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**instructor:** William Littmann

**course title:** History and Theory of Interior Design II

**institution:** California College of the Arts

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# History and Theory Interior Design 2

INTER-2220-1

Fall 2019

Friday 12:00-3:00

Timken Lecture Hall (Draft 6 Sept 19)

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Office hours Friday 10-12, 3-4 Friday (library), other times can be scheduled with instructor

# Course description:

This course examines the history of interiors from the late 19th century to the present. Lectures, readings, and in-class assignments help students gain an understanding of the important developments in the design of interior spaces and expose them to some of the theoretical literature that has influenced the profession. The course also helps students develop the tools to formulate questions about the social meaning of interior spaces and understand how the decisions by the interior designer are shaped by larger political, social, and economic forces. This course takes a holistic approach to the study of interiors--thus we will consider not only the design and decoration of the interior architectural envelope, but also the material objects found inside rooms: including carpets, drapery, woodwork, machinery, and decorative objects. We also consider how there can be multiple interpretations of interior space based on gender, sexual identity, class, ethnicity, and race.

In general, the course traces the design of interiors found in the modern industrial world as well as reactions to modernity. Thus we will begin with a look at the rise of industrial society and how new economic, social, and political realities shaped interiors around the turn of the century. We will look at such topics as the growing presence of women in the workplace as well as the rise of new building types of the 19th century, including the movie theater, the public library, the museum, and exhibition spaces.

We will also look at reactions to industrialization and mass production, notably the Arts and Crafts movement and, later, the counterculture of the 1960s. We will also examine the complex history of important interior spaces, including the classroom, the mosque, the hair salon, the barbershop, the dollhouse, spaces designed for people with disabilities, as well as the act of staging of apartments and houses for sale.

Instruction methods employed in the course include 30-40 minute lectures on particular styles, social trends, or historical topics. We will also focus for entire class periods on particular case study interiors, including the Chrystal Palace (1851), Frank Lloyd Wright’s Larkin Office Building in Buffalo (1904) and the Rietveld-Schröder House (1924). There will also be hands-on work in class, either individually or in groups. The final paper involves having students design a historic room for a museum.

In addition, the course will look at non-western interior environments, looking at examples from Asia and Africa. A key goal of the class is to demonstrate how interior design developed in an interconnected world shaped by the circulation and exchange of beliefs, material objects, aesthetic ideas, and people. The course also looks at interior environments often not considered in interior history courses: including, the history of postwar East German interiors, classroom layout in contemporary China, and the decoration and use of communes in 1960s San Francisco.

Students will also discover how architectural interiors inform how we make sense of the world and, at the same time, performing an integral role in constructing gender and familial identities, reflecting images of class, ethnicity, power and politics. In sum, this course is designed around the fundamental

belief that architectural interiors of the past are one of the best forms of evidence for understanding the history of the lives of men and women from around the world.

# Learning outcomes:

Through lectures, reading and research assignments, presentations, in-class activity, and site visits, students will:

* Have exposure to important and canonical examples of interior design over the last 125 years as well as the important styles of the period, including the Arts and Crafts, the Modern Movement, and Postmodernism. By the end of the course, students will be able to identify and discuss more than 75 examples of interior design.
* Understand how gender, ethnicity, race, sexual identity, and class shape the design, use, and interpretation of interior space.
* Develop their research and presentation skills through class presentations, research for in-class projects as well as for the final project.
* Have contact with theoretical writings that have guided interior designers.
* Understand the range of political, economic, and social factors that have contributed to the creation and use of interiors and objects.
* Develop student abilities in visual analysis of architectural interiors and material objects and how to understand how material objects represent the lives of the men and women that occupy interior space.
* Develop vocabulary for discussing historic interiors.
* To develop the skills to ask critical questions about how we interpret interior space and to consider the range of multiple meanings and forces that shape interior.

# Grading:

Your grade will be based on four quizzes, several written assignments, a term paper, a presentation, and your participation/attendance.

The following quizzes and writing assignments are given the following weight toward the final grade: Assignments (outside and in class): 20%

Quizzes 40% Presentations in class: 10% Final project 20%

Attendance and participation 10%

**Quizzes:** Most of the quizzes will take between 20 and 30 minutes and will consist of short answers, image identification, and comparative essays. Students will be tested on material from lecture, readings, the website, and site visits. The professor will likely offer a review for the exam either in lecture or as part of a study aid during the class session before the exam.

# Homework and class presentations.

Students working alone or in groups or students will give a ten-minute presentation on a particular case study (a historical topic or interior space). The topics are: the design and use of the modern elevator, history of the interior space of classrooms, schools, hair salons and barber shops, household and office

technologies, minimalism, dollhouses, modern mosques, home staging companies, and designing for the differently abled. This presentation will have the following required elements:

-A ten-minute presentation on your topic during class. Please practice your presentation so you are not just reading your notes. Do not go longer than five minutes—and we will cut you off at the five-minute mark. I can provide the images for your presentation or you can send me images that you think are important for your topic.

-Research on the particular topic using online and book/article sources as well as interviews or visits to showrooms in San Francisco. I will be glad to send you articles on your topic or direct you to appropriate articles in the library.

-Meet with the instructor class prior to your presentation to discuss the topic.

-Provide a study aid (at least 75 words) that will be distributed to the class. The study aid will contain more information than your presentation and it will be used by your fellow students to review for the quiz, midterm, and final. I will post these study aids on the class website.

-Your grade on the presentation (check plus, check, check minus) will be based on your research and preparation, organization, quality of work.

**Writing Assignments:** The writing assignments will help students develop their ability to write and analyze interiors. The assignments will be typed, double-spaced, and stapled together. More detailed descriptions will be provided to the students closer to the assignment’s due date.

The writing assignments are as follows. Other short assignments concerning the paper might come up during the semester.

* Response to Crystal Palace (Sept. 13)
* Response to Larkin Office Building (Sept. 20)
* Response to Soetsu Yanagi (Sept. 27)
* Paper topic due with short history of building (Oct. 4)
* Assignment: response to Rietveld and Schröder House documents (Oct. 18)
* Designing a new space for architectural crits (Nov 1)
* Response to staging assignment (Nov. 2)
* Final Paper due (December 12)

**Final Paper:** The final project is a representation of a historic room in a museum. You will be asked to select a particular interior dating from 1500 to 2000 and then create a model for an exhibition of that room. This will include a history of the room in general (approximately 1,000 words), as well as written descriptions of particular elements of that room (furniture, wallpaper, lighting, objects) or how people moved through the room (1000 words). You will be asked to make a mock-up of the room and describe how visitors to the museum will learn about the space when they visit the exhibition. The final project is due at the end of the semester, but part of the project are due throughout the fall. You will be expected to discuss your project for at least 30 minutes outside of class with the teaching assistant or instructor. We will bring in and discuss our projects on the last day of class.

The paper will receive a grade based on the completion of the steps noted above as well as showing they researched project using scholarly methods, considered the issues/themes of their example.

**Participation/attendance:** Attendance at all studio periods, forums, and colloquia, and field trips is required. You can miss two classes—after that, we reserve the right to reduce your grade by a third. Three unexcused absences [will/may] result in the student being asked to withdraw from the class or a non-passing grade will be issued. Absences are excused for the following documented reasons only: family or personal emergencies and illness. The instructors must be notified **in advance by email**, or

by note in their mailbox **prior** to class time, regarding excused absences. Also, we track if you are late and chronic lateness will result in a lower grade. Also note that your participation grade will drop if you work on outside projects in class. If you miss a quiz or assignment without a medial or legitimate excuse, your grade will drop by one letter grade.

**Plagiarism:** The official definition of plagiarism is the “the intentional or knowing representation of words, images, concepts, or ideas of another as one's own in any academic or studio exercise. Do not use the words of others in work you submit for a grade. I would rather read your prose than the work of scholars published in books in articles. I am very good at finding plagiarism. Plagiarism will result in a lower grade and might contribute to you failing the class. Additional information on plagiarism and the overall CCA Academic Integrity Code can be found at: https://[www.cca.edu/students/handbook/integritycode](http://www.cca.edu/students/handbook/integritycode)

# Texts:

* Assignment articles and book excerpts will be available through the class website.

# Schedule of Classes, site visits, due dates for assignments, readings, and quizzes

**Sept 6: Looking Backwards: The use of the past for new designs in the Renaissance Baroque, and 18th century.**

**Sept 13: Ride of industry and the mass production of interiors.**

Response to Crystal Palace due (in class. Case study #1: Crystal Palace

Readings:

* + Delmore Schwartz, "In Dreams Begin Responsibilities" *Partisan Review,* 1937.
  + John McKean Crystal Palace: Joseph Paxton and Charles Fox, Phaidon, 1994.
  + *The Crystal Palace Exhibition; illustrated catalogue, London 1851*. An unabridged republication of the original catalog, Dover, 1970.

# Sept 20: The interior of the modern office and the role of gender

Larkin assignment due

Case Study #2: Frank Lloyd Wright’s Larkin Building

Case Study #3: History, manners, and culture of the modern elevator

**Due**: Larkin Building Assignment Reading:

* + Louis Sullivan, “The Tall Office Building Artistically Considered,” 1896.
  + Jack Quinn, *Frank Lloyd Wright's Larkin building: Myth and Fact, 1987*
  + Larkin Book of Better Homes, 1924 catalog, online.
  + Larkin Company Administration Building: https://franklloydwright.org/site/larkin- company-administration-building/
  + Jerome Puma, “The Larkin Building, Buffalo, NY: History of the Demolition,” 1978 <http://www.buffaloah.com/h/larkin/admin/>

“Virtual Tour – Frank Lloyd Wright: The Lost Works | The Larkin Administration Building” at https://[www.buffalorising.com/2018/03/virtual-tour-frank-lloyd-wright-](http://www.buffalorising.com/2018/03/virtual-tour-frank-lloyd-wright-) the-lost-works-the-larkin-administration-building/

Background Reading:

* + “Design in the Office,” in Forty, *Objects of Desire*.

# Sept 27: Arts and Crafts

Quiz 1

Arts and Crafts assignment due

* + “The Kizaemon Tea-bowl” and “The Way of Craftsmanship” from Soetsu Yanagi, *The Unknown Craftsman: A Japanese Insight into Beauty*. Tokyo, Palo Alto: Kodansha International, 1972. (excerpts)
  + *Artists of Invention: A Century of CCA* (San Francisco, California College of the Arts, 2007).

Background reading:

* + “Introduction, International Arts and Crafts,” in Karen Livingstone, and Linda Parry.

*International Arts and Crafts*. London: V & A, 2005.

* + John Ruskin, *Stones of Venice.* London: Dent, 1907.
  + *Craftsman Furniture*, by Gustav Stickley, 1910.

# Oct 4: Who cleans the interior? Service workers and interior space

Readings to be announced Topic for paper due

Viewing “La Camarista (The Chambermaid),” directed, co-written by Lila Avilés (2019)

# Oct 11: Victorian architecture and domestic work

Case study #4: Barber shops and hair salon

Case study #5: Household and office technologies Reading:

* + Richard Walker, “Landscape and City Life: Four Ecologies of Residence in the San Francisco Bay Area,” *Ecumene*, 1995. Available on line at: [http://www.foundsf.org/index.php?title=Landscape\_and\_City\_Life:\_Four\_Ecologies\_](http://www.foundsf.org/index.php?title=Landscape_and_City_Life%3A_Four_Ecologies_) of\_Residence\_in\_the\_San\_Francisco\_Bay\_Area
  + Looking at images of student work at the Ecole des Beaux-Arts in *Cinquantenaire. Les grands prix de Rome d'architecture de 1850 à 1900. Reproduction en phototypie* (1904

Background reading:

* + Quincy Mills, *Cutting Along the Color Line: Black Barbers and Barber Shops in America*, 2016.
  + Jane Plitt, *Martha Matilda Harper and the American Dream: How One Woman Changed the Face of Modern Business*, 2000.

# Oct 18: The Modern Interior: Loos, Wright, de Stijl, Modernism.

Quiz 2

Case study #6: Schröder House (Gerrit Rietveld and Truus Schröder, 1926) Required reading:

* + Adolf Loos, “Ornament and Crime,” in Grace Lees-Maffei and Rebecca Houze (eds.), *The Design History Reader*. Oxford: Berg Publishers, 2010.

Case study (Schröder House) readings:

* + Catherine Croft, “Movement and Myth, The Schröder House and Transformable Living,” in Taylor and Preston, *Intimus*.
  + “Manifesto of ‘The Style,’” (1918)
  + “Family Matters, The Schröder House,” in *Women and the Making of the Modern House*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 2007. (excerpts)
  + Theo van Doesburg “Towards a Plastic Architecture” (1924).

Background reading:

* + Marie Kondo, *The Life-Changing Magic of Tidying Up*, 2010
  + Stephanie Land, “The Class Politics of Decluttering,” *The New York Times*, July 18, 2016
  + Tim Benton, “The Twentieth-Century Architectural Interior: Representing Modernity,” in Aynsley and Grant, *Imagined Interiors*.
  + Hermann Mathesius and Henry van de Velde, “Werkbund Theses and Antithesis,” in Lees-Maffei and Houze, *The Design History Reader*.
  + “The Decorative Interior,” in Penny Sparke. *The Modern Interior*. London: Reaktion, 2008.
  + “Modernism and Design,” in Penny Sparke, *An Introduction to Design and Culture in the Twentieth Century*. London: Allen & Unwin, 1986. (excerpts)

Required reading:

* + Pierre Bourdieu, “The Berber house or the World Reversed.” *Social Science Information* April 1970 9: 151-170.
  + Mark Jarzombek, Mijikenda culture in *Architecture of First Societies: A Global Perspective*, 2013.

Background reading:

* + Art Institute of Chicago, James Ward Thorne, Kathleen Culbert-Aguilar, and Michael Abramson, *Miniature Rooms: The Thorne Rooms at the Art Institute of Chicago*. Chicago: Art Institute of Chicago, 2004.
  + Sally Sexton Kalmbach, *Mrs. Thorne's World of Miniatures*. Chicago: Ampersand, 2014.
  + Nicole Cooley, “Dollhouses Weren’t Invented for Play,” *The Atlantic* (July 22, 2016).
  + Holland Cotter, “The Great Mosque in Djenné, Mali.” The New York Times, April 18, 2012
  + Great Mosque of Djenné,” Kahn Academy (study website, good overall history).
  + Jared Green, “Djenne: An Evolving Cultural Landscape,” The Dirt, (American Society of Landscape Architects) website, May 21, 2013.
  + Martine and Caroline Laffon. *A Home in the World: Houses and Cultures*. New York:

H.N. Abrams, 2004. (excerpts)

# Oct. 25: Architectural Education Part 1: Beaux Arts, Bauhaus and the Vkhutemas.

for building due and plan for model and exhibition. Case study #6: The classroom around the world Readings to be announced

# Nov 1: Architectural education Part II:

Architecture crit assignment due

# Nov 8: Midcentury modern.

Case study #7: Minimalism: Marie Kondo and the small house movement Case study #8: The dollhouse in world culture

Case study #9: The mosque

Case study #10: The work of home staging companies **Due**: Assignment related to home staging companies Readings:

* + Pat Kirkham, “New Environments for Modern Living: ‘At Home’ with the Eameses,” in Penny Sparke, *Designing the Modern Interior: From the Victorians to Today*. Oxford: Berg, 2009.
  + Readings
  + “Eames: The Architect and the Painter” (movie), 2011
  + Marilyn Neuhart, *The story of Eames Furniture,* 2010
  + Eames Demetrios, *An Eames Primer,* 2001

# Nov 15: Representation and history work.

Quiz 3

# Nov 22 North Korea, East Germany, Fascism, authoritarian interiors

Background reading:

* + Paul Betts, “Building Socialism at Home,” in Katherine Pence, and Betts. *Socialist Modern: East German Everyday Culture and Politics*. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2008. (excerpts)
  + Susan Reid, "The Khrushchev Kitchen: Domesticating the Scientific-Technological Revolution.” *Journal of Contemporary History*. 40 (2005) 289-316.
  + Owen Hatherley, *Landscapes of Communism: A History Through Buildings*. New York: New Press, 2015. (excerpts)
  + Guy Delisle, *Pyongyang: A Journey in North Korea*. New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2015.
  + Nicholas Bonner, *Made in North Korea: Graphics from Everyday Life in the DPRK*, London : Phaidon Press Limited, 2017

# Nov 29 No class, Thanksgiving Break

**Dec 6: Architecture of the Counterculture**

Reading:

* + Julia Bryan-Wilson. "Handmade Genders: Queer Costuming in San Francisco Circa 1970,” 2012.
  + Bill Weber and David Weissman, *The Cockettes*, 2018.

# Dec 13: Final quiz, presentations