Branding’s origins began during pre-industrial times as a means to indicate the origin of the object or identify the maker of the good. With the onset of the industrial revolution, those brands began to transcend the simplicity of a maker’s mark. They emerged as iconic entities which embodied complex personalities and developed into the vast capitalistic machine that has dominated our existing global economy. Organizations have utilized marketing strategies to develop brand recognition as a powerful tool which has produced unchecked political, social and economic power. As such, branding has mutated into an all-encompassing veneer that employs architecture as one of its primary actors in supporting the accumulation of wealth and power through a theater of deception.

This seminar will critically examine the close and sinister relationship that has developed between corporations and architecture as a vector for capitalistic agendas.

Through conversation, research, and a semester long analysis, conducted via small bi-weekly assignments, the course will produce a collection of individual targeted diagrammatic and written critiques of selected branded architectures, revealing the disparity between corporate agendas and the semiotic messages embedded in architectural iconography and symbolism.