

“Topics in Phenomena and Architecture”
ARC6212-Section 21247, History & Theory
Graduate Seminar, School of Architecture, Spr 2026
Dr. Hui Zou
Rm: AH215, Time: W/ Periods 10-E1

5:10 PM	-	6:00 PM
6:15 PM		7:05 PM
7:20 PM	-	8:10 PM

ARCHITECTURAL PHENOMENOLOGY

3 credits

Introduction:

Since the 1990s, architectural phenomenology has emerged as a significant historical movement of design theories and continuously provides the theoretical platform for reviving humanism and developing cross-cultural and comparative study in 21st-century architecture, urbanism and humanities. This seminar introduces the most important scholarly sources about this theoretical movement, which resists Cartesian dualism and seeks for the reunion of body, mind and soul in the built environment. In the class, students will present and discuss these literature sources in philosophical phenomenology and their application in architectural scholarship of history, theory and design. From the perspective of phenomenology, we will explore the primary issues of architecture such as truth (*aletheia*), poetical dwelling, historicity, temporality, sense of space and place, perception of surfaces and depth, atmosphere, bodily experience, landscape (gardens), embodiment, memory, linguistic analogy, hermeneutic meaning, cultural identity, technology (*techne*), mysticism, materiality, crafts, representation, cross-cultural imagination, etc. The readings also include some phenomenological architectural cases in modern and contemporary ages. The central objective of this course is to enhance the student's theoretical ability of approaching the “truth of the world,” in Heidegger's sense, through the art of building. This history/theory seminar provides solid training for architectural research and thesis writing. Each week we focus on one thematic topic. The student will be basically assigned 2 theoretical texts for presentations and required to complete a research paper. The course adopts a textbook: Alberto Pérez-Gómez, *Attunement: Architectural Meaning after the Crisis of Modern Science* (MIT, 2016). Besides the textbook, the reading list includes the texts by Husserl, Heidegger, Merleau-Ponty, Sartre, Hannah Arendt, Derrida, Michel de Certeau, etc.

Student Learning Outcomes (SLOs):

After completing this architectural history & theory seminar, the student should have a good knowledge and understanding of philosophical phenomenology, its key concepts and thoughts, phenomenological methodology, architectural phenomenological theories, architectural phenomenological design practice, architectural phenomenological pedagogy, and comparative phenomenological aesthetics between cultural differences. Through this course, each student should be able to find and build a constructive connection between phenomenology and architectural research topics. Through reading, presenting, communicating, and writing in this

course, the student can develop good skills of theoretical analysis, historical interpretation, and critical writing in architecture and art.

Class Regulations:

Constant preparation, attendance, participation and interest are expected. Your active participation including in-depth reading and presentation are important for the success of the whole class. You are expected to be in the classroom on time and remain in the classroom until the completion of each class. The assignment of your presentations will be decided in the first class. The date of the final paper submission is marked in the syllabus and no late submission please.

Textbook:

Alberto Pérez-Gómez, *Attunement: Architectural Meaning after the Crisis of Modern Science* (MIT, 2016).

Weekly Topics:

Week 1/ Introduction

Introduction, presentation assignments.

APG, "Introduction" in *Attunement*.

Week 2/ Attunement

Ch. 1: Atmosphere and Moods.

Ch. 2: Architecture as Communicative Setting 1: Premodern Musical Atmosphere.

Week 3/ Attunement

Ch. 3: Architecture as Communicative Setting 2: Modern Poetic Atmosphere.

Ch. 4: Architecture as an Unveiling of Place.

Week 4/ Husserl's phenomenology

-----, *Ideas*, 3rd section: ch. II, and 4th section: ch. II.

-----, *Ideas pertaining to a pure phenomenology and to a Phenomenological Philosophy*, Section I: Chs. 2, 3.

-----, "Origin of Geometry" & Introduction by J. Derrida.

Joseph J. Kockelmans, Chs. 5 "Phenomenological Reduction," 6 "Intentionality," 8 "Intersubjectivity", *A First Introduction to Husserl's Phenomenology*.

Week 5/ Heidegger's phenomenology 1

Heidegger, "What Are Poets For?" *Poetry, Language, Thought*.

-----, "The Thing," Ibid.

-----, "Poetically Man Dwells," Ibid.

-----, "Language," Ibid.

Week 6/ Heidegger's phenomenology 2

Heidegger, "The Way to Language," *On the Way to Language*.

-----, "Words," Ibid.

-----, "The Question Concerning Technology," *The Question Concerning Technology and Other Essays*.

Week 7/ Merleau-Ponty's phenomenology

Maurice Merleau-Ponty, "The Intertwining—The Chiasm," *The Visible and the Invisible*.

-----, "Eye and Mind," *The Primacy of Perception*.

-----, "Cézanne's Doubt," *The Merleau-Ponty Aesthetics Reader*.

Week 8/ Derrida's deconstruction philosophy

Jacques Derrida, "Différance," *Margins of Philosophy*.

-----, "Restitutions of the Truth in Painting," "+ R (Into the Bargain)," *The Truth in Painting*.

-----, Jacques Derrida, Sections "The Parergon" or "The Colossal," *The Truth in Painting*.

Week 9/ Sartre's existential phenomenology

Jean-Paul Sartre, "The Paintings of Giacometti," *Situations*; "The Search for the Absolute" (on Giacometti's sculpture). Both articles are also in Sartre, *Essays in Existentialism*, or *Essays in Aesthetics*.

-----, *The Emotions: Outline of a Theory*.

Week 10

(3/15-3/19, spring break)

Week 11/ Comparative phenomenological aesthetics

Jorge Luis Borges, "The Garden of Forking Path," "The Library of Babel," *Labyrinths*, in Latin American Magical Realism literary movement.

Octavio Paz, *Marcel Duchamp: Appearance Stripped Bare*.

François Jullien, *In Praise of Blandness*, on Eastern aesthetics.

Hui Zou, "The Distance," *Vorkurs 7* (2023), a comparative study on poetical distance between East and West.

Week 12/ Attunement

Ch. 5: Stimmung, Phenomenology, and Enactive Cognitive Theory: From Habit to Language.

Ch. 6: The Linguistic Dimension of Architecture: Attunement and the Poetic Word.

Week 13/ Attunement

Ch. 7: Representation and the Linguistic Imagination.

Ch. 8: Architecture and *Spiritus* in the Twenty-First Century.

Week 14/ Practice of phenomenology

Hannah Arendt, Chs. “The Human Condition,” “The Public and the Private Realm,” *The Human Condition*.

Michel de Certeau, Chs. “Theories of the Art of Practice,” “Spatial Practices,” *The Practice of Everyday Life*.

Design works by Marcel Duchamp, Alberto Giacometti, Le Corbusier, Carlo Scarpa, John Hejduk, Steven Holl, Daniel Libeskind, Isamu Noguchi, Feng Jizhong (China), Maya Lin, Patricia Johanson, etc.

Education of an Architect: A Point of View (1999) and Introduction by Alberto Perez-Gomez.

Week 15

(No class) **Paper due** by 5 pm on Canvas, 4/23, Friday

Week 16

(Grading)

Grading:

1) Participation (reading, presentation, discussion and attendance): 60%

2) Paper: 40%

The course grade will be based on the overall qualities of the student’s class participation and paper.

You can find the university grading policy at:

<http://www.registrar.ufl.edu/catalog/policies/regulationgrades.html>

Grading Scale:

Letter Grade	A	A-	B+	B	B-	C+	C	C-	D+	D	D-	E
Numeric Grade	100-95	94-90	89-87	86-83	82-80	79-77	76-73	72-70	69-67	66-63	62-60	0
Quality Points	4.0	3.67	3.33	3.0	2.67	2.33	2.0	1.67	1.33	1.0	0.67	0.0

Office Hours: TBD (appointment required)

Contact: Office AH134, Email: hzou@ufl.edu

Disclaimer: This syllabus represents my current plans and objectives. As we go through the semester, those plans may need to change to enhance the class learning opportunity. Such changes, communicated clearly, are not unusual and should be expected.

UF Policies:

UF Academic Policies and Campus Resources: <https://go.ufl.edu/syllabuspolicies>

University Policy on Accommodating Students with Disabilities:

<https://disability.ufl.edu/students/get-started/>

University Policy on Academic Misconduct: <http://www.dso.ufl.edu/students.php>

Netiquette: Communication Courtesy:

<http://teach.ufl.edu/docs/NetiquetteGuideforOnlineCourses.pdf>

Canvas Help:

- Learning-support@ufl.edu
- (352) 392-HELP - select option 2
- <https://lss.at.ufl.edu/help.shtml>

Other Resources: <http://www.distance.ufl.edu/getting-help> for:

- Counseling and Wellness resources
- Disability resources
- Resources for handling student concerns and complaints
- Library Help Desk support

Should you have any complaints with your experience in this course, please visit

<http://www.distance.ufl.edu/student-complaints>

The online course evaluation process: Students are expected to provide professional and respectful feedback on the quality of instruction in this course by completing course evaluations online. Students can complete evaluations in three ways:

1. The email they receive from GatorEvals,
2. Their Canvas course menu under GatorEvals, or
3. The central portal at <https://my-ufl.bluera.com/>
 - a. Guidance on how to provide constructive feedback is available at <https://gatorevals.aa.ufl.edu/students/>. Students will be notified when the evaluation period opens. Summaries of course evaluation results are available to students at <https://gatorevals.aa.ufl.edu/public-results/>