ARCH 650  Architectural History Seminar I:
Western Architectural Theory from Antiquity to the Renaissance

Prerequisites: M. Arch II and Ph.D. I and II students entering the History and Theory Program are required to audit simultaneously course ARCH 531 - Architectural Intentions from Vitruvius to the Renaissance. The seminar will normally take place in the Rare Books Department Seminar Room of the McLennan Library. There will be 13 sessions of 3 hours duration. This course may also be taken by M. Arch I students with a demonstrated interest and background in history of architecture and who may have previously completed the lecture course ARCH 531.

8 credits

INTRODUCTION

The general topics of these weekly seminars are described in the lecture course description - Architectural Intentions from Vitruvius to the Renaissance (attached). Participants in the seminars are expected to be familiar with the secondary sources that refer to the lectures, particularly those sources marked with an asterisk (*) in the lecture course syllabus. Students will be asked to choose three sessions during the first class meeting for which they will be responsible. On three occasions during the term, each student will present a primary source (or a few selected sources) in its context, and will chair a discussion around the topic. Assignments will take account of the students' knowledge of languages. The following list of texts, therefore, will not be covered in its entirety, but serves as a point of departure for our sessions.

The presentations will be oral, and students are expected to submit a 3-5-page paper/outline, providing a copy to each participant at class time (copies may be made in advance in the school office through the program secretary). After the seminar discussion, and taking into account any important suggestions, students are expected to develop one of their presentations (one of a total of six in both Fall and Winter History seminars) into a paper (20-25 pages of text maximum, plus bibliography and footnotes), for final submission with the project document at the end of July. Tutorial advice for this paper is available during the Fall and Winter semesters, and students are encouraged to make appointments to speak with Dr. Pérez-Gómez as soon as they have made a decision.

For secondary sources in relation to each session, please refer to the lecture course bibliography (attached). Key secondary sources are marked. An excellent bibliographical guide to the primary sources is M. Schlosser, La Letteratura Artistica. Summaries of the major treatises are found in H-W Kruft, A History of Architectural Theory. Read D. Lindberg's The Beginnings of Western Science for a very succinct and clear introduction to the European scientific tradition in its philosophical and religious context until 1450. Also consult the Master's and Ph.D. dissertations from the History and Theory program, available in the school office or through the university library.

PRIMARY TEXTS FOR DISCUSSION

Week 1. Sept 13
Introduction to the course and the library. Preliminary discussion organized in terms of questions arising from readings on ancient architectural intentions (from lecture course bibliography).

Week 2 and 3. Sept 20
Sample hermeneutic reading. All students must prepare Vitruvius and marked secondary sources in sessions 2 and 3 of the lecture course bibliography. Prof. Pérez-Gómez will present on week 2 and students on week 3.

c) Robinson J. ed., *The Nag Hammadi Library*. (For the issue of gnosticism in relation to architecture, consult other secondary sources, particularly Jonas H. *The Gnostic Religion.*)

**Week 4. Sept 27**

For secondary sources refer to session 4 of the lecture course bibliography.

[Reader 1: a); Reader 2: b) & c)]


**Week 5. Oct 4: *Louis Brillant (Milan Cathedral)***

For secondary sources refer to session 5 of the lecture course bibliography.

[Reader 1: a) & b); Reader 2: c), d) & e)]

a) Suger, Abbot of Saint Denis, "De Administratione" and "De Consacracione" in Panofsky E. ed., *Abbot Suger on the Abbey Church of St-Denis and its art treasures.*

b) Illuminated Manuscripts from McGill Rare Books, RBD 38a-e; RBD 132 de Ricci; RBD 57; RBD 96; RBD 134; RBD 146; RBD 47; MS Greek 1 (bible); MS Greek 2 (bible).

c) "Annual reports on the building operations of Milan Cathedral," in Holt E. ed., *A Documentary History of Art.*


**Week 6. Oct 11**

For secondary sources refer to session 6 of the lecture course bibliography.


b) Nicholas of Cusa, *The Game of Spheres* (*De Ludo Globi*, English text, with excellent introduction), see also *On Learned Ignorance*.


d) Ficino M., "Five Questions concerning the Mind," in Cassirer E. et al., *op.cit.* See also *The Book of Life* (*De vita coelitus comparanda*).

**Week 7. Oct 18**

For secondary sources refer to session 7 of the lecture course bibliography.

a) Alberti L.B., *The Ten Books* (Leoni and Rykwert tr.).


c) Colonna F., *Hypnerotomachia Poliphili* or *Le Songe de Poliphile*, several eds. including abridged English version.

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Week 8. Oct 25
For secondary sources refer to session 8 of the lecture course bibliography and recent articles in periodicals.
   a) Pacioli L., *On Divine Proportion* (French ed. in the McGill Library, or Spanish in APG’s library. German and Italian versions also exist.)
   b) Piero della Francesca, *Perspectiva pingendi*. Add. source: Daly Davis Margaret, *Piero della Francesca’s Mathematical Treatises*.

Week 9. Nov 1
For secondary sources refer to session 9 of the lecture course bibliography and recent articles in periodicals.
   a) Averlino A., detto “II Filarete”, *Trattato di Architettura*.
   b) Campanella T., *The City of the Sun*.
   c) More T., *Utopia*. (See also Erasmus, *In Praise of Folly*.)

Week 10. Nov 8
For secondary sources refer to session 10 of the lecture course bibliography.
   b) Barbaro D., *La Pratica della Prospettiva*.

Week 11. Nov 15
For secondary sources refer to session 11 of the lecture course bibliography.
   c) Viator J.P., *De Artificiali Perspectiva*, Ivins W., ed.
   d) Vignola J., *Regole delle Cinque Ordine*.
   e) Vignola J. and Danti E., *Regole della Prospettiva Pratica*.
   g) Cusano N., *The Vision of God* (*Visio Dei*, English tr.).

Week 12. Nov 22
For secondary sources refer to session 12 of the lecture course bibliography.
   b) Agrippa C., *Occult Philosophy* (original in Medical library). See also *Female Pre-Eminence* (1670), and *On the Vanity and Uncertainty of the Arts and Sciences*.
   c) Porta G.B., *Natural Magick*.
   d) Herrera J., *Discurso de la Figura Cúbica*.
   e) Dee J., “Preface” to *Euclid* original (1570) in Rare Books. Partially reprinted in Yates F., *Theatre of the World*. See also *Monas Hieroglyphica* in *Ambix* vol.XII, no.2 & 3, June, October 1964 (PSE Library). Both texts exist as independent reprints (Kessinger).
ASSESSMENT OF CANDIDATES

No examination will be given in this course. The mark will be based on the three formal papers (90%) and on the informal participation of students in the seminar group (10%).

McGill University values academic integrity. Therefore all students must understand the meaning and consequences of cheating, plagiarism and other academic offences under the Code of Student Conduct and Disciplinary Procedures (see http://www.mcgill.ca/integrity for more information).

L'université McGill attache une haute importance à l'honnêteté académique. Il incombe par conséquent à tous les étudiants de comprendre ce que l'on entend par tricherie, plagiat et autres infractions académiques, ainsi que les conséquences que peuvent avoir de telles actions, selon le Code de conduite de l'étudiant et des procédures disciplinaires (pour de plus amples renseignements, veuillez consulter le site http://www.mcgill.ca/integrity).

A. Pérez-Gómez

May 2013