OBJECTIVES:
The seminar maps contemporary architectural culture using a thematic approach that examines different facets of architectural production and criticism. It situates architectural discourse within a broader context of technological, cultural, and social processes and ideas with which architectural thinking interacts, such as the proliferation of digital technologies, the emergence of branding, surveillance, and globalization, and the relationship of contemporary practice with the legacies of modernism and the postmodern. In each meeting, we examine in depth several case studies in relation to the theoretical concepts developed in the readings, to establish a productive dialog between architectural history, theory, and practice.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

Grades and course credit will be based on the following requirements:

Term paper: 30%
The topic of the essay must be relevant to the themes explored in the course. Students are encouraged to design the graphic layout of the essay, including embedded images, to match the prevailing models of architectural publications. As one of the aims of the class is to develop academic research and writing skills, students are encouraged to sign up for a meeting during office hours to discuss their paper and receive timely feedback on their drafts. Additional guidelines will be posted on Blackboard.

Two Class Presentations 25% each
Students are required to prepare two 20 minutes presentation of an architectural project suggested by the syllabus, to be discussed through the conceptual terms developed by the readings of that week. Students are advised to schedule a meeting during office hours to discuss their presentations and familiarize themselves with the relevant literature.

Weekly responses: 10%
A one-page printed response is due each week. Nine (9) responses are required throughout the semester. No late or emailed submissions accepted without prior permission. A response paper is not a summary, nor an expression of one’s personal liking or disliking of the readings—rather it should make an argument concerning the theme of the week.

Class Participation 10%
Regular on-time attendance, with no more than Two (2) late attendances or absences, is required to fulfill credit requirement. For the mutual benefit and pleasure of all students, please come prepared to class, and be willing to voice your thoughts and contribute to the discussion.

Academic Integrity
All members of the Northeastern community are expected to maintain complete honesty in all academic work, presenting only that which is their own work in tests and assignments. Copying or paraphrasing the words and ideas of others without proper acknowledgment is considered as plagiarism, defined as “intentionally representing the words, ideas, or data of another as one’s own in any academic exercise without providing proper citation.” On how to properly attribute the work of others, contact your professor, or visit http://www.lib.neu.edu/online_research/help/avoiding_plagiarism/
COURSE OUTLINE

Sept. 13  HISTORY: CRITICAL ARCHITECTURE
Screening: The Truman Show

Sept. 20  POST-CRITICAL: THE NEW PRAGMATISM
James Corner, Not Unlike Life Itself: Landscape Strategy Now, Harvard Design Magazine 21 (Fall 2004)

Sept. 27  OPERATIONS

CLASS PRESENTATIONS
Peter Eisenman : the house series
Bernard Tschumi, La Villette (1982)

Oct. 4  ARCHITECTURE AND CONSUMER CULTURE
Robert Venturi, Denis Scott Brown and Steven Izenour, Learning from Las Vegas (MIT Press, 1977), excerpts.

CLASS PRESENTATIONS
Starbucks or Hard Rock Café
Apple retail stores
Las Vegas: the Paris or Venetian casinos

Oct. 11  ARCHITECTURE, BRANDING AND SPECTACLE
Guy Debord, The Society of the Spectacle, theses 1-4, 12, 17, 23, 34. Movie http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=g34XVscFklsls
Naomi Klein, No Logo (Knopf, 2000), Chapter One: "New Branded World", pp.25-46

CLASS PRESENTATIONS
Prada
Zaha Hadid, BMW
Calatrava: Milwaukee museum

Oct. 18  THE RETURN OF BEAUTY: ORNAMENT AND THE SUBLIME
Adolf Loos, "Orament and Crime

CLASS PRESENTATIONS
Dominique Perrault, Bibliothèque Nationale de France

Oct. 25  EMBODIMENT
Hans Moravec, "The Senses Have No Future."

CLASS PRESENTATIONS
Peter Zumthor, The Vals Spa and the Kunsthaus Bregenz
Nov. 1  TECHNOLOGY AND MATERIALITY

CLASS PRESENTATIONS
Lars Spuybroek (NOX): Textile tectonics
Toyo Ito: Sendai Mediatheque, Serpentine pavilion
Nouvel: Fondation Cartier, 1991

*Preliminary abstract and annotated bibliography for term paper due.

Nov. 8  TECHNOLOGIES OF THE "SELF": SURVEILLANCE AND CONTROL
Michel Foucault, Discipline and Punish; the Birth of the Prison, pp. 200-206, 218-223.

CLASS PRESENTATIONS
The remaking of Downtown Los Angeles. Consult Mike Davis, “Fortress LA,” in The City of Quartz
The Peckham Experiment (1935-1951)

Nov. 15  DOMESTICITY
Robin Evans, “Figures, Doors, and Passages,” Architectural Design 78:4
Reynier Banham, “A Home is not a House,” Art in America (April 1965)

CLASS PRESENTATIONS
Futuro, the house of the future (1964-68)

Nov. 22  GENTRIFICATION AND PUBLIC SPACE
Stefan Metaal, “Gentrification, an Overview,” OASE 73 (Summer 2007)
Nancy Fraser, Social Justice in the Age of Identity Politics: Redistribution, Recognition, and Participation (1996), 3-18

CLASS PRESENTATIONS
Seaport District redevelopment, Boston
Gentrification of a residential neighborhood or suburb of your choice
Remaking of Times Square

Nov. 29  CITY AND GLOBALIZATION
“Dueling Globalizations; a debate between Thomas Friedman and Ignacio Ramonet,” Foreign Policy 116 (Fall 1999), pp. 110-127
Mike Davis, “Planet of Slums”, New Left Review 26 (3/4: 2004), pp. 5-6, 12-20, 30-34.

CLASS PRESENTATIONS
Bangalore. See Rahul Mehrotra, “Bangalore: Dysfunctional Boom Town.” Harvard Design Magazine (Spring 2007)

Dec. 6  ARCHITECTURE, MEMORY AND RUINS
Adrian Forty, “Memory,” in Words and Buildings; a Vocabulary of Modern Architecture (Thames & Hudson, 2000)

CLASS PRESENTATIONS:

*Term papers due. Please submit both a hard copy and a digital file of your essay via e-mail.