



COURSE DESCRIPTION CARD - SYLLABUS

Course name

ARCHITECTURAL CONTEXT IN CONTEMPORARY SCHOLARSHIP: KEY ISSUES AND PERSPECTIVES [S5AIU>KAWBN]

Course

Proposed by Discipline

–

Year/Semester

3/5

Level of study

Doctoral School

Course offered in

English

Form of study

full-time

Requirements

elective

Number of hours

Lecture

8

Laboratory classes

0

Other

0

Tutorials

0

Projects/seminars

0

Number of credit points

2,00

Coordinators

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Lecturers

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Prerequisites

Basic knowledge of general history, Basic knowledge in the understanding of social, economic, legal and other determinants outside the engineering activity of historical process in Europa and worldwide Identify and interpret key theoretical and methodological frameworks used in contemporary architectural research. Critically analyse the relationship between architectural theory, practice, and research contexts. Evaluate interdisciplinary perspectives and their relevance to the study of the built environment. Formulate coherent and researchable questions addressing current issues in architectural and urban studies.

Course objective

The course explores the notion of context as a critical framework in architectural thought and research. Through an examination of key 20th- and 21st-century projects, theories, and debates, it investigates how architecture responds to, transforms, or challenges its cultural, historical, and urban surroundings. The lectures address seminal works and ideas—from Le Corbusier's and Kahn's unrealized projects in Venice, to Venturi and Scott Brown's Learning from Las Vegas, the urban theories of Rob and Leon Krier, and the radical visions of the Metabolists and Superstudio. Special attention is given to questions of memory, identity, and meaning in the built environment, as explored by thinkers such as Colin Rowe, Bernard Tschumi, and Hassan Fathy. By analyzing diverse case studies—from the reconstruction of European cities and colonial capitals like New Delhi and Chandigarh, to experimental environments such as Disneyland or Sun City—the course encourages students to critically assess how architecture both reflects and constructs its context. Through this lens, students will engage with broader theoretical perspectives, developing a reflective understanding of architecture as a cultural, social, and intellectual practice situated within evolving historical conditions.

Course-related learning outcomes

KNOWLEDGE

- 1) global achievements, covering theoretical foundations as well as general and selected specific issues that are relevant to scientific disciplines studied at the doctoral school, to the extent that enables revision of existing paradigms, [P8S_WG/SzD_W01]
- 2) key developmental trends of science disciplines in which education takes place at the doctoral school, [P8S_WG/SzD_W02]
- 3) scientific research methodology in disciplines represented at the doctoral school, [P8S_WG/SzD_W03]
- 4) principles of promoting scientific activity results, also in an open access mode, [P8S_WG/SzD_W04]
- 5) fundamental dilemmas of the contemporary civilization, [P8S_WK/SzD_W05]
- 6) economic, legal, ethical and other vital conditions related to scientific activity, [P8S_WK/SzD_W06]

SKILLS

- 1) critically analyze and assess scientific research results, work of experts and other creative activities together with their contribution into knowledge development, [P8S_UW/SzD_U02]

COMPETENCIES

- 1) fulfilling the social obligations of researchers and creators, [P8S_KO/SzD_K04]

Methods for verifying learning outcomes and assessment criteria

Learning outcomes presented above are verified as follows:

Student performance will be evaluated based on active participation in class discussions and the ability to engage in critical reflection on the topics presented. Assessment will include:

Active participation in classes and seminars – demonstrating preparedness, involvement, and contribution to group discussions (40%).

Critical discussion and analytical reflection on selected readings or case studies – clarity of argumentation, depth of insight, and quality of reasoning (60%).

Active engagement, openness to dialogue, and evidence of independent critical thinking are essential components of the final grade.

Programme content

Introduction to Architectural Research Contexts

- The role of context in architectural theory and practice
- Contemporary challenges in architectural scholarship

Theoretical Foundations

- Key concepts in architectural thought
- Paradigms and schools of interpretation in 20th- and 21st-century research

Methodological Approaches

- Qualitative and quantitative methods in architectural studies
- Interdisciplinary and cross-disciplinary research strategies

Critical Perspectives and Debates

- Architecture and cultural identity
- Environmental, social, and technological dimensions of contemporary architecture
- Ethics and responsibility in architectural research

Case Studies and Research Applications

- Analysis of selected contemporary research projects
- Application of theoretical and methodological frameworks

Developing Research Skills

- Formulating research questions and hypotheses
- Structuring academic arguments and referencing sources
- Preparing for critical discussions and academic presentations

Contemporary Issues and Future Directions

- Emerging topics and paradigms in architectural and urban research
- The evolving role of architecture in global knowledge production

Course topics

Via della Conciliazione, Rome – Urban transformation, monumental axis, and ideological context.
 Frank Lloyd Wright's Masieri Memorial, Venice (1953) – Modern architecture in a historical setting.
 Le Corbusier's Venice Hospital (1964) – Spatial logic, urban continuity, and unbuilt modernism.
 Louis I. Kahn's Congress Palace, Venice (1968–1974) – Monumentality, materiality, and context.
 Learning from Las Vegas – Robert Venturi, Denise Scott Brown, and Steven Izenour (1972); symbolism, sign, and popular culture in architecture.
 Rob Krier, Urban Space (1975) – Typology, form, and the morphology of the city.
 Colin Rowe and Fred Koetter, Collage City (1975) – Contextualism, pluralism, and the idea of the fragmented city.
 Leon Krier, Rational Architecture: The Reconstruction of the City (1978) – Traditional urbanism and critique of modernity.
 Collective Memory and Architecture – Theories of memory and identity in urban space.
 Hassan Fathy and the "Pleasantest Memories" – Tradition, vernacular heritage, and community-based design.
 Theatres of Memory – Architecture as a vessel of cultural remembrance.
 Contextualism and the Idea of a "Better Fit" – Human scale, continuity, and place-making.
 The Megastructure and Investigations in Collective Form (1964) – Large-scale systems and collective spatial order.
 Metabolism and Context – Organic growth, adaptability, and the city as process.
 Superstudio and Context – Radical critique of modernity and anti-architecture.
 Bernard Tschumi, The Manhattan Transcripts – Narrative, event, and the redefinition of architectural representation.
 La Défense, Paris – Planning, modernity, and the challenge of contextual integration.
 Disneyland Park, Anaheim (1955) – Simulation, spectacle, and the architecture of experience.
 Sun City, Arizona (1960, Del Webb) – Modern utopias and suburban models of community.
 Chandigarh and Context – Maciej Nowicki vs. Le Corbusier: visions of the modern Indian city.
 New Delhi, Imperial Capital (1912, Edwin Lutyens and Herbert Baker) – Colonial urbanism and the politics of representation.

Teaching methods

Lecture: multimedia presentation including illustrations and examples.

Bibliography

Banham R. "Theory and Design in the First Machine Age" (1960).
 Frampton F, "Modern Architecture: A Critical History" Thames & Hudson (1980).
 Forty A., "Words and Buildings: A Vocabulary of Modern Architecture" Thames & Hudson (2004).
 Rossi A., "The Architecture of the City Oppositions Book "(1966).
 Tafuri M., "Theories and History of Architecture" Harper & Row, (1980).

Breakdown of average student's workload

	Hours	ECTS
Total workload	50	2,00
Classes requiring direct contact with the teacher	8	0,00
Doctoral student's own work (literature studies, preparation for laboratory classes/tutorials, preparation for tests/exam, project preparation)	42	2,00