Course Details

Course title: *Sex & Space*
Course number: AHI 122
Quarter: Summer 2019

Instructor: Professor Talinn Grigor
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Description

This course explores the relationship between space and sexuality. It examines the diverse ways Western sexuality and modern architecture have intersected in order to produce the modernity that defines our age. Architecture is permeated with sexual metaphors — the shaft, the high-rise, the closet — and sexual and gender identities have been shaped by architectural formations — the bathhouse, the kitchen, the hotel/harem, the interior, the office, the secret garden. Yet, the space of sexuality has always been painstakingly veiled and excluded from architectural and art historical discourses.

Leading architects, including Claude-Nicolas Ledoux, Sir John Soane, Adolf Loss, and Le Corbusier, played on the notions of sex in their designs, at times as innuendoes and suppressed pathologies.
Others, Mies van Der Rohe, Le Corbusier, and Louis Kahn made their famed careers with female partners whose stories remain predominantly in the closet, so to speak. While others, including Robert Venturi and Charles Eames celebrated their design partnerships with their wives as a counter-narrative to the orthodoxy of modernism. Still others, such as Philip Johnson, Paul Rudolph, and Charles Moore deployed Postmodernism as a form of queer architectural expression. Defined by a solid history of masculinity and “stud” culture, the architectural profession is one of the last male-dominated professions. The spatial dimension of gender and sexuality became further poignant in the colonial context where binary opposites and temporal flux were omnipresent. To design curved walls with ornaments was rejected by modernists architect – i.e., Loss, Gropius, Mies, and Le Corbusier – nothing but an “effeminate crime.”

The course explores the multidimensional aspects of sexuality in shaping architectural myths, designs, discourses, and critical theories through lectures, class discussions, student presentation of case studies, student building of architectural models, viewing of films, and field trips. Active student engagement with and participation in the course activities is an essential part of this little examined and rarely taught topic.

Syllabus

This syllabus is the official document that sets all the details and conditions of this course. It is to be followed closely by everyone who is a participant in the course. This syllabus, the schedule of courses, and requirements for the class will be followed. In case of unforeseen exceptions, these are subject to change at my discretion.

Honor Code

I expect my students to abide by the university’s Academic Code of Conduct. I count on student integrity, honesty, and hard work to create a productive and an intellectually stimulating environment for learning. Plagiarism, dishonesty, racism, sexism, or any other kind of disrespectful behavior is contrary to the intellectual spirit of the university and will not be tolerated.

Content Note

The course explores identity politics related to colonialism, modernization, and sexuality. Occasionally, we will discuss historical phenomena that might be unconformable or disturbing to some students. If you suspect that specific material is likely to be emotionally challenging for you, please feel free to discuss it with me anytime. Likewise, if you ever wish to discuss your personal reactions to course material with the class or with me individually afterwards, I welcome such discussions as an appropriate part of our classwork. If you feel you need to step out on a difficult discussion please do so after having let me know. Everyone is expected to approach the topics discussed intellectually and art historically and remain respectful of all views expressed and discussed.

Lectures

The course consists of two sets of lectures and discussions by the instructor: in-class with PowerPoint presentation and on-site in proximity to a significant architectural edifice. They are both at the core of the learning experience of this course. Students must attend all contact events with the instructor, in person and be prepared with the readings and other assignments in order to pass the course. A commitment to active engagement with the professor, the buildings and spaces, the course material, the artwork presented, and your colleagues are meant to set the stage as how to think about, react to, and understand contemporary architecture. This engagement lends itself to diverse interpretations of objects, theories, and spaces. The course is about intellectual commitment to listening to ideas and to exchanging ideas.
Architectural Model 40%

Based on your engagement with architecture and sexuality write a 300-word thesis/think-piece. The text should be accompanied with 2 images the further explore your core thesis statement. These should be addressing an issue raised by your case study topic. Exchange your think-piece and images with another student in class in order to give and receive feedback. Do all this thinking, writing, drafting, writhing, and drawing in your sketchbook.

Based on the 2-image and 300-word think-piece start to produce the first draft of an architectural model addressing your core thesis statement. Student can choose to work on the model either individually or in a 3- or less-person team. Each student will need to bring her/his text, images, ideas, and discussions together in one place in order to produce the main concept of the architectural model project. Always think in your sketchbook. Along these conversations, each student will also produce an essay of several pages, “manifesto of the architect,” which an explanation of the concepts of the architectural model, handwritten in the sketchbook. Students will build the model from “found objects” and are therefore, welcomed to select their own materials. 50% of the model must be made manually or with the body: building, sketching, painting, assembling, collaging, sculpting, etching, knitting, preforming, etc. The architectural model will be displayed and presented to the class. Students will have about 5-6 minutes to speak about the main concept of her/his project during the model reviews. Each project will receive feedback from the instructor and colleagues during the review.

Professor Grigor will explain the project and process of the model project during class time, as she will do with all other instructions and reminders. However, this and all assignments in this course, it is meant to be an open-ended, self-discovery, teamwork driven, ongoing and constantly evolving project. THERE ARE NO EXPECTATIONS THAT WILL LEAD TO AN A. THERE ARE NO FORMULAS THAT WILL GET YOU A GOOD GRADE. It is about constant thinking, working, seeing, and experiencing architecture as it happens now. It is meant to be a 4-week conversation between you, the instructor, the spaces, the buildings, the artworks, the readings, the discussions, the field trips, the works you meet, and the city you experience. There are no black-and-white guidelines. Do not expect such guidelines for they are contrary to the very spirit of critical thinking and creative process. You need to think and create, always with a critical eye. As long as you do that honestly, critically, and deeply, you will receive a good grade. Sloppy thinking and lazy work will not be rewarded.

Artist’s Sketchbook 40%

The artist’s sketchbook is a long tradition among artists and architects. It constitutes the manifestation of everything the artist, the architect, the writer experiences. Your sketchbook will be the outcome of all our thinking during the 4-week period we are together. I encourage you to engage yourself with the rich environment around you and record all of your thoughts and experiences in your sketchbook. Several pages of writing—both academic, intellectual, social, cultural, personal, etc.—sketching, drawing, painting, coloring, collaging, etc. will be required in your sketchbook everyday, including off days. An important part of the sketchbook assignment is the “manifesto of the architect.” You will discuss with me, both as a group and one-on-one your ideas and even final project of your work in the sketchbook. On the final day of the program, the sketchbook along with the architectural model will be graded as the two main assignments for this course.

Case Study 20%

Individually or in the same team as the model project, students will present to the class a 20-minute presentation. It will trace the architectural history and theory of specific buildings or visual ideas that are listed in the syllabus. Each topics cluster is listed under the appropriate week in this syllabus. Each structure corresponds to the week’s larger topic presented by the professor during her off- and on-site lectures. Case Study presentations are to be kept to 20 minutes and presented to the class. Case Study presentations can be in pre-recorded formats, including but not limited to short film, photo-essay, pre-recorded PowerPoint, musical video, etc. The site visits should be used, whenever possible, to produce
documentary materials, including photographs, sketches, drawings of the case study building. The medium should intelligently match the content.

Grading

20% Case Study  40% Architectural Model  40% Artist’s Sketchbook

All grades will be posted on Canvas depending on the availability of Internet connection and time for the instructor. Students are welcomed to speak with me in order to find out about progress in class. All assignments must be turned in on Canvas BEFORE the portal closes. NO LATE WORK will be accepted unless there is a documented emergency. All missing assignment from Canvas after the deadline will receive an automatic 50%. Given that there are only 3 assignments and each carry 30% or more of the final grade, missing a single assignment will means a failed grade in class. No extra credits will be given.

Readings

Readings assigned in the syllabus must be done prior to the class. With the exception of required books, all readings are posted on Canvas as are all other assignments, instructions, grades, and communications. In addition, each student must select and read one or two additional texts of her/his choosing from the week’s reading list. Those students who are presenting on a given week’s topic, should do most of the readings listed under that week.

Required Books

Richard Williams, Sex and Buildings: Modern Architecture & the Sexual Revolution (Reaktion, 2013)


Recommended Books

Michel Foucault, Histoire de la sexualité [History of Sexuality] (Paris, 3 volumes, 1976)
Beatriz Colomina, Sexuality & Space (Princeton, 1996)
Diana Agrest, Ratricia Conway, Leslie Kanes Weisman, eds. The Sex of Architecture (Abrams, 1996)
Joel Sanders, Stud: Architectures of Masculinity (Princeton, 1996)
Aaron Betsky, Queer Space: Architecture and Same-Sex Desire (HarperCollins, 1997)
Virgina Woolf, A Room of One’s Own (various publishers, original 1929)
Mark Wigley, White Walls, Designer Dresses (MIT, 1995)
Beatriz Preciado, Pornotopia: An Essay on Playboy’s Architecture and Biopolitics (Zone Books, 2014)


Recommended Films

The films listed under each week are complementary to the lectures in this course. Since its difficult to show them during the Study Abroad Program in France, I highly recommend students watch them before the start of the program. Excerpts, whenever available, will be shown during in-class lecture.
## Schedule

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Days 1-2</th>
<th>S&amp;S</th>
<th>June 30-July 1</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Lectures</strong></td>
<td>1: Introduction to <em>Sex &amp; Space</em>, method of site visits, visual analysis of space, assignments</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Films</strong></td>
<td><em>The Fountainhead</em> (dir. Ayn Rand &amp; King Vidor, 1949)</td>
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### Site Visits & Lectures

**Musée du Louvre, Pyramids, Paris**

By I.M. Pei, 1989


75001 Paris, France

https://www.louvre.fr/
Lectures
2: Rise of bourgeoisie after Industrial Revolution, classification of architectural fragments and body parts in 19th century, origins of the Modern Movement
3: Fin-de-siècle Vienna, Freud’s theory of sexuality, Vienna Secession, modernist architecture and sexuality in Vienna, moves to southern California by 1910

Readings

Site Visits
Centre Georges Pompidou, Paris
By Renzo Piano and Richard Rogers, 1971-77
Place Georges-Pompidou, 75004 Paris, France
https://www.centrepompidou.fr/
Moulin Rouge, Quartier Pigalle area, Paris
Red light district, urban fabric, 1880-1910

Fondation Louis Vuitton, Paris
By Frank Gehry, 2006-14
8 Avenue du Mahatma Gandhi, 75116 Paris, France
http://www.fondationlouisvuitton.fr/
Lectures
4: Mies, High Modernism, erasure of gender in architecture, rise of high rise, fetishism of High Tech architecture

Readings

Films
King Kong (dir. Merian Cooper & Ernest Schoedsack, 1933)
Rear Window (dir. Alfred Hitchcock, 1954)
Robert Venturi and Denise Scott Brown (dir. Michael Blackwood, 1988)

Case Study
William Lamb, Empire State Building, Manhattan, New York, 1931
Boris Iofan, Palace of the Soviets, 1934
SOM, Lever House, Manhattan, New York, 1952
Jean Nouvel, Torre Agbar, Barcelona, Spain, 2005
Susan Buck-Morss, Dreamworld and Catastrophe (MIT, 2000) chap. 1

Site Visits
Eiffel Tower, Paris
By Gustave Eiffel & Stephen Sauvestre, 1887
Champ de Mars, 5 Avenue Anatole France, 75007 Paris, France
https://www.toureiffel.paris/fr

Hermitage Plaza Twin Towers, Paris
By Norman Foster, 2019-2024
92400 Courbevoie, France
https://www.fosterandpartners.com/projects/hermitage-plaza/
Lectures 5: Invention of American suburb, perfect hostess, urban-suburban gender dynastic, The American Home and its discontents, DeCon architecture and degenderization

Anne McClintock, “Screwing the system: Sexwork, race, and the law,” boundary 2, 19/2 (Summer, 1992) 70-95, optional

Films Pillow Talk (dir. Michael Gordon, 1959)
Mad Men (AMC, 2007)
Nip/Tuck (FX, 2003)
James Bond film Diamonds Are Forever (1971)
American Beauty (dir. Sam Mendes, 1999)
The Hours (dir. Stephen Daldry, 2002)
The World of Charles and Ray Eames (pro. Masaaki Hagimo, 1986)

Case Study Charles and Ray Eames, Eames House, Los Angeles, 1949
Robert Venturi, Vanna Venturi House, Chestnut Hill, Pennsylvania, 1964

Dana Arnold, “Reading architectural herstories: The discourses of gender,” in Architecture and Design in Europe and America (Malden, 2006) 172-79
Denise Scott Brown, “Room at the top? Sexism and the star system in architecture,” in Architecture: A Place for Women (Smithsonian, 1989) 237-46
Louis Kahn, Louis Kahn to Anne Tyng: The Rome Letters 1953-54 (Rizzoli, 1997) 28-61,
Virginia Woolf, A Room of One's Own (1929)
Simone de Beauvoir, The Second Sex (1951)

Site Visits Villa Savoye, Poissy
By Le Corbusier, 1928-31
82 Rue de Villiers, 78300 Poissy, France
http://www.villa-savoye.fr/
Lectures
6: Postmodernism and birth of hotel atriums, sex motels and privatization of seeing, Zizek on Freud, kitsch and Vegas, spaces of scopophilia

Readings

Film
*Psycho* (dir. Alfred Hitchcock, 1960)
*Dames* (dir. Ray Enright, 1934)

Case Study
Alhambra or Madinat al-Hamra, Granada, Spain, 13th-14th centuries
Safavid and Ottoman Harems, 16th-19th centuries

Alain Grosrichard, *The Sultan’s Court: European Fantasies of the East* (1998), selections

Site Visits
**Institut du Monde Arabe, Paris**
By Jean Nouvel, 1981-87
1 Rue des Fossés Saint-Bernard, 75005 Paris, France
https://www.imarabe.org/fr
**Lectures**
7: Cooperating male-female architects, *De Stijl* and Dutch modernism, birth of new home, 
Le Corbusier vs. Gray, erasure of Gray, villa as gendered battleground

**Readings**
Alice Friedman, “Not a muse: The client’s role at the Rietveld Schroder House,” in 
Zeynep Çelik, “Gendered spaces in colonial Algiers,” in *The Sex of Architecture* 
(Abrams, 1996) 127-40, optional
Nadir Jahiji, “The gift of the Open Hand: Le Corbusier's reading of George Bataille’s La Part 
Maudite,” *Journal of Architectural Education* 50/1 (1996) 50-67, optional

**Film:** *Women and Architecture: Public Space and Public Work* (Amanda Willett, 2002)
*A Personal Journey with Maya Lin, Artist and Architect*

**Case Study**
Gendered Modernism in the Non-West

(2006) 53-56
Sibel Bozdogan, “Gendering the modern,” *Modernism and Nation Building* 
(Washington, 2001) 80-105
Vikramaditya Prakash, “With open hand,” *Chandigarh’s Le Corbusier* 
(Washington, 2002) 123-45

**Site Visits**
*Notre Dame du Haut, Ronchamps*
By Le Corbusier, 1954
13 Rue de la Chapelle, 70250 Ronchamp, France
http://www.collinenotredameduhaut.com/
Day 18-20  

**DEBATE & DRAFT MODEL REVIEW**  

The class will divide in two groups. One will argue pro and one con based on readings.
10 min. prep; 30 min. strategize; 30 min. debate; 10 min. summary. Pick one reading.

After the debate, students will present the core ideas of their model projects in draft and sketch.

### Readings


Eugene Gates, “Why Have There Been No Great Women Composers?” *Journal of Aesthetic Education* 28/2 (Summer 1994) 27-34

### Site Visits

**Saline Royale / Royal Saltworks, Arc-et-Senans**

By Claude-Nicolas Ledoux, Maison de Plaisir, Oikema, 1789

Grande Rue, 25610 Arc-et-Senans, France

http://www.salineroyale.com/

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![Image of Saline Royale / Royal Saltworks, Arc-et-Senans](http://www.salineroyale.com/)

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![Image of floor plans](http://www.salineroyale.com/)
**Lectures**
8: Queer theory and illegibility of Western masterpieces, *Epistemology of the Closet*, semiotics, Postmodernism queering architecture, Philip Johnson, Paul Rudolph, Charles Moore

**Readings**

**Film**
*South Park* (dir. Terry Parker and Matt Stone, 1997 on)
*Carol* (Dir. Todd Haynes, 2015)

**Case Study**
Philip Johnson, Glass House, New Canaan, Connecticut, 1949
Philip Johnson, AT&T Building, Manhattan, New York, 1984

Aaron Betsky, “Queering modernism,” *Queer Spaces: Architecture and Same-Sex Desire* (New York, 1997) 98-139
Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick, *Epistemology of the Closet* (Univ. of Cal, 1990) 67-90, optional
Alan Hollinghurst, *The Swimming-Pool Library* (Vintage, 1989), optional

**Site Visits**
*Miroir Ombrière, Vieux Port, Marseille*
By Norman Foster, 2013
Quai de Rive Neuve, 13001 Marseille, France
https://www.fosterandpartners.com/projects/marseille-vieux-port/
CMA CGM Headquarters, Marseille
By Zaha Hadid, 2010
Quai de Rive Neuve, 13001 Marseille, France
http://www.zaha-hadid.com/architecture/cma-cgm-headquarters/

Carré d'Art-Musée d'Art Contemporain, Nîmes
By Norman Foster, 1993
Place de la Maison Carrée, 30000 Nîmes, France
Lectures 9: Historical development of leisure architecture, queer shaping of liminal spaces, political origins of pornography and visual critique, Foucault’s theory of sexual control and militant architecture

Readings Susan Sontag, “Notes on Camp,” in Against Interpretation and Other Essays (New York, 1964)
Michel Foucault, “The other Victorians,” and “The repressive hypothesis,” in The History of Sexuality (1976), v. 1, optional

Films My Beautiful Laundrette (dir. Stephen Frears, 1985)

Case Study Jeremy Bentham’s Panopticon
Louis Sullivan
Bathhouses and bathrooms

Yolanda Retter, “Lost in space: Queer theory and community activism at the fin-de-millennaire” & “Queer space,” Queers in Space: Communities, Public Places, Sites of Resistance (1997) 3-26
Laud Humphreys, Tearoom Trade: Impersonal Sex in Public Places (1975) sections

Site Visits

Unité d’Habitation, Marseille
By Le Corbusier, 1947
280 Boulevard Michelet, 13008 Marseille, France
http://www.marseille-citeradieuse.org/
### Villa Noailles, Hyères
By Mallet-Stevens (building) & Gabriel Guevrekian (garden), 1923-28
Montée de Noailles, 83400 Hyères, France

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<th>Day 26</th>
<th>INTERIOR</th>
<th>July 25</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Lectures</strong></td>
<td>9: Contemporaneity, fragmented identity, fragmented spaces, new meaning and practices of architecture, (dis)appearance of gender, inside Freud’s office/Freud’s mind, violence of global, spaces of torture</td>
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### Day 27

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<tr>
<th>MODEL PROJECT &amp; ARTIST’S SKETCHBOOK</th>
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Display & Presentation of student models and artist’s sketchbooks. Students will have about 6-7 minutes to speak about the main concept of her/his project. Each student will receive feedback from the instructor and colleagues during the review.

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### Site Visits

**E.1027, Roquebrune-Cap-Martin**
By Eileen Gray, 1929, restored 2008
E-1027 Sentier Massolin, 06190 Roquebrune-Cap-Martin, France

**Le Cabanon Summer Cabin and Tombstone, Roquebrune-Cap-Martin**
By Le Corbusier, 1952
06190 Roquebrune-Cap-Martin, France
https://www.sites-le-corbusier.org/fr/cabanon-de-le-corbusier