



History of Architecture II: Land, Labor, Capital, Material

Arch 323_001

M W 11:30am—1:00pm

Prof. Andrew Herscher

2108 A+AB

We must not accept the memory of a profession as our own memory. The history of architecture, presented as the history of the architectural profession, conceals fierce conflicts of interest (sometimes exploding, most often repressed) between conquerors and conquered, masters and slaves, capitalists and workers, dominators and dominated in race, sex, nationality, and many other categories besides. And in such a world of conflict, a world of victims, survivors, dissenters, protesters, resisters, and executioners, it is the job of thinking people not to be on the side of the executioners.

These words, paraphrased from Howard Zinn's *A People's History of the United States* and altered to refer to architecture, point to the stakes of architectural history. Architectural history has traditionally been a history of architects. Centering on innovations in design, architectural history has therefore been inattentive, at best, to the ways in which those innovations emerged within and advanced colonialism, racial capitalism, nationalism, developmentalism, and other systems of exploitation, extraction, and domination.

In an effort to grasp the relationship of architecture to the systems that both support and are supported by it, this course will introduce you to a history of architecture that is distinct from a history of architects. We will not center on architectural authors, movements, or periods, as in traditional architectural history courses; we will not be occupied with “historicizing,” “theorizing,” or otherwise “contextualizing” architectural masterworks, as in traditional architectural history courses; and we will not produce precedents for use in the design studio, as in traditional architectural history courses. Instead, our focus will be placed on the ways in which architecture has mediated struggles over land, labor, capital, and materials. In so doing, you will be introduced to architecture within the historical processes that have shaped modern and contemporary lifeworlds.