AUD 290: Interpretation, Erudition, Empiricism

UCLA Department of Architecture and Urban Design
Winter 2019, Wed 2:00-4:50
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Course Objectives

The course revises aspects of the recent historiography of architectural history by putting this literature alongside broader experiments in general history, the history of epistemologies and the history of sciences. The first part pays attention to the nineteenth-century “denaturalization” of knowledge and history undertaken by Marx, Nietzsche, Freud and their followers through their respective interpretive projects. Parts two and three account for two historiographical modes stemming from these nineteenth-century developments—erudition and empiricism. Part two reconsiders erudition as antidote against the excesses of specialization. Here philology is taken as the keyword to reconsider questions of durée and globalization, whereas broad, “erudite” histories of concepts and ideas indicate ties between intellectual histories and their material formulations. Part three accounts for the relatively recent expansion of architectural historiography towards the records, techniques, practices, equipments, and ideologies involved in what we conventionally consider the production of architectural ideas and buildings. The aim of the two workshops will be to assay some critical arguments on this historiographical turn.

Course Requirements

Attendance, participation readings, workshop presentations, research paper.

1. Readings: Most class meetings will be devoted to detailed discussion of assigned readings. In addition to completing all assigned readings, every student will prepare one discussion question per each reading.
2. Presentations: Students will contribute to two workshop sessions during the Fall term. Detailed instructions pertaining to these presentations will be further discussed in class.

Grading

For the winter quarter, students’ grades will be based 30% on participations in weekly discussion, 30% workshop presentations, 40% on a final paper.

Course Outline

Weeks 1-3: Interpretations

Fragments, Details, Traces:

Archaeologies, Genealogies:


Places, Mentalities, *Durées*:


Week 4: Workshop 1

Weeks 5-6: Erudition

Philology:


Epistemologies:


Week 7: Workshop 2

Weeks 8-9: Empiricism

Bureaucracies, Institutions, Networks:


Environments, Sciences, Technology:


Week 10: Guest and Final Presentations