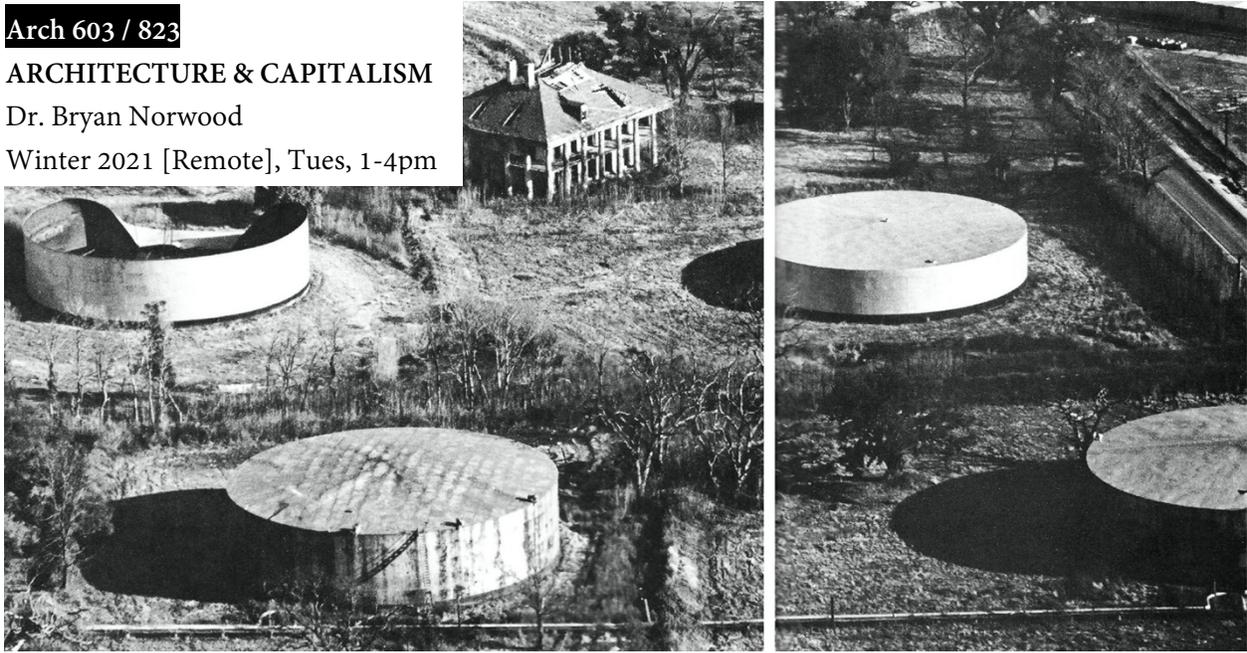


Arch 603 / 823

ARCHITECTURE & CAPITALISM

Dr. Bryan Norwood

Winter 2021 [Remote], Tues, 1-4pm



Seven Oaks Plantation, Westwego, Louisiana, ca. 1950s

This seminar considers architectural practice's relationship to capitalism (and in particular to what Cedric Robinson called "racial capitalism") through selective readings in the histories of materials, property, and labor. While we will necessarily need to attend to larger time frames, our focus will be on the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. And while we will need to attend to global geographies, our focus will be on select cases in the United States, Greater Caribbean, and Atlantic World.

The first third of the class will be a mixture of lectures and discussions, with a goal of grounding some terminological and historical issues: what do we mean by capitalism? racial capitalism? What issues are at stake when we approach architecture through concepts such as commodities, resource extraction, property, and labor? The last two thirds will be devoted to the discussion of recent books on these issues. Each student will choose one book and write a review of it in the early weeks of the course. Virtual course meetings for the last two-thirds of the class will each be oriented around one of these books. Each student will choose which portion of their selected book the whole class will read and will guide our discussion. The goal for the semester is this: to understand one book well, consider its implications for how we think about architecture, and guide the rest of the seminar towards understanding and thinking about these implications too.

The books we will consider include: Hannah Appel, *The Licit Life of Capitalism: US Oil in Equatorial Guinea* (2019); Sarah Lopez, *The Remittance Landscape: Spaces of Migration in Rural Mexico and Urban USA* (2015); Andreas Malm, *Fossil Capital: The Rise of Steam Power and the Roots of Global Warming* (2016); Adam Mandelman, *The Place with No Edge: An Intimate History of People, Technology, and the Mississippi River Delta* (2020); Mimi Sheller, *Aluminum Dreams: The Making of Light Modernity* (2014); Sara Stevens, *Developing expertise: architecture and real estate in metropolitan America* (2016); Keeanga-Yamahtta Taylor, *Race for Profit: How Banks and the Real Estate Industry Undermined Black Homeownership* (2019); and Jeremy Zallen, *American Lucifers: The Dark History of Artificial Light, 1750-1865* (2019).