

**Graduate Concentration in the
History + Theory of Architecture**

School of Architecture | College of Design | NC State University

Program Description

Comprising one of the primary areas of inquiry in architectural education and practice ever since at least the first century BCE, the study of the history and theory of architecture has played an increasingly central role in defining and reshaping the boundaries, tasks, and questions of architecture and urbanism. It is the primary component that bridges the aims of scholarship and practice in architecture and urbanism. In addition to familiarizing students with existing schools of thought and modes of practice, the lecture and design courses offered under this concentration provide students with ways of analyzing the built environment as they also make up an integral component of the School of Architecture's graduate degree programs.

The Graduate Concentration in the History + Theory of Architecture allows students to build a broader knowledge and a deeper understanding of the questions of architecture, urbanism, and the built environment. With these critical methods of analysis that the discipline of architecture shares with a variety of other disciplines, the students learn to think, write, and design in an interdisciplinary manner, ultimately bringing these analytical tools to shape their work in the design studio. Students who are especially interested in building a broad knowledge base, becoming lead designers, and innovative thinkers will find this concentration especially useful to their aims. This concentration is also essential for those students who are interested in writing and speaking about their work and the built environment, developing a thesis project, and/or pursuing post-professional degrees and teaching in architecture and related fields.

Objectives

The Primary Courses (outlined below) of the *Graduate Concentration in the History + Theory of Architecture* will result in the following learning outcomes, which will be broadened and deepened in particular areas by the secondary courses:

identify the major schools of thought in architectural theory

outline the major periods and movements of the history of architecture

interpret theoretical and historical scholarship

distinguish between a variety of theoretical approaches to the history and theory of architecture

apply historical and theoretical methodologies to their design work

explain their design work according to its theoretical constructs

evaluate the impact of history and theory to more effectively design architecture.

Enrollment History

In any given semester approximately 75 graduate students are enrolled in seminars; of these, 20 – 30 take history and theory seminars. Based on this, the enrollment in the concentration over the next four years is projected as follows:

Year 1	5
Year 2	10
Year 3	15
Year 4	20

Other Programs

The *Graduate Concentration in the History + Theory of Architecture* is not similar to, or does not provide redundant content to, any existing concentration offered by the College of Design or other colleges at NC State.

Concentration Requirements

Concentration students are required to complete a minimum of 12 hours of approved courses in the History and Theory of Architecture within the existing curricula of the Master of Architecture (Tracks 1, 2, and 3) degrees.

All students are required to take one Primary Course, either *ARC 540, Architectural Theory*, or *ARC 545 Methods of Interpretation in Architectural History*. Students may take both in satisfaction of the 12 required credit hours.

Students choose courses from a list of Secondary Courses for the other 9 hours required for completion. Students may propose to take ARC 590, Graduate Experimental Courses, or one (1) advanced seminar course in a related field from another department within the College or University. Independent Studies are not permitted. The Program Coordinator must approve such courses in advance as to whether they fulfill the course requirements of the Concentration.

To complete the *Graduate Concentration in the History + Theory of Architecture* a student must have a minimum 3.00 grade point average (GPA) for all concentration course work. The minimum grade to receive concentration credit can be no lower than a grade of B-. Students who take letter-graded courses do not have the option of taking the courses for "credit only" if they intend for the course to be part of their concentration. Transfer credit from other institutions is not allowed for the concentration. All course work must be registered for through NC State University.

Primary (3 credit hours)

ARC 540 Architectural Theory (Barrie)

This course provides an introduction to the major themes and associated figures of architectural theory. It focuses on 20th and 21st century texts with a particular emphasis on historicism, phenomenology, structuralism and post-structuralism. Each week there is assigned reading from a range of texts, including extra-disciplinary writers. Lectures and discussions serve to identify principal themes, connect to contemporary issues, and establish relevancy to architectural design.

ARC 545 Reading Architecture: Methods of Interpretation in Architectural History (Erdim)

This course surveys the materials, methods, and texts of architectural history positioning it as an analytical discipline essential for the understanding of the forces that shape the built environment. A broad selection of readings trace the evolution of the discipline identifying its emerging questions in relation to other fields including architecture, art history, urban and social history, anthropology, literature, cultural studies, urban planning, and architectural theory.

Secondary (9 credit hours)

ARC 530 Tectonics and Craft (Harmon)

Studies of construction and material form in architecture. Case studies of select examples of contemporary architecture that exemplify the technique and craft of modern construction. Analysis of functional, tectonic, and experiential aspects of building methods within the context of economics and culture. Examination of assembly as a determinant of building form.

ARC 535 Experiments in Architectural Prototypes (Hill)

Examination of significant architecture prototypes of the Modern Movement. The seminar investigates the effectiveness of prototypes in proposing solutions to technological, social, and environmental issues such as housing, education, and sustainability. Students will explore the possibilities of prototype design and construction in contemporary practice. Field trips required.

ARC 541 Architecture, Culture, and Meaning (Barrie)

This course focuses on architecture as a cultural artifact and provides an overview of the interrelationship of architectural form, organization, symbolism, use and meaning. A broad range of examples from a variety of cultures, religions, and historical periods are covered [including "non-Western"], illustrated by detailed case studies. Syncretic, holistic and homological approaches to understanding the meaning and significance of architecture are emphasized. Phenomenological and hermeneutical methods of interpretation are introduced and pertinent philosophical traditions discussed.

ARC 542 Sacred Architecture (Barrie)

This course focuses on the meaning and cultural significance of sacred architecture, including its environmental and socio-political contexts, and doctrinal and liturgical influences. The course is structured according to the world's principal faiths and presented comparatively and holistically. There is a particular emphasis on the communicative roles of architecture and the symbolism and ritual use of sacred places. Contemporary theoretical methodologies are introduced and applied as means establish relevancy to contemporary issues and architectural design.

ARC 543 Analysis of Precedent (Clark)

Investigation of architectural elements, relationships and ordering ideas through comparative graphic analysis of buildings designed by architects. Emphasis on buildings as physical artifacts.

ARC 544 American City Planning History (Schaffer)

An examination of the history of American cities, their founding, plans, and development with emphasis on the colonial era to the late 19th century. Broad study of the larger historical trends in city planning balanced by readings focused on major cities [New York, Chicago, Los Angeles] and smaller ones [Savannah, New Orleans]. Major issues include street patterns, parks, and public buildings and spaces; and the roles of government and private citizen groups.

ARC 572 Regional Infrastructures (Queen)

This seminar provides students with a solid knowledge base about current urban issues and design theory surrounding the contemporary networked metropolis. Through lectures, discussions, and workshops the course examines how infrastructural systems might be expanded in order to catalyze additional environmental, social, and economic processes. Students research specific infrastructural systems [conducting food, water, or energy] at a systems-defined regional scale to better understand the characteristics of 21st century American cities and speculate on new opportunities for architects and landscape architects to practice.

ARC 590 Special Topics (topics vary, by approval of concentration coordinator)
Examples of Seminars that have been taught since 2008

The Ontology of Home (Barrie)

New Taxonomies for Modernity (Coll-Barreu)

Mediterranean Cities (Erdim)

Architecture and Modernity (Erdim)

Networks of Architecture and Development (Erdim)

Beyond the Bauhaus (Kentgens-Craig)

Latin American Architecture (Morgado)

Laws of the Indies (Morgado)

Inca and Spanish Cuzco (Morgado)

Luis Barragán (Morgado)

The City of New Orleans (Schaffer)

Triangle Modernism (Bell)

Faculty

Robin Abrams, Ph.D., Professor of Architecture

Thomas Barrie, Professor of Architecture

Roger Clark, Professor Emeritus of Architecture

Juan Coll-Barreu, Associate Professor of Architecture

Burak Erdim, Ph.D., Assistant Professor of Architecture

Frank Harmon, Professor in Practice

David Hill, Associate Professor of Architecture

Patricia Morgado, Ph.D., Associate Professor of Architecture

Sara Queen, Assistant Professor of Architecture

Kristen Schaffer, Ph.D., Associate Professor of Architecture

Margret Kentgens-Craig, Ph.D., Practice Faculty

Bryan Bell, Associate Professor of Architecture

Budget

No new budget or space resources are needed for this concentration.

Administration

The program will be coordinated by Burak Erdim, Ph.D. as part of his service to the School of Architecture.