



Futurability

Summer 2020
Sam Fox School

ARCH330
Graduate School of Architecture, Urban Design, and Landscape Architecture
Washington University in St. Louis

Online
Time: Tuesdays and Thursdays 2:30 – 5:30PM

Instructor: Michael Allen, Senior Lecturer in Architecture, Landscape Architecture and Urban Design
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Course Description

Can we design for a time not yet arrived? Is our motive for that design an exit from, critique of or commentary on the present? Can architecture be a revolutionary practice, serving to transform social and spatial relations simultaneously? Can designers bring about a future?

This seminar explores architectural and urban design manifestations of "futurability," of that which is capable of existing or occurring in the future. We will examine speculative urban-scale designs by Ebenezer Howard, Frank Lloyd Wright, Le Corbusier, June Jordan, Kisho Kurakawa, Superstudio, Paolo Soleri and others; architectural projects built and unbuilt envisioned by Buckminster Fuller, Oscar Niemeyer, Archigram and Michael Reynolds; and optimistic state-led programs state architecture in the former nations of Yugoslavia, Cuba and East Germany. Along the way, we will examine literary, philosophical and artistic pushes to utopian or dystopian futures, from *The Communist Manifesto* to current commentaries on the world after coronavirus.

Aim

The goal of this course is to introduce students to the ways in which architectural practice has responded to history, especially through projects or movements that are utopian or futurist in nature.

Learning Outcomes

Students will be able to:

1. Articulate how architecture has pursued future-focused practices, including the incorporation of utopian and revolutionary ideas;
2. Articulate general themes in futurist movements in the twentieth and twenty-first centuries;
3. Research and write about specific case studies of futurist-oriented designers, movements and architectural projects;
4. Relate futurist theory to the current response of architecture to the coronavirus pandemic.

Course Materials

These books are required and students must obtain their own copy:

- J.G. Ballard, *High-Rise* (New York: Liveright Publishing Company, 2012).

All other required readings are accessible on Canvas.

Schedule

Tuesday, June 2: Introductions

Thursday, June 4: The Current Crisis

Readings:

Arundhati Roy, "The pandemic is a portal," *The Financial Times* (April 3, 2020).

<https://www.ft.com/content/10d8f5e8-74eb-11ea-95fe-fcd274e920ca>

Alain Badiou, "On the Epidemic Situation," *Verso Books Blog* (March 23, 2020).

<https://www.versobooks.com/blogs/4608-on-the-epidemic-situation>

Alissa Walker, "Coronavirus is Not Fuel for Urbanist Fantasies," *Curbed* (May 20, 2020).

<https://www.curbed.com/2020/5/20/21263319/coronavirus-future-city-urban-covid-19>

Oliver Wainwright, "Smart Lifts, Lonely Workers, No Towers or Tourists: Architecture after Coronavirus," *The Guardian* (April 23, 2020).

<https://www.theguardian.com/artanddesign/2020/apr/13/smart-lifts-lonely-workers-no-towers-architecture-after-covid-19-coronavirus>

Tuesday, June 9: Theories of Time and History

Reading:

Paul Virilio, "The Perspective of Real Time," *Open Sky* (New York: Verso, 1997).

Keller Easterling, "Disposition," *Extrastatecraft: The Power of Infrastructure Space* (New York: Verso, 2014).

T.J. Demos, "Anthropocene, Capitalocene, Chthlucene: The Many Names of Resistance," *Against the Anthropocene: Visual Culture and Environment Today* (Berlin: Sternberg Press, 2017).

Critical Reflection Due

Thursday, June 11: Bending the Future

Reading:

Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels, *Manifesto of the Communist Party*.

<https://www.marxists.org/archive/marx/works/1848/communist-manifesto/>

Bifo Berardi, "Invention" and "Afterword: The Inconceivable," *Futurability: The Age of Impotence and the Horizon of Possibility* (New York: Verso, 2019).

Tuesday, June 16: Producing the Future

Guests: Constance Vale, Assistant Professor of Architecture, Sam Fox School
Gavin Kroeber, Principal, Studio for Art & Urbanism

Reading:

Deleuze and Guattari, "Treatise on Nomadology," *A Thousand Plateaus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia* (Minneapolis: The University of Minnesota Press, 1981).

Guy Debord and Gil J. Wolman, "Methods of Detournement," *Situationist International Anthology* (Berkeley: Bureau of Public Secrets, 1981).

Carrie Lambert-Beatty, "Make-Believe: Parafiction and Plausibility," *October* 129 (Summer 2009).

Critical Reflection Due

Thursday, June 18: Architecture Reaches Toward the Future

Reading:

Le Corbusier, "Three Reminders to Architects" and "Architecture or Revolution," *Towards a New Architecture* (New York: Dover Publications, 1986).

Jean-Louis Cohen, *The Future of Architecture. Since 1889*. (London: Phaidon Press Ltd., 2012), chapters 13 and 14.

Tuesday, June 23: Architecture Reaches Toward the Future

Reading:

Cohen, chapters 15, 16, 18 and 19.

Critical Reflection Due

Thursday, June 25: The Future Is Not Always on Time

Reading:

Cohen, chapters 24, 28 and 30.

Manfredo Tafuri, "The Crisis of Utopia: Le Corbusier at Algiers," *Architecture and Utopia: Design and Capitalist Development* (Cambridge: The MIT Press, 1976).

Mark Jarzombek, "The Quadrivium Industrial Complex," *e-flux* (November 11, 2019).

<https://www.e-flux.com/architecture/overgrowth/296508/the-quadrivium-industrial-complex/>

Tuesday, June 30: Case Studies

Guest: Huda Tayob, Senior Lecturer, Graduate School of Architecture, University of Johannesburg

Presentations: Oscar Niemeyer – Joel Leon | Lina Bo Bardi – Jingwen He

Reading:

WAI Think Tank, "Anti-Racist Architecture Manifesto" (June 2020).

<http://waithinktank.com/Anti-Racist-Manifesto>

Glauco Campello, "Architecture and the Environment in Niemeyer's Work," *Oscar Niemeyer: Classics and Unseen* (Sao Paulo: ITAU, 2014).

Farés El Dahdah, "Oscar in New York: The Pavilion and the United Nations," *Oscar Niemeyer: Classics and Unseen* (Sao Paulo: ITAU, 2014).

"Oscar Niemeyer," *Domus* (no date).

<https://www.domusweb.it/en/biographies/oscar-ribeiro-de-almeida-de-niemeyer-soares-noto-come-oscar-niemeyer.html>

Zeuler R.M. DeA. Lima, "Lina Bo Bardi and the Architecture of Everyday Culture," *Places Journal* (November 2013).

Sabine Von Fischer, "The Horizons of Lina Bo Bardi: The Museu de Arte de São Paulo in the Context of European Postwar Concepts of Architecture," *Lina Bo Bardi* (Berlin: Hatje Cantz, 2015).

Critical Reflection Due

Thursday, July 2 – NO CLASS

Tuesday, July 7: Case Studies

Presentations: National Art Schools of Cuba – Charlie Chen | Kisho Kurokawa – Yoko Furuya

Reading & Viewing:

Patrick Calmon de Carvalho Braga, "Arquitectura Cuba and the Early Revolutionary Project," *International Journal of Cuba Studies* 9.2 (Winter 2017).

Georgia McCafferty, "Resurrecting a Revolution: The Fight to Save Cuba's Forgotten Art Schools," CNN (June 2, 2016).

<https://www.cnn.com/style/article/cuba-national-art-schools/index.html>

Anthony Zonaga, "Anthropotopia: Kisho Kurokawa and the Metamorphosis of the Metabolist Utopia." https://www.academia.edu/27022556/Anthropotopia_Kisho_Kurokawa_and_the_Metamorphosis_of_the_Metabolist_Utopia

"Kisho Kurokawa on the Nakagin Capsule Building," *Tokyo Art Beat* (August 10, 2007).

<http://www.tokyoartbeat.com/tablog/entries.en/2007/08/kisho-kurokawa-on-the-nakagin-capsule-building.html>

"Kisho Kurokawa on Building the National Art Center," *Tokyo Art Beat* (July 3, 2007).

<http://www.tokyoartbeat.com/tablog/entries.en/2007/07/kisho-kurokawa-on-building-the-national-art-center.html>

Thursday, July 9: Case Studies

Presentations: Yugoslavian Architecture – Jackson Feinknopf | Paolo Soleri – Bing Zhao

Reading and Viewing:

Aleks Eror, "What's Behind the Recent Craze for Yugoslavia's Modern Architecture?," *The Calvert Journal* (June 4, 2019).

<https://www.calvertjournal.com/features/show/11192/yugoslav-architectures-big-year>

A History of the Paolo Soleri Amphitheater.

<https://paolosoleriamphitheaterhistory.com>

Lean Linear City: Aerial Arcotology (2010).

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xX_GD7omON4

Tuesday, July 14: Case Studies

Presentations: Superstudio – Casey Niblett | Archigram – Chen Li

Reading and Viewing:

Superstudio Supersurface: An Alternate Model for Life On Earth (1972).

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1KkTewCUKT8>

Ross K. Elflin, "Superstudio and the 'Refusal to Work'," *Design and Culture* 8:1 (2016).

Fernando Quesada, "Superstudio 1966-73: From the World Without Objects to the Universal Grid," *FOOTPRINT* 8 (2011).

Darran Anderson, "The Prophetic Side of Archigram," *CityLab* (November 15, 2017).

<https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2017-11-15/archigram-and-the-modern-city>

"Archigram's Plug-In City shows that 'pre-fabrication doesn't have to be boring,'" *Dezeen* (2020).

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=v3HPCarhOyg>

"Archigram's Instant City concept enables 'a village to become a kind of city for a week,'" *Dezeen* (2020).

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QzVutKhNsq8>

Thursday, July 16: Case Studies

Presentations: Buckminster Fuller - Xinrui Zhou | June Jordan – Kai Smith

Readings and Viewings:

“Design: The Dymaxion American,” *Time* (January 10, 1964).

<http://content.time.com/time/subscriber/article/0,33009,875527-1,00.html>

“A Community Dwelling Machine,” *SynEarth Network* (2020).

<https://solutions.synearth.net/a-community-dwelling-machine/>

Buckminster Fuller on The Geodesic Life (2020).

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-Fhnkkzk9oo>

Life Emergence (2013).

https://www.youtube.com/watch?time_continue=43&v=NrYYqCfHJmA&feature=emb_logo

Spencer Stultz, “The Harlem Race Riot of 1964,” *BlackPast* (December 4, 2017).

<https://www.blackpast.org/african-american-history/harlem-race-riot-1964/>

Doreen St. Flix, “Out of Print: June Jordan,” *Lenny* (September 30, 2015).

<https://www.elle.com/culture/books/a30763/out-of-print-june-jordan/>

Charles Davis, “Race, Rhetoric and Revision: June Jordan as Utopian Architect,” *Open Cities: The New Post-Industrial World Order* (2014).

Tuesday, July 21: Case Studies

Presentations: Michael Reynolds - Yixuan Wang | Black Quantum Futurism (Camae Ayewa and Rasheedah Phillip) - Natian Tian

Readings and Viewings:

Susan Reed, “Want An Ecologically Correct House? Architect Michael Reynolds Builds Earthships Out of Beer Cans and Tires,” *People* (January 14, 1991).

<https://people.com/archive/want-an-ecologically-correct-house-architect-michael-reynolds-builds-earthships-out-of-beer-cans-and-tires-vol-35-no-1/>

Patricia Leigh Brown, “Father Earth,” *New York Times* (January 10, 1993).

<https://www.nytimes.com/1993/01/10/style/father-earth.html?pagewanted=all>

Michael Reynolds Archiculture Extras Interview (2015).

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=L_9Gwb0Ze-c&t=37s

Thursday, July 23: When Utopia Falls Apart

Guest: Jenny Price, Research Fellow, Sam Fox School

Reading:

J.G. Ballard, *High-Rise* (New York: Liveright Publishing Company, 2012).

Tuesday, July 28: The Paths Forward

Reading:

Antoine Picon, “Notes on Utopia, the City and Architecture,” *Grey Room* (September 2017).

Richard Sennett, “The Search for a Place in the World,” *Architecture of Fear* (Nan Ellin, editor; Princeton: Princeton Architectural Press, 1997).

Critical Reflection Due

Thursday, July 30: Final Presentations

Assignments

1. Critical Reflections

Students will post critical reflections as indicated by the syllabus due dates. The instructor will post a question on Canvas, and students should post the response on Canvas. Responses should be *less* than 500 words and represent a short response. Longer responses should be edited down as much as possible. These are not papers, but quick essays.

2. Case Studies Presentation

Students will prepare a presentation on a project or designer as noted on the syllabus. Students will sign up for presentations during the first week of the seminar. Students will be responsible for a presentation of at least 20 minutes on the subject, and will circulate suggested readings ahead of the presentation. The exact assignment will be submitted by the instructor during the first week of the seminar,

3. Final Project

The final project will consist of a manifesto about the future or architecture and a short presentation. The exact assignment will be distributed in seminar before the third week.

Evaluation and Grading

The required work in the seminar will include short response papers, a midterm project, a final research project and participation in the course glossary, participation in discussion and attendance. The final grade will be based on this formula:

Final Project	30%
Case Studies Presentation	20%
Critical Reflections	30%
Attendance and Participation in Discussion	20%

Papers and work will be graded numerically out of 100 points. Final grades will be letter grades based on the following grading scale:

Conceptual Considerations	Methodology	Craftsmanship	Integrative skills
A New concepts are explored in original ways. Conceptual basis of project demonstrates clear grasp of complex issues (histories, social contexts, ecological issues). Project is fully developed and expresses a high level of investigative rigor.	Analysis demonstrates rigor and highly developed understanding of scope. Sophisticated and attentive design decision-making apparent throughout process. Logical, confident and iterative procedure generates design outputs that can be described and evaluated in terms of the process.	Clear connection between ideas and their investigation through careful manipulation of design representation and materials. Excellent craftsmanship displays thought and care. Clear demonstration of the importance of the artifact in design production. Attentiveness to the aesthetic of making.	New and complex issues are successfully integrated. Seamless integration of depiction and depicted. Comprehensive marshaling and conjoining of the physical, the conceptual and the representational.

B	Complex issues are adequately integrated. Project is well-developed and design outcomes show understanding of issues.	Process demonstrates adequate grasp of problems and issues. Clear use of iterative method. Source data employed throughout. Project process remains within the confines of the known.	Good quality work, with moderate appeal. Engagement with materiality of representation needs further work. Outputs would improve with greater attentiveness to quality of craft.	Design production shows real understanding of issues, problems, resources and process, but does not quite bring them all together in a unified articulation of design intent.
C	Project exhibits an inherent lack of conceptual engagement. The necessary components are gathered but are related and explored only superficially.	Clear and effective process never fully developed. Tentative and ill-defined methodology. Tendency to change from approach to approach without fully investigating any one method, suggesting uncertainty with respect to iterative procedures.	Crafted dimension of production distracts from design intent. Sloppy, ill-managed articulation of the artifact as an object. Ideas remain untransformed by the act of making.	Project remains on the level of a collection of disparate ideas and forms, weakly integrated or developed, and only marginally related to the singularity of the site, situation or program.
D	Project is inadequately developed in all areas. Heavy reliance on found materials. Project shows little or no regulation by means of conceptual thinking.	Inadequate development of project. Muddled thinking about process. Little or no clear methodological procedure utilized. No connection between design output and design process.	Poor quality or negligible craftsmanship. No sense of the development of an aesthetic. Outputs are uninspiring, timid and uncared for.	Little or no sense of the project as an interactive condition. Outcome does not relate to program, site or contexts. Failure of understanding with respect to the nature of design.

Course Communication

All course communication will take place through Canvas with individual meetings on Zoom, WhatsApp, FaceTime or other mutually-agreeable platform. Final work shall be submitted via email.

Course Policies and Information for Students

This seminar operates on a pedagogical model of participatory inquiry, where all participants shape the research questions and experiential priorities of the course. The seminar requires a high degree of participation through verbal discussion while also demanding a robust schedule of readings to support exploration of themes. While the instructor will lecture and guide, the seminar is a venue for each student to present questions, findings and connections located in readings and field trips. For readings, students should make every attempt to complete readings before meeting, but if not possible, at least discern authors’ key points and themes. The seminar encourages research as practice; that is, research not for memorization but for critical understanding of subjects to advance students’ own educational goals. Design students should have no fear.

Seminar: *Oxford English Dictionary* definition 1.1: “A class at university in which a topic is discussed by a teacher and a small group of students.” Origin: Late 19th century: from German Seminar, from Latin *seminarium* (see seminary).

Inclusive Learning Environment: The best learning environment—whether in the classroom, studio, laboratory, or fieldwork site—is one in which all members feel respected while being productively challenged. At Washington University in St. Louis, we are dedicated to fostering an inclusive atmosphere, in which all participants can contribute, explore, and challenge their own ideas as well as those of others. Every participant has an active responsibility to foster a climate of intellectual stimulation, openness, and respect for diverse perspectives, questions, personal backgrounds, abilities, and experiences, although instructors bear primary responsibility for its maintenance.

A range of resources is available to those who perceive a learning environment as lacking inclusivity, as defined in the preceding paragraph. If possible, we encourage students to speak directly with their instructor about any suggestions or concerns they have regarding a particular instructional space or situation. Alternatively, students may bring concerns to another trusted advisor or administrator (such as an academic advisor, mentor, department chair, or dean). All classroom participants—including faculty, staff, and students—who observe a bias incident affecting a student may also file a report (whether personally or anonymously) utilizing the online Bias Report and Support System.

1. ATTENDANCE POLICY

Attendance is mandatory, and will be documented for all course meetings. Sam Fox School students are expected to arrive ready to participate and be fully engaged in the day's coursework during the entire scheduled class period. Participation in major critiques and reviews by all students is essential to the development of all of students. Failure to do so will have an impact on your final grade.

Following university policy, class will begin promptly with the start time listed. Students are allowed two unexcused absences. After two unexcused absences, students will receive one full letter grade penalty for each subsequent absence. Three late arrivals and/or early departures will equal one absence. If a student misses more than 20 minutes of a class, they are considered absent. Missing a review or critique equals two absences. If a student must miss a critique, please inform the professor beforehand. Any student who misses class is responsible for contacting a fellow student to find out what they missed, for making up all work, and for being prepared for the next class. In the case of severe medical or family emergencies, contact the Associate Dean of Students Georgia Binnington as soon as possible at gbinning@wustl.edu or 314.935.6532.

2. PENALTIES FOR LATE WORK and REQUESTS FOR EXTENSIONS

Late work will lose a half-letter grade for each week that it is late, after being graded (so a B paper turned in one week late is a B- paper). Requests for extensions must be made before the start of the class session before the assignment is due. Always consult the instructor if in doubt.

3. POLICIES ON MISSED EXAMS, MAKE-UP EXAMS OR QUIZZES

There are no exams in this seminar.

4. REGRADING POLICY

There is no regrading in this seminar.

5. REQUESTS FOR INSTRUCTOR FEEDBACK ON DRAFTS AND REQUESTS TO REVISE

Students should make every effort to consult with the instructor before submitting work. The instructor is available during office hours, by appointment and by email to review ideas for the papers.

6. GRADE DISPUTE POLICY

The Sam Fox School aims to provide each student with a fair assessment of their academic work and studio. Students have the right to dispute their overall course grade (not individual assignments) if they believe that grade does not accurately reflect the quality of their work. A grade dispute must be submitted to the faculty member who assigned the grade within 30 days of receipt of the grade. The School stresses that every effort to resolve this dispute be made by the faculty and student involved. A student's eligibility for advancement in sequential coursework requires timely resolution of the grade dispute. For more information visit https://samfoxschool.wustl.edu/files/Greivance%20Policy_Update%202019.pdf.

7. TECHNOLOGY POLICIES

Computers or other electronic devices, including “smart pens” (devices with an embedded computer and digital audio recorder that records the classroom lecture/discussion and links that recording to the notes taken by the student), may be used by students at the discretion of the faculty member to support the learning activities in the classroom. These activities include taking notes and accessing course readings under discussion. If a student wishes to use a smart-pen or other electronic device to audio record lectures or class discussions, they must notify the instructor in advance of doing so. Permission to use recording devices is at the discretion of the instructor, unless this use is an accommodation approved by Disability Resources.

Nonacademic use of laptops and other devices and use of laptops or other devices for other coursework is distracting and seriously disrupts the learning process for other people in the classroom. Neither computers nor other electronic devices are to be used in the classroom during class for nonacademic reasons or for work on other coursework. Nonacademic use includes emailing, texting, social networking, playing games, instant messaging, and use of the Internet. Work on other coursework may include, but is not limited to, use of the Internet, writing papers, using statistical software, analyzing data, and working on quizzes or exams. The nonacademic use of cell phones during class time is prohibited, and they should be set on silent before class begins. In the case of an emergency, please step out of the room to take the call. The instructor has the right to hold students accountable for meeting these expectations, and failure to do so may result in a loss of participation or attendance points, a loss of the privilege of device use in the classroom, or being asked to leave the classroom. Visit <https://sites.wustl.edu/insidesfs/it/> for more information.

8. LICENSE FOR NON-EXCLUSIVE RIGHT TO REPRODUCE AND DISTRIBUTE

Michael Allen has non-exclusive right to reproduce and distribute work produced in this class as part of a publication or body of work, which may include products from this course or other works. Students retain ownership of all rights held under copyright. This permission is revocable for 3 months following the conclusion of this course via notification in writing to Michael Allen.

9. ETHICS/VIOLATIONS OF ACADEMIC INTEGRITY

Ethical behavior is an essential component of learning and scholarship. Students are expected to understand, and adhere to, the University’s academic integrity policy: wustl.edu/policies/undergraduate-academic-integrity.html. Students who violate this policy will be referred to the Academic Integrity Policy Committee. Penalties for violating the policy will be determined by the Academic Integrity Policy committee, and can include failure of the assignment, failure of the course, suspension or expulsion from the University. If you have any doubts about what constitutes a violation of the Academic Integrity policy, or any other issue related to academic integrity, please ask the instructor.

- Always cite sources when ideas are presented and/or language that was developed by another individual, including material from class lectures and discussions.
- Violation of this policy includes collaborating on assignments where collaboration is not allowed and/or utilizing notes, texts, etc. on any assignment where use of such materials is not allowed.
- Computers and smart phones may aid course sessions by allowing students to pull up readings, websites, images or other materials to share. These devices should not be used for other purposes during class time. Absolutely no use of these devices for personal communications, web browsing or games is allowed. If a student uses a device in such a manner, that student’s participation grade will be reduced by three points for each infraction. If a student has an urgent need

to communicate, the student should leave the seminar room to call, email or text. There will be no penalty.

10. RELIGIOUS HOLIDAYS

The Sam Fox School recognizes the individual student's choice in observing religious holidays that occur during periods when classes are scheduled. Students are encouraged to arrange with their instructors to make up work missed as a result of religious observance, and instructors are asked to make every reasonable effort to accommodate such requests.