PARIS, ROME and ATHENS: THE WORK OF LE CORBUSIER

Dawn Gilpin, Lecturer IV in Architecture
Joss Kiely, Doctoral Student, Architectural History and Theory
Taubman College
University of Michigan

DESCRIPTION
The course proposes a chronological investigation of the practice of the modernist architect Le Corbusier from his early designs in La Chaux-de-Fonds, Switzerland through many sites in and around Paris and culminating in Roquebrune-Cap-Martin where he died in 1965. Le Corbusier was prolific in the production of urban proposals, architecture, drawings and writings. Many of the projects are located in a region that is traversable over a few weeks giving clarity to the evolution of the body of work and the strong influences of new technologies as well as cultural, economic, social and political issues of the time. Ancient Greek and Roman sites strongly influenced his education and practice and will be included in the itinerary to set the context for Corbusier’s practice.

The semester abroad is proposed as a support program for courses required in the undergraduate program. Travel to these cities and environs provide students direct learning experience (in support of classroom courses) through fieldwork and immersion in the culture of Paris, Rome and Athens. The course will include lectures on the work of Le Corbusier and guided tours of architecture by local architects, curators and educators. Faculty will lead general tours through each city with emphasis on modern architecture in France and ancient architecture of Italy and Greece. In Paris we will research various representations of the city over time focusing on the bourgeois boulevards and urban rooms of Baron Georges-Eugene Haussmann. In Rome we will study Giovanni Battista’s Nolli Nuova Pianta di Roma and Piranesi’s Campo Marzio to frame our work of field measure and representation in this city. We will also study, through field work and tours, legible examples of ancient architecture and its integrative and defining role in politics, social structures, culture and the economy of Rome.

DATES OF TRAVEL
May 8 - June 18

TRAVEL DESTINATIONS
Paris, Rome and Athens are primary destinations. Chronological tour of the work of Le Corbusier is included as a separate attachment.

DESCRIPTION OF TRAVEL
Two agendas define the itinerary for this course. One is the study of the cities of Paris, Rome and Athens as well as their influence on the work of Le Corbusier. The second is the chronological tour of the work of Le Corbusier. We will begin in Athens for five days, then fly to Rome for one week. While in Rome we will focus our research on the ancient city. We will then fly to Geneva where the tour begins. By rail we will travel to each site, lodging in the project where it is possible such as La Tourette Monastery and Unite d’Habitation, Marseille. Otherwise we will be accommodated by hostels and hotels. We will stay in Paris for 2.5 weeks and continue the tour south to the coast. The final site will be the Le Cabanon in Roquebrune-Cap-Martin. The general tour is included as a separate attachment.

COURSE DELIVERABLES: Metron (Collection), Documentation, Translation + Representation
Each student works independently and in groups collecting documentation and measurement of sites using the Body Metron and other conventional and unconventional measuring techniques. Video, photography, diagramming, drawing and modeling (translation of collected measure) culminating in three critical representations designed in response to historical and modern notational representations. The culmination of the field work will be translated to drawing, photographs printed and composed, and documentation of transcripts, notations and diagrams formatted in a series of plates. These plates will then be bound in a portfolio for student reference and exhibition. The work will be published and distributed to the guides, homeowners, architects, educators, and others that have supported the studio while traveling.

OTHER FUNDING TO BE SOUGHT
ELF - Experiential Learning Fund through the International Institute due February 20, 2012
FDF - Faculty Development Fund through CRLT due February 7, 2012
IDF - Instructional Development Fund through CRLT applications accepted at any time of the 2011-2012 academic year.