

Spring Semester 2021

Graduate and Senior Undergraduate offering

Course Description and Learning Outcomes

This course surveys essential ideas, methods, and paradigms behind the spiritual and cultural roots of place-making. The purpose is to introduce students to systematic ways to question, research, reason, and respond to our fundamental need to establish a meaningful connection to others, nature, cosmos, and the divine. What constitutes sacred space and how does dwelling intersect it? Are commonalities possible in a multicultural world? How do faith, rationality and service meet and inform one another in and through architecture? Are there age-proven approaches to such challenges? The class examines these and other SSCS questions with architectural design and scholarship in mind.

At the conclusion of the course, the student will be able to:

- understand current issues surrounding spirituality vis-à-vis architecture from a multidisciplinary perspective;
- define five ways in which architecture/the built environment may seek a transcending response to spiritual, professional, cultural, and social forces;
- establish, deploy, and utilize an analytical methodology to determine design characteristics of architecture, particularly those related to transcending buildings;
- engage the built environment through a contemplative attitude, something quite rare to learn in architectural school;
- articulate aesthetic, ethical, scientific, natural, and theological reasons that both challenge and encourage a transcending vision of architectural production and reception;
- understand and explain how architectural attributes, features, or characteristics play an essential role in expressing and/or giving people access to the sacred;
- point and justify outstanding historical and contemporary examples of transcending architecture;
- deploy appropriate written, oral and graphic means to present a diversity of ideas, arguments and experiences addressing transcending architecture;
- understand and apply subjective-phenomenological (1st Person), intersubjective-social (2nd Person), objective-empirical (3rd person), and integrative-combined/comparative (4th Person) approaches in architectural studies, experiences, and reflections

Professional Standards Addressed

This class covers NAAB criteria [PC.2] Design; [PC.4] History and Theory; [PC.5] Research and Innovation; [PC.7] Learning and Teaching Culture; [SC.1] Health, Safety, and Welfare in the B.E.

Instructor

Julio Bermudez, Professor

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Phone: (202) 319-5755

Class Meetings

Days: Wednesdays

Times: 9:40–12:10pm

Room: ONLINE

Office Hours

Office Number: ONLINE

By appointment

Prerequisites

Senior undergraduate status

Course Communication

Since this course will be 100% ONLINE, we'll be in touch with you as a class and individually via email, ZOOM, MIRO, and/or phone as the situation requires.

Course materials will be always up to date and available online here:

<http://juliobermudez.com/courses/618/index.htm>

Final Exam

Wednesdays 28 April and 5 May

Instructional Methods & Delivery

In order to accomplish its goals, this class will use a variety of pedagogic tools, namely (1) lectures that introduce and frame the particular areas of inquiry; (2) readings that provide much of the course content, (3) a variety of exercises to apply, develop and practice core concepts, knowledge, skills, methodologies, etc.; (4) field-trips to experience assigned buildings, (5) informal reviews of the ongoing assignments on a scheduled basis, and (6) personal instruction and follow-up by instructor. The course will work as a seminar. Formal feedback and evaluation will be performed through scheduled presentations and discussions in front of and with the participation of the instructor and all students, The use of media (sketching, photography, and video) will be important in the second part of the semester during a series of ‘in-situ’ contemplative architectural practices. **All the instruction will be done online due to COVID-19. We will be using ZOOM and MIRO as our communication platforms. In terms of hardware, wide band, high speed internet connection, two screens/monitors, video camera, scanner, and printer will be necessary.**

Required & Recommended Texts

Diverse references and sources will be used during the semester, including films/videos, music, and other media. However, central to this investigation will be:

- N.Ardalan et al, *Transcendent Architecture. A Pilot Study* (White Paper, 2014)
- J. Bermudez, *Transcending Architecture* (CUA Press 2015)
- J. Bermudez, *Usus in Praesens* (paper and website)
- R. Clark and M. Pause, *Precedents in Architecture* (Wiley 2012)
- J. Elkins, *Pictures and Tears* (Routledge 2001)
- J. Pallasmaa, *Inseminations: Seeds for Architectural Thought* (Hoboken, NJ: Wiley, 2020)
- E. Jenkins, *Draw to Design* (Basel, Switzerland: Birkhauser, 2013)
- S. Unwin, *Analyzing Architecture* (Routledge 2009)

Other materials (readings, bibliography, detailed calendar, web links and info, etc.) Please, review particular assignments (to be handed out separately), and more in the studio website.

Libraries

Specifically our school library (but also CUA Libraries at large) offers a wide range of resources and services, including image databases, online journals, etc. FAQs are here: <https://libraries.catholic.edu>) For assistance on papers and assignments, consult the research guides here: <https://guides.lib.cua.edu/a> or schedule an appointment with Julie Joy, the architecture subject librarian at loy@cua.edu and (202) 319-5548.

Course Goals & Pedagogy

Is there a relationship between transcendence and architecture? Can the built environment help us access a spiritual state, perhaps God? And if so, how? These are questions as old as architecture and perhaps mankind itself. They are interrogations that deserves particular attention from those of us who profess architecture, since it is us who are in charge of, hopefully, make it happen.

This class will study the *transcending* nature of architecture using analytical and phenomenological methods. The **FIRST** half of the semester will start with fundamental reflections and emphatic work that will set up the general framework of the course (*Learning Unit 1*). In addition to getting acquainted with the state-of-the-art on the topic of ‘transcendence’ in architecture through lectures/readings, we will engage in case studies of actual buildings reported to induce ‘ineffable,’ ‘spiritual,’ or sacred responses. The first 8 weeks of the semester will conclude with a document summarizing architectural properties, rules, and methods to assist designers in the pursuit of the highest purpose of architecture (*Learning Unit 2*). The **SECOND** half of the semester will turn this picture upside down by proposing that the phenomenon of transcendence via architecture should not be analyzed or studied from without but lived. Students will be educated in the difficult, seldom recognized, and yet fundamental art of experiencing buildings and being present. We will carry on this contemplative practice in the perfect context of springtime and Washington DC powerful architecture. Students will be asked to visit, experience, and record their encounter with significant buildings (sacred and not). If properly engaged, these last 8 weeks of the term may prove to be transformative in a student’s career (*Learning Unit 3*).

Assessment / Grading

The weight of each of three Learning Units will be broken down as follows:

Unit [1] :	Reflection and Empathy (individual effort)	10%
Unit [2] :	TA Design Analysis: How to do it (individual effort)	40%
Unit [3] :	Experiencing TA (individual effort)	40%
Total		90%

While exercises will be evaluated using a presentation and discussion format based on criteria defined in each assignment, the faculty will also consider the level of inquiry (breadth, depth, method, logic and creativity) that the student acquired in the process. Other pedagogic dimensions such as student growth (i.e., improvements in skills, knowledge, attitude, questioning, etc.) as well as their participation, collaborative practice, citizenship and/or committed effort throughout the semester will count toward the **remaining 10% of the grade**.

University Grades

The University grading system is available at

<https://policies.catholic.edu/students/academicundergrad/gradesfull.html#ii>

for undergraduates and <https://policies.catholic.edu/students/academicgrad/gradesfull.html#iii> for graduate students.

Note that some School grading policies (see attached) supersede university policies, particularly with respect to what constitutes a failing grade. Reports of grades in courses are available at the end of each term on

<https://csprd.cua.edu/psp/csprd/?cmd=login&languageCd=ENG&>.

Course Schedule

See attached Calendar or visit course website. However, some modifications are likely depending on how the class progresses. Students are expected to review the updated schedule at regular intervals.

Bibliography (additional to above)

Albrecht, Johannes (2002) Against the Interpretation of Architecture. *JAE* 55:3, pp.194-196

Ardalan, Nader and Laleh Bakhtiar (2000) *The Sense of Unity: The Sufi Tradition in Persian Architecture*. Chicago, IL: Kazi Publications

Bachelard, Gaston (1964) *The Poetics of Space*. Boston, Mass: Beacon Press.

Benedikt, Michael, (1987) *For an Architecture of Reality*. New York: Lumen Books.

Barrie, Thomas; Bermudez, Julio and Tabb, Phillip (2015) *Architecture, Culture, and Spirituality*. Surrey, England: Ashgate Press.

Bosselman, Peter (1998) *Representation of Places*. Berkeley, CA: University of California Press.

Campo Baeza, Alberto (2012) *Principia Architectonica*. Spain, Mairea.

Cullen, Gordon (1961) *Townscape*. New York: Reinhold Publishing Corporation.

Dewey, John (1934) *Art As Experience*. New York: Wideview/Perigee Book,

Frank, Frederick (1979) *The Awakened Eye*. New York: Vintage Books

Gadamer, Hans-Georg (1986) *The Relevance of The Beautiful And Other Essays* (NY: Cambridge Univ Press)

Harries, Karsten (1998) *The Ethical Function of Architecture*. Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press

Heidegger, Martin (1971) *Poetry, Language, Thought*. New York: Harper & Row Publishers.

Hiss, Tony (1990) *The Experience of Place*. New York: Vintage Books.

Holl, Steven (1994) "Archetypal Experiences of Architecture", *A+U: Questions of Perception*, pp.121-135

Jenks, Charles (1999) *Ecstatic Architecture*. New York Academy Editions

Jones, Lindsay (2000). *The Hermeneutics of Sacred Architecture*. (volumes 1 and 2). Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

Krinke, Rebecca (2005) *Contemporary Landscapes of Contemplation*. New York: Routledge

- Lawlor, Anthony (1994) *The Temple in the House*. New York: Tarcher/Putman Books.
- Le Corbusier (1987) *Journey to the East*. Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press.
- Lobell, John (1985) *Between Silence and Light. Spirit in the Architecture of Louis Kahn*. Boston: Shambhala.
- Malgrave, Harris Francis (2018) *From Object to Experience. The New Culture of Architectural Design*. London: Bloomsbury Publishing Plc.
- Norberg-Schulz, C. (1985) *The Concept of Dwelling*. New York: Rizzoli International Publication Inc.
- O'Donohue, John (2004) *Beauty. The Invisible Embrace*. New York: Harper Collins
- Pallasmaa, Juhani (2008) *Encounters, Architectural Essays*. Helsinki, Finland: Rakennustieto Publishing.
- Perez Gomez, Alberto. (2006) *Built Upon Love*. Cambridge, Mass: MIT Press.
- Plummer, Henry (2016) *The Experience of Architecture*. New York: Thames & Hudson.
- Rios V., Gonzalo and Carlos Zeballos V. (2019) *Poetics from an Inhabited World I*. Arequipa, Peru: Univ. Catolica de Santa Maria.
- Rasmussen S.E. (1962) *Experiencing Architecture*. Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press
- Silvestrin, Claudio (1999) *Claudio Silvestrin*. Basel, Switzerland: Birkhäuser
- Silvestrin, Claudio, Bertoni Franco and Celant, Germano (2011) *The Non-materiality of the Material*. Turin, Italy: Umberto Allemandi & C.

University Policies

All members of the Catholic University community have a shared responsibility to know and to abide by the University's policies, especially relating to:

- Academic Integrity
- Accommodations for Students with Disabilities
- Attendance
- Conduct
- Final Exams
- Grades and appeals

All of Catholic University's policies are detailed at <https://policies.catholic.edu/index.html>. Please follow up with the instructor if you have any policy-related questions.

Of particular note are the policies regarding Academic Integrity, Accommodations for Students with Disabilities, and Final Exams, which are described below.

Academic Integrity

Academic dishonesty at The Catholic University of America is not tolerated (<https://policies.catholic.edu/students/academicundergrad/integrityfull.html> and <https://policies.catholic.edu/students/academicundergrad/integrityprocedures.html>)

As such, academic integrity is not merely avoiding plagiarism or cheating, but it certainly includes those things. Academic integrity means, above all else, taking responsibility for your work, your ideas, and your effort, and giving credit to others for their work, ideas, and effort. If you submit work that is not your own – whether test answers, whole papers, or something in-between – that is considered to be academic dishonesty. University procedures related to academic dishonesty are conducted with respect and dignity, while also preserving accountability, and they presuppose that all participants will treat each other with respect and dignity.

The following sanctions are presented in the University procedures related to Student Academic Dishonesty:

“The presumed sanction for undergraduate students for academic dishonesty will be failure for the course. In the context of graduate studies, the expectations for academic honesty are greater, and therefore the presumed sanction for dishonesty is likely to be more severe, e.g., expulsion. ...In the more unusual case, mitigating circumstances may exist that would warrant a lesser sanction than the presumed sanction.”

At times, you may do group work for an in-class presentation or group project. For that *specific* assignment, you are allowed to share material, ideas and information; however, for any related work that is to be submitted on an individual basis, I expect your submission to be your own in its entirety.

For more information about what academic integrity means at CUA, including your responsibilities and rights, visit <https://integrity.catholic.edu/index.html>.

Supplemental Expectations and Policies

See School of Architecture & Planning Policies (link in course website).

Accommodations for students with disabilities: Any student who feels s/he may need a reasonable accommodation based on the impact of a disability should contact the Office of Disability Support Services (<https://dss.catholic.edu/index.html>) by email at CUA-DSS@cua.edu or call 202-319-5211 to make an appointment to discuss possible accommodations. DSS recommends that a student with a disability meet with DSS staff during the first week of every semester since accommodations are not retroactive. Please note that instructors will only provide those accommodations included in the DSS accommodation letter. DSS is located in PRYZ 127.

Final Exam: The final exam must be given on the day and time assigned by Enrollment Services. Please plan accordingly for travel, work, special events, or appointments.

A student having an exam scheduling conflict as defined in the policy must report to her/his school's Academic Dean's Office no later than fourteen calendar days before the end of classes. The dean will assist the student in rescheduling the exam(s) for the course having the lowest enrollment(s). All make-up exams must be completed at the earliest possible time during the final examination period.

University Resources

- **Libraries** <https://libraries.catholic.edu/>
- **Center for Academic and Career Success** <https://success.catholic.edu/>
- **Math Center** <https://success.catholic.edu/academic-support/math-center/index.html>
- **Tutoring Services** <https://success.catholic.edu/academic-support/tutoring-services/index.html>
- **Writing Center** <https://success.catholic.edu/academic-support/writing-center/index.html>
- **Office of Disability Support Services** <https://dss.catholic.edu/index.html>
- **Counseling Center** <https://counseling.catholic.edu/index.html>
- **Student Health Services** <https://health.catholic.edu/index.html>
- **Dean of Students Office** <https://deanofstudents.catholic.edu/index.html>

School of Architecture & Planning Policies *(attachment to syllabus)*

Achievement

Grades on exams and assignments are based on the degree to which each student has achieved course learning objectives. They do not depend on how hard a student worked, the student's degree of self-satisfaction, or the number of other things a student was trying to juggle during the same semester.

Assignments

In general, no "make up" or "extra credit" projects will be allowed. Students are urged to do a good job the first time. Incomplete work will be graded as is. Limited extensions of time will be allowed only when the Dean approves a request to assign a grade of "Incomplete" (see "Attendance", below).

Papers are expected to be free of spelling and grammatical errors. With computerized spell-check and grammar-check, this is particularly easy. Professionalism counts.

Lost work, crashed computers, etc., will not be accepted as excuses. Back up files and keep hard copies.

Attendance

As noted in the Academic Regulations for Undergraduates:

***XII. Attendance at Class:** Good scholarship requires the presence of students at all class and laboratory meetings. The responsibility for prompt and regular class attendance rests upon the individual student. If, for any reason, a student is absent too frequently from class, it may become impossible for that student to receive a passing grade. Authority for excusing absences rests with the teacher who may request that the student obtain authentication of absences considered unavoidable.*

Those who arrive late or depart early may be counted as absent. Teachers may give failing grades to students with too many unexcused absences. Absences are excused at the discretion of the teacher.

Students are allowed time to participate in sports teams so long as they complete course requirements.

Students who are sick are asked to stay away so that they can recover and so that they don't infect others. And students facing personal or family crises are expected to need time to manage them. But in both cases, students need to manage their absences through communication and balance.

- For foreseeable absences (upcoming sports team event, religious holiday, funeral, etc.): Please notify teachers ahead of time and submit documentation if requested explaining the absence.
- For unforeseeable absences (sickness, injury, or family emergency): Please notify, or have someone else notify, teachers as soon as possible and generally no later than the end of the day of the absence. Note that unforeseen events caused by lack of planning do not justify absence.

Students must work out with teachers how they will achieve the learning objectives of the missed session(s). When the absences occur before the deadline to withdraw from a course and the teacher feels that there is no practical way to achieve the objectives, the student should withdraw. If he or she does not, the teacher has an obligation to give the student a grade of F for failing to achieve the learning objectives of the course. This is simply an acknowledgement of the infeasibility of making up the missed session(s). When the absences occur after the deadline for withdrawal, the student should request the dean to allow a grade of "Incomplete" (a form for that is posted to the school's website) to be permitted additional time to finish the work.

Grading

Letter grades for architecture and planning majors for courses in those majors will be assigned by this scale:

A: Exceeded Learning Objectives (Grades of A and A- allow for some nuance)

B: Fully Met Learning Objectives (Grades of B+, B, and B- allow for some nuance)

C: Partially Met Learning Objectives (Grades of C+, C, and for undergrads only, C-, allow for some nuance)

D: Failed to Meet Learning Objectives, even though some or even a significant amount of work was done. (Available to undergraduates only; D+ and D- grades are not available even to them.)

F: Failed to Meet Learning Objectives by a significant margin

Students receiving grades of **D** or **F** will be required to repeat the course until a grade of at least **C-** is earned. Students may repeat a passed course with all grades calculated into the GPA. Only failed grades may be appealed, and only when the failure was for reasons unrelated to academic performance.

Lecture Series Attendance

Attendance at the school's Lecture Series events is expected. Almost no class is scheduled in our school at that time, so students should not have any conflicts. Lecture dates can be found on the school website. Take sketchbooks to the lectures to make drawn as well as written notes.

School Closure

In the event of unforeseen school closures, students are expected to maintain their progress in courses by such means as completing assigned readings and completing and submitting assigned work electronically when due. See teachers for supplemental procedures applicable to specific courses.

The Provost will determine any changes in the academic calendar and usually will notify the entire campus community by e-mail.