Texas A&M University

Core Curriculum: ARCH 350

Initial Request for a Course Addition to the Fall 2014 Core Curriculum

Foundational Component Area: Creative Arts

Courses in this category focus on the appreciation and analysis of creative artifacts and works of the human imagination. Courses involve the synthesis and interpretation of artistic expression and enable critical, creative, and innovative communication about works of art.

How does the proposed course specifically address the Foundational Component Area definition above?

ARCH 350 examines the development of modern and contemporary architecture in the 20th and 21st century. This includes ideas (theories), movements, architects and monuments, and also modern materials, structural systems, social, political, and economic developments. This course aims to encourage the formulation of well-grounded opinions upon built environment by referring the concepts, the visual and social consequences, the technology employed, and the cultural and historical context of their creation. Upon successful completion of this course, students will be able to:

• Visually recognize architectural illustrations (plans, elevations, sections) and identify main characteristics of modern architecture, recognizing influences and major concepts - identify buildings, ideas, and architects that portray Modern and Contemporary Architecture.
• Describe, using formal and technical vocabulary, the defining characteristics of Modern and Contemporary buildings.
• Distinguish significant developments in construction and design: concepts, architects and movements that shaped architecture into what it is today and how their ideas affect current design.
• Interpret motivation and societal forces behind the design, and the process of creating relevant forms.
• Build a chronological framework for understanding the development of construction techniques.
• Apply critical thinking to theories in the history of architecture.

Core Objectives

Describe how the proposed course develops the required core objectives below by indicating how each learning objective will be addressed, what specific strategies will be used for each objective and how student learning of each objective will be evaluated.

Critical Thinking (to include creative thinking, innovation, inquiry, and analysis, evaluation and synthesis of information):

ARCH 350 addresses the Core Critical Thinking Objective through the critical examination of factual data and theories related to the development of the built environment, the origins and the evolution of ideas related to creativity in art and architecture, and important innovations in architectural form, material and technique from the early 20th century to the present.
The following critical thinking skills will be assessed on exams and through in-class writing activities and discussions.

- Students will analyze architectural illustrations and make inferences concerning the essential elements, relationships, and organizing principles of design.
- Students will analyze and evaluate data concerning architectural precedents and concepts that have impacted the form of the built environment in the 20th and 21st century.
- Students will investigate and interpret evidence for the transmission of modern style and innovations across time and cultures and evaluate the strengths and weaknesses of different theories concerning cultural diffusion and/or parallel developments in architecture.
- Students will think creatively about symbolic communication in art and architecture, synthesize information from diverse historical/cultural precedents, and formulate innovative sets of relationships or guidelines that could be applied to other contexts.

Communication (to include effective development, interpretation and expression of ideas through written, oral and visual communication):

ARCH 350 addresses the Core Communication Objective by teaching students how to examine and interpret architecture and architectural illustrations (formal visual analysis) and how to describe defining characteristics using accurate and technical vocabulary.

The following aspects of communication skills will be assessed on exams and through in-class writing activities and discussions.

- Students will learn methods of visual communication, analysis and interpretation through work with architectural illustrations (plans, elevations, sections), photographs, and other visual media. [Visual communication]
- Students will present analytical reports and/or build analytical models of modern and contemporary buildings with selections of contemporary writings to interpret architectural design and its relationship to culture, context, climate, philosophical traditions, and political and social circumstances. The reports should consider concept and connections to style; how it came to be designed and/or built in a certain way; Architect’s philosophy regarding design or architecture. [Written, oral, and visual communication]
- Students will summarize in approximately 200 words the main points of lecture, video, and reading assignments and discuss what they found particularly interesting and what they were in disagreement with. [Written and oral communication]
- Students will access relevant multi-media resources and explain in class what they have learned as the most important architectural concepts reflected in a building’s design. [Oral communication]
- Students will engage in class discussions to formulate accurate and appropriate responses and questions during lectures. [Oral communication]
- Students will share individual and small group responses orally with the larger class, receiving feedback and commentary both from other students and the instructor. [Oral communication]
Social Responsibility (to include intercultural competence, knowledge of civic responsibility, and the ability to engage effectively in regional, national, and global communities):

ARCH 350 addresses the Core Social Responsibility Objective by considering the parallel and divergent canons and traditions of architecture from around the world. It teaches students to appreciate, understand, and respect the built environment of the diverse cultures and belief systems that form the foundations of the modern world.

The following aspects of the social responsibility skills will be assessed on exams and through in-class activities and discussions.

- Students will demonstrate intercultural competence by explaining how the human-designed and built environment can be understood as expressions of culture at local, regional, national and global scales, and how the culturally encoded meanings of art and architecture can change over time.
- Students will summarize and explain the roles and responsibilities of individuals, societies, local governments, and international organizations concerning our built environment.
- Students will compare the societal roles and responsibilities of architects and patrons in their own and other cultures.
- Students will learn about the history and theory of sustainable architecture, the most recent architectural theories related to adaptive reuse, industrial heritage, and sustainable principles.

Teamwork (to include the ability to consider different points of view and to work effectively with others to support a shared purpose or goal):

ARCH 350 will address the Core Teamwork Objective through in-class and online activities, including minute papers, discussion in small groups, and analytical exercises. These activities will provide models for students to share individual perspectives with each other and develop more effective answers to questions that may appear on formal examinations.

The following learning objectives will be developed using teamwork skills:

1. Describe the defining characteristics of modern and contemporary buildings using formal and technical vocabulary
2. Discuss different observations and points of view about the character of modern and contemporary architecture.
3. Analyze and interpret the motivation and societal forces behind the design, and the process of creating relevant forms.

Statement on International and Cultural Diversity

ARCH 350 surveys important aspects of the 20th and 21st century architecture in both Western and Non-Western traditions. In this culture-historical approach to architectural history and theory, students develop an awareness of the modern and contemporary architecture in different contexts and the transmission of design principles and technology across cultures and over time, and an understanding of how cultural identity is expressed in the visual arts and urban settings. The examination of current design theories, urban planning and sustainability principles provides an opportunity to discuss issues of social memory, identity, globalization, adaptive
reuse, and historic preservation. By learning how to appreciate, understand, and respect the built environment of different cultures and circumstances, students are able to develop an understanding of how the architecture of diverse contemporary cultures reflects identity and cultural values.