

ARCH 603

University of Michigan, Taubman College of Architecture and Urban Planning  
Special Topics in Architectural History and Theory (3 Credits) - Fall 2023

**Reading: *Towards An Architecture***

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Seminars: Thursdays, 8:30 – 11:30 AM in 3136 A&AB  
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Le Corbusier, *Vers Une Architecture* (1923).

*“One of the most influential, widely read, and least understood of all the architectural writings of the twentieth century.”* Reyner Banham

The text for "Reading: \_\_\_\_\_" in fall 2023 is *Vers Une Architecture*, 1923 by Le Corbusier (aka, Charles-Édouard Jeanneret). A collection of observations arguing for a (new) architecture (though written almost 100 years ago), the book has been subject to a continual process of interpretation and critique. As both paragon and pariah, on topics ranging from technology, form, politics, gender, and identity, authors as diverse as Colin Rowe, Reyner Banham, Peter Eisenman, Caroline Constant, and Mabel Wilson, have used the book as documentary evidence in the on-going trials of (modern) architecture. While no longer cited chapter and verse, the book continues to exist as an originary font of architecture's disciplinary imaginary, and reading it now, in the framework of multiple critical contexts (leaving aside for the moment the question of innocence or guilt) offers the grounds for insights into what is embodied within these articles of architectural faith.

Each offering of ARCH 603, Reading: Topics in Architectural Theory, focuses on a significant text within the development of architecture, selected for both its historical value and potential for revisited contemporary relevance. Students in the course participate in a close examination of the text (in a chapter-by-chapter reading of the book, with additional materials to contextualize), write weekly one-page reading responses, contribute to collective discussions regarding issues raised by the text (framed from historical and contemporary perspectives), and, as a final paper, write a "late" book review.