



Go Hasegawa, *Pilotis in a Forest*, Gunma, Japan, 2010

UNDERSTANDING ARCHITECTURE

Instructor:

Keith Mitnick

Associate Professor of Architecture

kmitnick@umich.edu

Course Overview:

This course will introduce students to foundational architectural ideas. Intended for non-majors, the lectures will survey a range of architectural themes from spatial concepts to representation, building materials, construction, and site. We will also consider how the different ways that architecture is represented in art, literature, photography, and film, inform how we encounter it in our lives.

Through a series of weekly discussions and creative exercises, students will consider different ways of thinking about and seeing architecture. Similar to a comparative literature course that uses literature as a lens for reflecting upon the world, we will examine the many ways that architecture embodies and expresses different ideas, value systems, and technologies. As with any survey course, students will be introduced to a range of case studies from different historical and geographical contexts. However, the emphasis throughout this course will be more conceptual: the goal is to provide philosophical frameworks for thinking about how architecture “works,” rather than to present a definitive body of architectural projects.

Course Organization:

The class meets three times each week, in two one-hour lectures on Mondays and Wednesdays (9-10am in Angel Hall) and in a one-hour Friday discussion section (9am or 10am).