

**john h. daniels faculty of architecture landscape, and design university of toronto**

**ALA 3031H: Pro-seminar  
Post-Professional Master of Architecture and Master of Landscape  
Architecture  
and  
ARC 3033H: Selected Topics in Architectural History and Theory  
Public Space: Cultural/Political Theory; Street Photography**

**Mondays 10 am – 12 noon and Fridays 10 am – 12 noon  
PCL Seminar Room**

Dean George Baird [dean@daniels.utoronto.ca](mailto:dean@daniels.utoronto.ca)

**COURSE DESCRIPTION**

This course will be a combined lecture/seminar/reading course, focusing on the issue of public space in contemporary architecture and urbanism. The instructor will begin the course by outlining a debate in regard to the issue that raged over a number of years straddling the turn of the twenty-first century.

He will then turn to his own approach to the issue, moving away from architecture and urbanism directly, to address the question of “the public” as it has been addressed by two major political theorists of the twentieth century: Hannah Arendt and Jurgen Habermas, as well as a cultural theorist from the same period: Walter Benjamin. The instructor will propose a hybrid of the concept of “action”, as it was developed in the political theory of Arendt, and “distraction”, as characterized by Walter Benjamin.

The instructor will then attempt to depict this hybrid in a series of archival street photographs by such celebrated photographers as Walker Evans and Henri Cartier-Bresson.

Finally, he will outline a series of architectural conditions of publicness, and will conclude with a consideration of publicness, as exemplified in the work of such contemporary architects as Diller Scofidio and Renfro, Machado and Silvetti, and OMA.

**COURSE OBJECTIVES**

The objective of the course is to familiarize students with debate around a key issue in contemporary architecture and urbanism: the status of public space. It is expected that the course will enable students to discuss this debate knowledgeably and critically, and then to demonstrate their mastery of the issues at stake, first in a class presentation relating to the debate, and then, in a final paper.

**LIMITED ENROLMENT**

The class is mandatory for the 8 students in course ALA 3031H, and will be limited to 16 additional students from the professional Master of Architecture program who are eligible to take it as an elective under the course number ARC3033H.

## SCHEDULE

Due to the complex travel schedule of the instructor this fall, the class will be given on selected Mondays and Fridays from 10:00 am until 12:00 noon, in Room 104. Please see the detailed Schedule with Topics of Classes for the specific dates of the classes.

### Detailed Schedule and Topics of Classes:

- September 8 and 12: No Class
- September 15: Overall Introduction to the Class by the instructor
- September 19: Finalization of Enrolment in the Course, and lecture by instructor: The Eclipse of the Idea of “the Public” in Architecture and Urbanism at the End of the Twentieth Century; Part 1
- September 22: Lecture by instructor: The Eclipse of the Idea of “the Public” in Architecture and Urbanism at the End of the Twentieth Century; Part 2; as well as lecture by instructor: Cultural/Political Theory and the Re-invigoration of the Idea of the Public
- September 26: Student Presentations on the following readings:  
Fredric Jameson and Michael Speaks: “Envelopes and Enclaves: The Space of Post-Civil Society; An Architectural Conversation” in *Assemblage* No: 17, Cambridge, MIT Press, 1992, pages 30-37.  
Aaron Betsky: “No More Flowers: Against Public Space”, in Michael Bell and Sze Tsung Leong, eds.: *Slow Space*; New York, Monacelli Press, 1998, pages 456-478.
- September 29: Student Presentations on the following readings:  
Colin Rowe and Fred Koetter: “Crisis of the Object: Predicament of Texture” in Rowe and Koetter: *Collage City*, Cambridge, MIT Press, 1978, pages 50-85.  
Leon Krier “The Reconstruction of the City” in *Rational Architecture*; Brussels, Archives d’architecture moderne, 1978; 38-42.
- October 3 and 6: No Class
- October 10: Student Presentations on the following readings:  
Margaret Crawford: “The World in a Shopping Mall” pages 3-30; Mike Davis: “Fortress Los Angeles: The Militarization of Urban Space” pages 154-180; and  
Michael Sorkin: “See You in Disneyland”, pages 205-233; all in Michael Sorkin: *Variations on a Theme Park*, New York, Hill and Wang, 1992.
- October 13: Thanksgiving; No Class
- October 17: Student Presentations on the following readings:  
Hannah Arendt: “Action” in Hannah Arendt: *The Human Condition*; Chicago, University of Chicago Press, 1958, pages 175-247.  
Jurgen Habermas: Parts I, II, III, and IV in Habermas: *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere*, Cambridge, MIT Press, 1991, pages 1-88.
- October 20: Student Presentations on the following readings:

Walter Benjamin: "The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction"; in Walter Benjamin: *Illuminations*, New York, Harcourt Brace and World, 1968, pages 219-253.

Walter Benjamin: "The Author as Producer" in Walter Benjamin: *Understanding Brecht*, London, New Left Books, 1973, pages 85-104.

- October 24: Student Presentations on the following readings:  
Seyla Benhabib: "From Public Space to Public Sphere: Hannah Arendt and Jurgen Habermas", and "The Contested Public Sphere: Arendt, Habermas and Beyond" in Seyla Benhabib: *The Reluctant Modernism of Hannah Arendt*: Rowan and Littlefield, 2003; pages 199 to 210.  
Nancy Fraser: "Rethinking the Public Sphere: A Critique of Actually Existing Democracy" in Bruce Robbins ed.: *The Phantom Public Sphere*, Minneapolis, University of Minnesota, 1993, pages 1-32.
- October 27: Lecture by instructor: The Hybrid of Distraction and Action Made Visible
- October 31: Lecture by instructor: The Architectural Conditions of Publicness
- November 3: Lecture by instructor: Designing the Public
- November 7, 10, 14: No Class
- November 17: Student Presentations on the following readings:  
George Baird: Review of "Exemplary Projects 3: Berlin Free University", in *AA Files* No: 40, London, Architectural Association, 1999, pages 66-71.  
George Baird: "On Publicness and Monumentality" in K. Michael Hays ed. *Unprecedented Realism*, New York, Princeton Architectural Press, 1995, pages 180-186.
- November 21 Student Presentations on the following readings:  
Rem Koolhaas: "Bigness" in Rem Koolhaas and Bruce Mau: *SMLXL*, New York, Monacelli Press, 1994, pages 494-516.  
Rem Koolhaas: "Junk Space" in *Content*, Koln, Taschen, 2004, pages 162-171.  
Rem Koolhaas: "Found in Translation" in *Volume/Archis* 2006 No: 2, Amsterdam, pages 120-127.
- November 24, 28, and December 1, 5: No Class

## EVALUATION

Each student in the class will be expected to attend all classes, to read all the readings assigned each week, and to be prepared to participate in class discussion each week. Each student will also be expected in one of the classes scheduled, to participate as a member of a group, whose responsibility it will be to make a presentation relating to the issues raised in the course up to that point in the progress of the course (See the details of the course schedule as outlined).

Finally, at the end of the term, each student in the class will be expected to prepare and submit a 4000 word paper addressing one or more of the issues that have arisen in the class. The instructor will be available to discuss topics for final papers with students. The class presentation will be worth 30% of the total grade for the course, and the final paper the other 70%. Evaluation will be carried out in accordance with the Graduate Grading and Evaluation Practices Policy (and how that policy is interpreted and applied in

this Faculty). The *University of Toronto, School of Graduate Studies, 2008 – 2009 Calendar*, pages 26 to 30 explains that policy in detail.

#### PLAGIARISM

University of Toronto code of Behaviour on Academic Matters states that "It shall be an offence for a student knowingly: to represent as one's own any idea or expression of an idea or work of another in any academic examination or term test or in connection with any other form of academic work, i.e., to commit plagiarism."

For accepted methods of standard documentation formats, including electronic citation of internet sources please see the U of T writing website at:

<http://www.utoronto.ca/writing/document.html#elect>

The full Code of Behaviour regulations could be found from consulting <http://www.sgs.utoronto.ca/current/calendar/regulations16.asp>

#### WRITING AND ENGLISH LANGUAGE

As well as the al&d writing support, please see English Language and writing support at University of Toronto: <http://www.sgs.utoronto.ca/english/> and <http://www.utoronto.ca/writing/advise.html>. Students have commented that they found the latter address extremely helpful for writing term papers.

The following are also useful:

Sylvan Barnett, *A Short Guide to Writing About Art*. 5-7th edition (New York: Harper-Collins, 1997)

William Strunk Jr., E.B. White. *The Elements of Style* (New York: MacMillan Publishing)

#### LATE WORK

All assignments are due in class at the specified time and date. Late submission will result in a 5% deduction (of each assignment's total grade) per business day, excluding weekends. In the case of illness or other special circumstance, notification should be given to the instructor and the Program Office as soon as possible and before the deadline in question. Late work submitted after 3:00 PM on the final day of classes, Friday, December 5, 2008, is not acceptable without prior written permission from the Program Director.

#### FINAL DUE DATE

The class presentation will be due on the day on which it is scheduled in the overall schedule above. The final papers will be due on **Friday, December 19, 2008**, in the main Program office, by 12:00 noon.