison-Moore, A. and C. Rowe, *Architecture and Design in Europe and America, 1750-2000*.

Hays, K.M., ed., *Architectural Theory since 1968*.

Hays, K.M., *Oppositions Reader*.

Leach, N., *Rethinking Architecture: A Reader in Cultural Theory*.

Nesbitt, K., ed., *Theorizing a New Agenda for Architecture: An Anthology of Architectural Theory, 1965-1995*.

Ockman, J., ed., *Architecture Culture 1943-1968: A Documentary Anthology*.

Stern, R., A. Plattus and P. Dreamer, *[Re]Reading Persepcta*.

Sykes, K.A., ed., *Constructing a New Agenda: Architectural Theory 1993-2009*.

Braham, W. and J.A. Hale, ed., *Rethinking Technology: A Reader in Architectural Theory, 1901-2004*.

### **Selected General Bibliography**

Frampton, K., *Labor, Work and Architecture: Collected Essays on Architecture and Design*

Tafuri, M. and F. Dal Co, *Modern Architecture 1 & 2*

Weinstock, M., *The Architecture of Emergence: The Evolution of Form in Nature and Civilization*.



## NOTES

1. Written work, term assignments and other course related work may only be submitted by e-mail if prior permission to do so has been obtained from the course instructor.
2. Academic Accommodations. Students who require an accommodation in relation to their coursework or to fulfil requirements for a graduate degree, based on a protected ground other than disability, should communicate this need, preferably in writing, to their Instructor or the designated contact person in EVDS, Jennifer Taillefer ([jtaillef@ucalgary.ca](mailto:jtaillef@ucalgary.ca)). Students who require an accommodation unrelated to their coursework or the requirements for a graduate degree, based on a protected ground other than disability, should communicate this need, preferably in writing, to the Vice-Provost (Student Experience). For additional information on support services and accommodations for students with disabilities, visit [www.ucalgary.ca/access/](http://www.ucalgary.ca/access/).
3. Plagiarism - Plagiarism involves submitting or presenting work in a course as if it were the student's own work done expressly for that particular course when, in fact, it is not. Most commonly plagiarism exists when:(a) the work submitted or presented was done, in whole or in part, by an individual other than the one submitting or presenting the work (this includes having another impersonate the student or otherwise substituting the work of another for one's own in an examination or test),(b) parts of the work are taken from another source without reference to the original author,(c) the whole work (e.g., an essay) is copied from another source, and/or,(d) a student submits or presents work in one course which has also been submitted in another course(although it may be completely original with that student) without the knowledge of or prior agreement of the instructor involved. While it is recognized that scholarly work often involves reference to the ideas, data and conclusions of other scholars, intellectual honesty requires that such references be explicitly and clearly noted. Plagiarism is an extremely serious academic offence. It is recognized that clause (d) does not prevent a graduate student incorporating work previously done by him or her in a thesis. Any suspicion of plagiarism will be reported to the Dean, and dealt with as per the regulations in the University of Calgary Graduate Calendar.
4. Appeals: If a student has a concern about the course, academic matter, or a grade that they have been assigned, they must first communicate this concern with the instructor. If the concern cannot be resolved with the instructor, the student can proceed with an academic appeal, which normally begins with the Faculty: <http://www.ucalgary.ca/provost/students/ombuds/appeals>
5. Information regarding the Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act (<http://www.ucalgary.ca/secretariat/privacy>) and how this impacts the receipt and delivery of course material
6. Emergency Evacuation/Assembly Points (<http://www.ucalgary.ca/emergencyplan/assemblypoints>)
7. Safewalk information (<http://www.ucalgary.ca/security/safewalk>)
8. Contact Info for: Student Union (<https://www.su.ucalgary.ca/contact/>); Graduate Student representative(<https://gsa.ucalgary.ca/about-the-gsa/gsa-executive-board/>) Student Union Wellness Centre: <https://www.ucalgary.ca/wellnesscentre/>; Library Resources: <http://library.ucalgary.ca/> and Student Ombudsman's Office (<http://www.ucalgary.ca/ombuds/>).
9. Students will be expected to complete each of the course assignments. There will be no final exam. Students must obtain an overall passing grade to pass this course. At the discretion of the instructor, assignments submitted after the deadline **may** be penalized with the loss of a grade (e.g.: A- to B+) for each day late. The following equivalencies (the University of Calgary has no official percentage scale system) will be used in calculating grades: **A+** (95-100) Exceptional; **A** (90-94.99) Excellent; **A-** (85-89.99) Above Average; **B+** (80-84.99) Average; **B** (75-79.99) Adequate/Below Average; **B-** (70-74.99) Minimum Pass; **C+** (66-69.99) Fail; **C** (63-65.99) Fail; **C-** (60-62.99) Fail; **D+** (56-59.99) Fail; **D** (50-55.99) Fail; **F** (0-49.99) Fail.
10. A student who receives a "C+" or lower in any one course will be required to withdraw regardless of their grade point average (GPA) unless the program recommends otherwise. If the program permits the student to retake a failed course, the second grade will replace the initial grade in the calculation of the GPA, and both grades will appear on the transcript. Final grades will be reported as letter grades, with the final grade calculated according to a 4-point range. Assignments will be evaluated by percentage grades with their letter grade equivalents as shown.