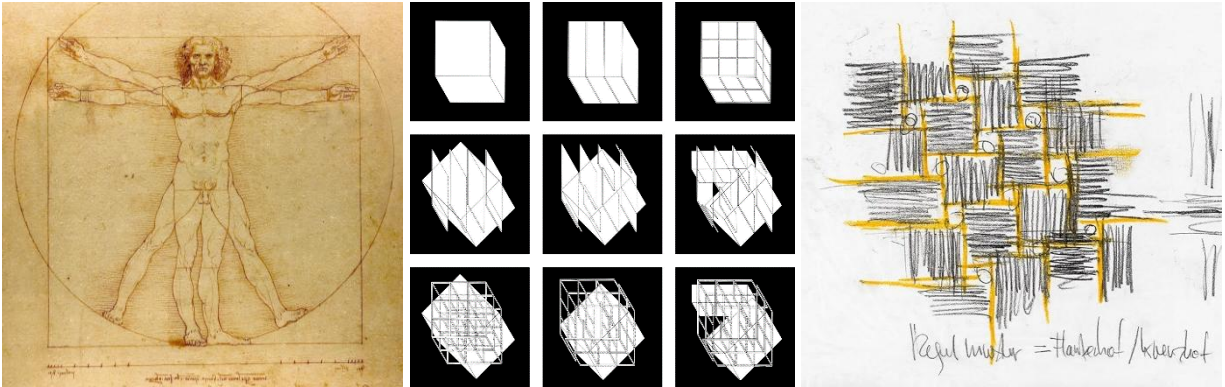


Syllabus / Architectural Theory / Arch 642 Section 1 (47585) / Spring 2026



Drawings (from left to right): Leonardo Da Vinci's "Vitruvian Man", Peter Eisenman's "House III" (design process), and Peter Zumthor's "Swiss Pavilion" (concept sketch).

INSTRUCTOR INFORMATION

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COURSE INFORMATION

Course Description: Examines architectural theory through the presentation and study of significant texts and built form. Theories covered may range from antiquity through the modern, postmodern, and contemporary eras.

Prerequisites/enrollment restrictions: Graduate standing or permission of the program director.

Course Objectives: In this course, students will critically analyze numerous written works of architectural theory. Your efforts towards this goal will consist of reading and note-taking writing assignments, and class discussions. These activities will comprise the majority of the semester. Subsequently, you will apply your growing knowledge of architectural theory towards an analytical, written, and graphical work focused upon a specific building type of relevance historically or contemporarily. The principal skills to be honed during this part of the course are your critical thinking and writing abilities. This we will do individually and collectively in support of one another in a workshop environment. By the end of the semester, each student will have built up an arsenal of productive analytical skills – that is, reading, note taking, critical thinking, and participating in Socratic-style class discussions – that will be invaluable to them in further research, studio design, and professional practice.

Course Modality/Structure: Our class will be in-person, lecture/discussion style. There will be no planned Zoom component or recorded lectures. So, expect to participate in a traditional, in-person, and regularly scheduled seminar class in a physical classroom.

COURSE MATERIALS

There is no required textbook for this course. You will instead have regularly assigned readings,

which will be posted as PDF files on our class's Canvas site.

In terms of your weekly readings, it would be wise for you to not print out every reading for the semester. Get in the habit of downloading the PDF files, and reading them on your laptop, or better yet on a tablet. You will save yourself a great deal of money that way. And reading on a tablet is almost as handy as reading a physical printout.

Other than a personal laptop, internet access, and the normal complement of online university tools (i.e., Canvas), there are no other required instructional materials. Additionally, there will be several books on reserve in the Architecture Library. You are strongly encouraged to delve into these references to gain deeper understandings of the class topics.

Use of laptops and other electronic devices: You may use your laptops, tablets, and smartphones during class, as long as you are using them to advance your work in the class. Checking social media, texting, working on other classes, accessing a generative AI, or any other similar activities are counterproductive to your learning in class, and thus are not allowed.

COURSE ASSIGNMENTS AND ASSESMENTS:

This course consists of three principal assignment types:

1. reading notes/talking points on the weekly reading assignments
2. weekly class discussions on the class lectures and readings
3. an individual writing assignment and presentation board design (both an individual project and a small-group workshop)

The assignment types listed above place an emphasis on “teaching and learning as a conversation,” that is, becoming conversant on the course topics through continuous and varied engagement with the class contents.

Reading notes/talking points: Beginning on Week 2 (January 14) each student is required to submit a set of reading notes/talking points derived from that week's readings. Your focus for these notes should be on notable quotes; points of personal agreement, disagreement, and/or confusion; and key questions. Notice the difference to reading a chapter in a history book, in which your focus is primarily in information gathering. Understanding such a difference will be useful for these reading and writing assignments.

Class discussions: Our weekly, graded class discussions form the core of our course. Each week the class will delve into that week's readings and lecture presentations through an open-ended discussion on the readings – again, focusing on notable quotes; points of agreement, disagreement, or confusion; and key questions. **These class discussions are the times to bring your best insights, questions, reflections, and reactions to the readings each week.** The instructor will act as the class facilitator, but the discussions are student-centered. All students will participate, and the instructor will ensure full engagement by calling on students in class.

Writing workshop/presentation board design: During the second half of the semester, each

student will write an essay centered on an architectural building type or model. The essay may be a manifesto or a polemic. Your aim is to critically analyze – whether favorably or negatively – your chosen type or model. Define the salient characteristics of your study subject, get at its essence, and argue for or against it in our contemporary era. Your choice may be a singularly contemporary type of architecture, or a work type from the past worth a renewed look today.

Once a student has made a choice of study subject, they are required to begin writing their critical analysis, conduct individual research on their topic, and bring their working drafts to each class session spanning this project. Together as a class in a writing workshop format, we will review each student's work and make recommended changes for further working drafts. At the end of the assignment each student will have completed a full, well-composed personal essay, as well as a graphic presentation board showcasing their work.

Attendance: Except in the case of a *documented* medical or family emergency, or a relevant academic activity (such as a professional conference), **you are required to be at every class session**. The instructor will monitor class attendance and deduct 2 points from each student's class participation grade (see below) for every unexcused absence that the student accrues. If a valid situation does arise whereby you will not be able to attend class, you must notify the instructor ahead of time via e-mail or in person.

Weight of Graded Assignments

Participation in class discussions_____	30%
Reading notes/talking points_____	30%
Writing workshop/presentation board design_____	30%
Attendance_____	10%

Finally, letter grades will be determined using the following scale:

A	92.5 ≤ A ≤ 100%	C	72.5 ≤ C < 77.5%
A-	90 ≤ A- < 92.4%	C-	70 ≤ C- < 72.5%
B+	87.5 ≤ B+ < 90%	D+	67.5 ≤ D+ < 70%
B	82.5 ≤ B < 87.5%	D	62.5 ≤ D < 67.5%
B-	80 ≤ B- < 82.5%	D-	60 ≤ D- < 62.5%
C+	77.5 ≤ C+ < 80%	F	< 60%

UNIVERSITY STATEMENTS AND OTHER CLASSROOM POLICIES

University Statement: We are committed to ensuring that all members of the community are welcome, through valuing the various experiences and worldviews represented at Ball State and among those we serve. We promote a culture of respect and civil discourse.

Disability Statement: If you need course adaptations or accommodations because of a disability, please contact the instructor of record as soon as possible. Ball State's Disability Services Office coordinates services for students with disabilities; documentation of a disability needs to be on file in that office before any accommodations can be provided. Disability Services can be contacted at 765-285-5293 or dsd@bsu.edu.

Academic integrity: I encourage each of you to study and work together to get the most out of this course. Even a small study group of two students will help you to navigate some of the difficult material in this class. However, I expect that all assignments that each of you turns in will be your own. Do not plagiarize or copy each other's work for the sake of completing an assignment. Any such infractions will be susceptible to a lower grade for that assignment.

Late assignments: The only acceptable excuses for a late assignment without a grade penalty are a documented family or medical emergency. Such a situation must be communicated in writing (via e-mail) to the instructor **before** the assignment is due. For the regularly scheduled reading notes/talking points, you will lose one point for each day that the assignment is late.

Use of Generative Artificial Intelligence Technology: Generative AI technology has arisen in the in the last few years as a new leap forward in the evolution of computing capability. Many proponents and experts on this technology regularly insist upon its ethical and responsible use. Additionally, much news reporting has arisen with a focus on the technology's pitfalls – e.g., hallucinations, and the stunting of key skills learned in the classroom (critical thinking, writing, etc.), among others. These assertions could not be more relevant in the architecture classroom or design studio. Thus, this semester we will observe specific limits on the use of this technology. Those limits are as follows:

- You are responsible for reading in their entirety all weekly reading assignments. Do not rely upon a computer-generated summary version of any kind for these assignments.
- All writing assignments must be completed solely by you. You may not submit as part of any assignment any text that has been produced by a generative AI. This applies specifically to your reading notes/talking points, and any work that is a part of the semester's writing workshop.
- You may not rely on, use, or have open in front of you an AI program during our weekly class discussion.

Any breaches of this policy will constitute an academic integrity offense, and is thus susceptible to a grading penalty.