

PRATT INSTITUTE
INTERIOR DESIGN DEPARTMENT
FALL 2014 SYLLABUS
INT 332 – ENVIRONMENTAL THEORY

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INTRODUCTION

Course Description

This course is about the relationships between people and their surroundings. We look at aspects of human behavior, meaning, personal and cultural values, perception, and cognition. We consider the reciprocal cause-and-effect relationships between people and their environment; how human behavior and values shape the environment and, conversely, how the environment affects us.

Course Goals

This course will help you develop an awareness of the psychological, social, and cultural aspects of spaces and places, both designed and not designed. Interior design contributes to the fit between humans and their environment in many ways that go beyond the familiar notions of luxury, trends, and social status. This course explores a wide range of human connection to the material world. One of the important questions we will focus upon asks: What is good design? We will address this issue through readings, looking at the work of significant designers, and by analyzing familiar sites in the city.

Course Learning Objectives

Through readings, discussion, site visits, and assignments, students will:

- Consider the meaning of “place” and how it is constructed
- Articulate their personal relation to places they have inhabited
- Assess the role and responsibility a designer has in creating places
- Gain a basic understanding of design guidelines and standards, including Universal Design, LEED, and the International Building Code
- Form an opinion on what is “Good Design”
- Develop tools for observing human behavior and interaction
- Analyze the human features of and interactions in a specific place
- Present their work through writing and visual materials

The course involves readings and discussion as well as a series of projects. You are expected to read all the assigned material in time to discuss it in class. Good class participation is dependent on doing the reading and preparing a question to discuss in class. You are responsible for knowing what material has been covered if you are absent. You will need to obtain all of the required readings. In addition to weekly readings, there will be four projects that give you a chance to respond to the material we have read and address a number of issues about people and places. Work will be presented in class. All assignments are due on time, and must be submitted through LMS.

Your grade is determined by class participation and by a series of assignments that require thought and application of environmental theory. The assignments also exercise your skills in written, graphic, and oral communication.

COURSE POLICIES

Attendance

Students are expected to attend each class punctually and for the entire class period. Inform your instructor in advance of any expected absence or abbreviated attendance. Three unexcused absences will result in an automatic failure of the course. Attendance and participation in presentations are required.

Grading Criteria

A = Work meets all requirements and exceeds them. Presentations are virtually flawless, complete, and finely detailed. Work exhibits professional, “museum quality” level of craft. Student has developed an individual design process that shows a high level of independent thought and rigor. Work shows evidence of intense struggle to go beyond expectations, and beyond the student’s own perceived limits of their abilities.

B = Work meets all requirements. Presentations are complete and finely detailed. Work exhibits professional level of craft. Student has developed an individual design process that shows a high level of independent thought and rigor.

C = Work meets all requirements. Presentations are complete. Student has developed an individual design process but is lacking in craft and / or design resolution

D = Work does not meet all requirements. Craft is at an unacceptable level, and / or student has not sufficiently developed an individual thought process and / or does not finish work on time.

F = Work does not meet minimum requirements. Student does not develop process, and / or does not finish work on time.

INC = Grades of “incomplete” are not given unless there is evidence of a dire emergency (death in the family, accident, debilitating illness). Classes / work missed due to illness must be explained with a physician’s note.

Academic Honesty

As a student you are expected to conduct yourself in a manner that reflects the ethical ideas of the profession. Any act of academic dishonesty not only raises questions about an individual’s fitness to practice design, but also demeans the academic environment in which it occurred. Plagiarism, i.e. the presentation as one’s own work of words, drawings, ideas and opinions of someone else, is a serious instance of academic dishonesty. The submission of any piece of work (written, drawn, built, or photocopied) is assumed by the school to guarantee that the thoughts and expressions in it are literally the student’s own, executed by the student.

Accommodations for Students with Disabilities

Pratt Institute is committed to assisting students with documented disabilities who are otherwise qualified for admission to the institute. Students requesting accommodations must submit appropriate written documentation to Director of Disability Services and Parent Programs. Contact Mai MacDonald at 718-636-3711 in the office of the Vice President for Student Affairs.

Office Hours

Office hours are by appointment. Please request a time to meet before or after class sessions, or contact the professor.

RESOURCES

All course readings are available through the course page on LMS.

Recommended Books

- Awan, Schneider, Till, eds. 2011. *Spatial Agency*.
 Blundell Jones, Peter. 2002. *Modern Architecture Through Case Study*.
 Bell, Bryan. 2008. *Expanding Architecture: Design as Activism*.
 Brislin, Paul, ed. 2013. *Human Experience and Place: Sustaining Identity*.
 Brooker, Graeme. 2013. *Key Interiors Since 1900*.
 Dovey, Kim. 2007. *Framing Places: Mediating Power in Built Form*.
 Fisher, Thomas. 2006. *In The Scheme Of Things: Alternative Thinking on the Practice of Architecture*.
 Forty, Adrian. 2004. *Words and Buildings: A Vocabulary of Modern Architecture*.
 Gieseeking, Mangold, et al, eds. 2014. *The People, Place, and Space Reader*.
 Harvey, David. 2005. *Paris, Capital of Modernity*.
 Hayden, Dolores. 1997. *The Power of Place: Urban Landscapes as Public History*.
 Hayden, Dolores. 2002. *Redesigning the American Dream*.
 Hiss, Tony. 1991. *The Experience of Place*.
 Jacobs, Jane. 1992. *The Death and Life of Great American Cities*.
 Katz, Cindi. 2004. *Growing Up Global: Economic Restructuring and Children's Everyday Lives*.
 King, Anthony. 2004. *Spaces of Global Cultures: Architecture, Urbanism, Identity*.
 Kopec, David. 2012. *Environmental Psychology for Design*, 2nd Edition.
 Leach, Neil, ed. 1997. *Rethinking Architecture: A Reader in Cultural Theory*.
 Lippard, Lucy. 1998. *The Lure of the Local: Senses of Place in a Multicentered Society*.
 Low, Setha. 2000. *On the Plaza: The Politics of Public Space and Culture*.
 Lynch, Kevin. 1960. *The Image of the City*.
 Radford, et al. 2014. *The Elements of Modern Architecture: Understanding Contemporary Buildings*.
 Rybczynski, Witold. 1996. *City Life*.
 Rybczynski, Witold. 1987. *Home: A Short History of an Idea*.
 Saunders, William, ed. 2007. *Judging Architectural Value*.
 Sorkin, Michael. 2013. *All Over the Map: Writing on Buildings and Cities*.
 Sparke, Penny. 2008. *The Modern Interior*.
 Taylor and Preston, eds. 2006. *Intimus: Interior Design Theory Reader*.
 Tuan, Yi Fu. 2001. *Space and Place: The Perspective of Experience*.
 Zeisel, John. 2006. *Inquiry by Design*.
 Taylor and Preston, eds. 2006. *Intimus: Interior Design Theory Reader*.
 Voordt, T. and Wegen, H. 2005. *Architecture in Use*.
 Weinthal, Lois, ed. 2011. *Toward a New Interior*.
 Weston, Richard. 2010. *Key Buildings of the Twentieth Century*.

Recommended Websites

- People Place Space
 Spatial Agency
 Building Code
 NYC Department of Buildings
 PlaNYC
 Architect's Newspaper – www.archpaper.com
 Curbed – www.curbed.com
 Material Connexion – www.materialconnexion.com
 Green Depot – www.greendepot.com
 ADA Standards - www.ada.gov/stdspdf.htm
 LEED Information - www.usgbc.org/leed/
 Universal Design - www.universaldesign.com

ASSIGNMENTS

Digital copies of all assignments shall be turned in via LMS.

1. Reading Response Question

Due for each week of readings

Each week you will prepare a question in response to the assigned readings. The question may be directly related to the readings, or it may relate more generally to your studio work or the environment you inhabit. These questions are a significant part of your participation grade and will be due at the beginning of the class each week to guide the class discussion.

2. Favorite Places

Due September 2

What are your favorite places? List five of them and provide a brief description of each one. Choose one to present for the class. You may represent your favorite place in words (narrative, poetry, prose), or graphically (drawings, photographs). Please depict the basic location, layout, and environmental characteristics of the place and suggest why this place is important to you. Your representation must also communicate the way the place feels and the way you feel in the place. Consider the quality of light, material, sounds, smells, openness, and proportion of the space.

3. Environmental Autobiography

Due September 23

The environmental autobiography is a tool designed to explore the history and development of our own relationships with places. Think about the dwellings you have lived in since the time you were a child. How do you feel about them now? What was their physical layout, their visual quality? How did they smell, feel, taste, sound? What people were there? What do you find significant or valuable in the environments you have inhabited?

Growing up, did you have a yard or garden? Did you play in the street, park, or playground, or go to stores? What was the land like where you lived? Were there areas of woods, fields, or water? Did you go to these places? Do you remember the walk or bus ride to school? What was the school like—its hallways, classrooms, playgrounds? Were there places you went that your parents never knew about, or places where you went to hide? What was important about those places? Do you seek out similar places as an adult?

Choose one or a series of meaningful places from your past to describe. You may use graphic or narrative means as needed to tell the story. An environmental autobiography need not be all good memories but the extent to which you are prepared to relate painful memories is up to you.

4. Field Trip Research and Observation

Due November 4

Using observation techniques we will learn in class, you will select a place we visit on our field trip to document and study the activity of people occupying the space. At a minimum, you should plan to take photographs as well as make sketches of the layout and diagrams of the activities. The week following our field trip, you will present your observation notes and diagrams, as well as background research on the site. What patterns did you notice? Was there anything unusual going on? Were there any mitigating factors that might influence what you observed? What type of people were there? How well does the place support the activities it was intended for?

5. Environmental Theory Terms & Concepts Quiz

November 11

There will be a quiz on the terms and concepts studied in the course. The quiz will be multiple choice or short answer. Prior to the quiz, you will receive a handout of items to review. The quiz will focus on concepts related to the psychological and social aspects of our relationship to place.

6. Design Opinion Paper

Due November 18

How do you define good design? What qualities make a project significant? How do you evaluate the built environment? What design process produces the best results? Is design a collaborative effort or the product of a singular genius? Should architecture fade into the background or be innovative or thought provoking? Are there certain principles architects and designers should follow?

Please prepare a 5-minute argument outlining your opinion on good design. You should discuss at least three (3) criteria for what makes design good. Incorporate evidence from class readings and projects as well as your own experiences and design work. You may also be interested in reading the Wikipedia entry on "Architectural design values."

7. Site Analysis Project

First Review December 2

Choose a site somewhere in New York City to observe and document. Based on methods we have studied in the readings and developed in previous assignments, you will analyze the spatial, social, and psychological characteristics of the place.

For the first review: Document the site through drawings and photographs. Develop plan and section drawings of the site that show its designed features. Prepare diagrams that illustrate the circulation system and relation to adjoining spaces. Be able to describe the use and behavior patterns of the site. Include any other characteristics, information, or observations that you think are pertinent to the site. Also discuss how or what you plan to further investigate.

Final Review December 16

For the final review: Present a comprehensive analysis of the site addressing its major spatial features as well as its social and psychological characteristics. Discuss what you observed and how you think the space does or does not support the activity there. Evaluate the site based on your criteria for good design. Does the site meet your standard for good design? Prepare a written and visual report on your fieldwork. The report should include narrative description, analysis, and drawings, as necessary to communicate your ideas.

EVALUATION

Reading Response Questions and Class Participation	30%
Favorite Places	10%
Environmental Autobiography	10%
Field Trip Observation Notes	10%
Concepts & Terms Quiz	10%
Design Opinion Paper	10%
Site Analysis Project	20%

CLASS SCHEDULE

1 August 26 COURSE OVERVIEW

2 Sept 2 EXPERIENCING PLACE

Due: Favorite Places

Readings:

Hiss, Tony. 1991. "Ch. 1 Simultaneous Perception" in *The Experience of Place*.

New York: Vintage Books. pp. 3-26

Zumthor, Peter. 2006. "A Way of Looking at Things." in *Thinking Architecture*. Birkhauser.

3 Sept 9 PLACE AND IDENTITY and MYERS-BRIGGS

Readings:

Barbosa, Gabrielle. 2006. "At the top of the hill." *New Internationalist* (January/February), 4-6.

Cooper-Marcus, Claire. 1992. "Environmental memories," in *Place Attachment*. Altman, I. and

Low, S. eds., New York: Plenum Press, pp. 87-112

4 Sept 16 SPACES OF CHILDHOOD and MENTAL MAPPING

Readings:

Hart, Roger. 2002. "Provision for Play." *Environment and Urbanization* 14(2), pp. 135-148.

Lynch, Kevin, Ed. 1977. *Growing up in cities: studies of the spatial environment of adolescence in Cracow, Melbourne, Mexico City, Salta, Toluca, and Warszawa*.

pp. 1-21, 28-55. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press.

5 Sept 23 ENVIRONMENTAL AUTOBIOGRAPHIES

Due: Environmental Autobiography

6 Sept 30 SPACES OF DWELLING

Readings:

Hayden, Dolores. 2002. *Redesigning the American dream: The future of housing, work, and family life*, Chapter 6: "Architecture: Roof, Fire, and Center," pp. 141-189.

New York: W. W. Norton & Co.

Rybczynski, Witold. 1986. "Domesticity" in *Home: A Short History of an Idea*.

New York: Viking. pp. 51-75.

7 Oct 7 HUMAN FACTORS IN DESIGN

Readings:

Kopec, David. 2012. "Ch. 5 The Human Condition" in *Environmental Psychology for Design*, 2nd Edition. pp. 69-90

Kopec, David. 2012. "Ch. 6 Information Management" in *Environmental Psychology for Design*, 2nd Edition. pp. 91-110

8 Oct 14 NO CLASS – Midterm Break

9 Oct 21 ENVIRONMENTAL FIELD RESEARCH

Readings:

Zeisel, John. 1981. *Inquiry by design: Tools for Environment-Behavior Research*. Chapter 8: "Observing physical traces", pp. 89-110; and Chapter 9: "Observing environmental behavior", pp. 111-136. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
Bakos, et al 1980. "Evaluative Tools: Behavioral Mapping, Activity Analysis," in *Privacy, Territory, and Participation*. pp. 18-22.

10 Oct 28 FIELD TRIP (TBD)

11 Nov 4 DESIGN GUIDELINES AND STANDARDS

Due: Field Trip Observation and Research

Readings:

Voordt and Wegen. 2005. "Quality Assessment," from *Architecture in Use*. Elsevier.
Kibert, Charles. 2004. "Green Buildings: An Overview of Progress." *Journal of Land Use*.

12 Nov 11 DESIGN AND SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY

Quiz: Terms and Concepts

Readings:

Pallasmaa, Juhani. 1999. "Toward an Architecture of Humility: On the Value of Experience," in *Judging Architectural Value*. W. Saunders, Ed. University of Minnesota Press. (2007)
Mangold, William. 2014. "Architecture and the Vicissitudes of Capitalism," in *Architecture in an Age of Uncertainty*. B. Flowers, ed. Ashgate.

13 Nov 18 DESIGN OPINION PAPERS

Due: Design Opinion Paper
Discuss Site Selection for Analysis Project

14 Nov 25 PUBLIC SPACES / CITY SPACES

Video: Whyte, William. 1980. *The social life of small urban spaces*

Readings:

Gehl, Jan. 1989. "A changing street life in a changing society." *Places* 6(1), pp. 8-17.
Wood, Dennis. 1991. "Looking for life in the heart of the city." *Places* 7(2), pp. 40-47.

15 Dec 2 FURTHER MEANINGS AND QUESTIONS

Due: Site Analysis First Review

Readings:

Friedman, Alice. 1998. "People Who Live in Glass Houses: Edith Farnsworth, Ludwig Mies van der Rohe, and Phillip Johnson," in *Women and the Making of the Modern House: A Social and Architectural History*. New York: Harry N. Abrams, pp. 128–159.
Smith, Neil. 1996. " 'Class Struggle on Avenue B': The Lower East Side as Wild West," in *The New Urban Frontier: Gentrification and the Revanchist City*. New York: Routledge, pp. 3–29.

16 Dec 9 TBD

16 Dec 16 SITE ANALYSIS PROJECT FINAL REVIEW

Due: Site Analysis Project