

COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY  
GRADUATE SCHOOL OF ARCHITECTURE AND PLANNING

4420x: Comparative Critical Analysis of Built Form

Spring 1984

K. Frampton, A. Anderson

---

The Intention of the Course

1. The first aim of this seminar is to explore the way in which contemporary architecture has encoded certain values by virtue of the way in which it is organized, constructed and finished.
2. The second intention is to develop an awareness of different strategies that have been and may still be employed in achieving a system of architectural order and a pattern of formal composition.
3. The third intention is to encourage a critical awareness of the legacy of the modern movement in the belief that there is no fundamental break in this movement and that its cultural impulse has been subject to a certain element of reassessment and modification from the very beginning as an integral part of the unfolding and conscious inflection of a continuous tradition.

---

Procedure

1. Selection of Teams and Allocation of Analytical Subjects. This should be carried out by consent or by lottery during the second meeting of the class.
2. First Tutorial (Briefing) Material for Draft Analysis. Analytical teams receive information as to source material, etc.
3. Second Tutorial (Interim): Critique of Draft Analysis. The preliminary analysis is criticized by the tutor. Final analytical drawings to be prepared after this critique.
4. Third Tutorial (Final): Critique of Revised Analysis. At this analysis students are to present the final schedule and sequence of slides and images to be used in their analytical presentation to the class.
5. Analytical Presentation to the Class. The analytical teams present in turn their findings to the whole class. Experience has shown that with intervening discussion the whole process takes about two hours. A register of attendance will be kept for each of these seminar sessions. This is in order to assure a quorum for the later seminar sessions.
6. Submission of Analytical Notes and Original Analytical Drawings. The writing up and formal submission of the entire work.

---

Forms of Analysis and Analytical Categories

1. Typological Transformation. In this category an effort has to be made to identify the typological root of the particular plan in historical

precedent. (For example, the roots of the Casa de Fascio in the Palazzo Farnese.) An attempt should be made not only to identify the type or types behind the design but also to indicate through drawing the way in which the type has been transformed. (See Colin Rowe's analysis in his essay, The Mathematics of the Ideal Villa.) Once these analyses have taken place it will be possible to compare the kinds of transpositions that have taken place in each building and also to determine the referential intent of the type. A simple example will possibly help to make this clear. It is evident that both Terragni's Casa del Fascio and Asplund's Gotenborg Law Court extension are related to the renaissance palazzo. The aim in an analysis should be to demonstrate in what way these buildings have evolved from the same or from different types. As far as possible this analysis should show the stages of typological transformation. All comparative drawings should be in ink and drawn to the same scale.

2. External Hierarchy/ Environmental, Contextual Analysis. This analysis will naturally acquire its greatest importance where the building complex relates to a specific physical context such as an urban location, etc. However, it will also be relevant on a site with specific topography. Context analysis should, where relevant, comprise some or all of the following components:
  - a. Graphic figure/ground studies of the building plus context. (Black on white and white on black)
  - b. Graphic analysis of the hierarchy of access indicating such factors as pedestrian/public, vehicular/public and service access. Note there can be a goal/route aspect to this analysis. (see below.)
  - c. Facade contextural studies where applicable, etc.
  - d. Graphic analysis of public/private hierarchy comparable to the internal hierarchical analysis given below.
  - e. Section.
3. Internal Hierarchy/Public versus Private

The plans and sections of the buildings to be compared should be drawn to the same scale in ink so as to obtain base drawings for the analysis. These drawings should then be coded in color by inspection according to the following hierarchy:

- a. Public (Blue): This should indicate the areas of public use and representation.
- b. Private (Yellow): This should show the areas allocated to private occupation.
- c. Semi-Public (Green): This should show the transitional or intermediate category between a. and b.
- d. Service (Red): This should show service areas such as lavatories, heating chambers, escape stairs, elevator shafts, flues, etc.

## 6. Connotational or Referential Analysis

Finally there is a mode of analysis which has to be conducted at a detailed, architectonic level. This level could be considered as the intertextual level of architectural analysis where one building refers to any number of pre-existing components and/or types. Within the overall context, these references turn on such issues as deportment, scale, modulation, decorative elements, materials, etc. Depending on the exact context, the use of stone or other elements may or may not evoke certain semantic connotations. In the West, for instance, dressed stone is invariably monumental and wood an indicator of the vernacular, while in Japan, dressed wood replaces stone as the primary honorific material. In an industrial context, square gridded fenestration could imply the 'industrial' vernacular of the 19th Century. In a domestic context, it might suggest the latent Orientalism of the Arts and Crafts. Again, depending on the context, the suppression or expression of the actual building process will reflect the intention of the work.

### Schedule

Tutorial sessions follow after sessions 2 through 13 and are numbered according to the session number of the final presentation. They are coded: BT = briefing, IT = interim, and FT = final.

<u>Session 1</u> (January 31)	<u>Introductory Lecture</u> Categories, Analytical Method, Procedure
<u>Session 2</u> (February 7)	<u>Comparative Critical Case Studies I</u> (Maison Cook vs. Rietveld House) project and team selection, BT 4 & 5
<u>Session 3</u> (February 14)	<u>Comparative Critical Case Studies II</u> (SDN Competition, Le Corbusier vs. Hannes Meyer) BT6, IT 4 & 5, FT 4
<u>Session 4</u> (February 21)	<u>Weekend House, La Celle Saint Cloud, France, Le Corbusier (1935)</u> <u>Farnsworth House, Plano, Illinois, Mies van der Rohe (1946)</u> BT 7, IT 6, FT 5
<u>Session 5</u> (February 28)	<u>Villa Mairea, Noormarku, Finland, Alvar Aalto (1933)</u> <u>Martin House, Buffalo, N.Y., Frank Lloyd Wright (1904)</u> BT 8, IT 7, FT 6
<u>Session 6</u> (March 6)	<u>Lovell "Heath House" Los Angeles, California, Richard Neutra (1929)</u> <u>Villa Stein, Garches, France, Le Corbusier (1927)</u> BT 9, IT 8, FT 7
<u>Session 7</u> (March 20)	<u>Hansa Viertel Apartments, Berlin, Germany, Alvar Aalto (1957)</u> <u>Lake Shore Drive Apartments, Chicago, Illinois, Mies van der Rohe</u> BT 19, IT 9, FT 8 (1951)

This document is offered to you for free by the Canadian Centre for Architecture (CCA) in the context of the exhibition *Educating Architects: Four Courses by Kenneth Frampton*. It is to be used solely for research or private study and any use of this document for any other purpose requires the authorization of the copyright owner of this document.

Ce document vous est remis gratuitement par le Centre Canadien d'Architecture (CCA) dans le contexte de l'exposition *Apprendre aux architectes : quatre cours de Kenneth Frampton*. Il ne peut être utilisé qu'à des fins d'étude privée ou de recherche et tout usage de ce document à d'autres fins exige l'autorisation du titulaire du droit d'auteur sur les documents.