Course Code CRS3028

Cultural Interpretation of Space
空間的文化詮釋

Course tutor: Desmond Hui

Course description:
This course will examine both the textual and imagery sources related to the idea of spatial creation. The objective of study is to equip students with historical knowledge as well as develop their discursive capabilities in understanding and projecting the meaning and relationship between ideas and forms embodied in spatial discourses. Students will be required to read seminal texts from the Classical, Gothic, Renaissance through 19th century to Modern and Contemporary periods. No pre-requisite is required.

Learning Outcomes:
In terms of knowledge acquisition, students are expected to understand the importance and significance of space in the historical, cultural, philosophical and social orders; how spatial creation shape cultural practices, expressions and ideology and hence our identity, taste and values. In terms of values and skills, students are expected to develop critical ability in analyzing the diversity of values and interests, inter-cultural sensitivity, a balance view of local and global issues, literacy in understanding different visual and textual meanings and forms and the ability to appreciate the importance and significance of the inter-disciplinary nature of spatial discourse and interpretation.

Course content:
1. Introduction: principles of spatial creation
   The first session will be a general introduction from an intercultural perspective on the principles of spatial creation. The classical concept of decorum will be used to explain expression of cultural and political sovereignty east and west and particularly within the contemporary context of Mainland China, Taiwan and Hong Kong.

2. Literature Review
   The second session will introduce the scope of seminal texts for the course throughout history by elucidating the lineage of ideas and influences from
Classical through Modern and Contemporary writings. Each student will choose one seminal text for investigation to be presented in subsequent classes.

3. **Classical Sources**
   The third session will begin with investigation on the Classical period – writing from authors includes Plato, Aristotle and Vitruvius. Emphasis will be put on the origin and influences of the Platonic versus Aristotelian concept of idea and form on classical and subsequent periods of spatial creation.

4. **The Gothic Tradition**
   The fourth session will focus on the Gothic tradition with both textual and imagery sources. Scholasticism, Abbot Suger and the case of Milan Cathedral will be the objects of investigation. Topics such as medieval symbolism and mysticism will also be examined.

5. **Renaissance to 16th Century**
   The fifth session will deal with the Renaissance up to 16th century. Primary treatises and commentaries by Alberti to Scamozzi will be examined. The Renaissance to Baroque concept of beauty in nature and art will be the subject of investigation.

6. **17th Century to Enlightenment**
   The sixth session will examine the debate between the ancients and the moderns from 17th century France to development in Italy and England. Seminal textual and imagery sources include Perrault, Boullée and Boffrand. Emphasis will be on the development of rationalism and its impact on spaces and forms and its connection to the revival of classical idealism.

7. **19th Century and Romanticism**
   The seventh session will examine the transformation of the 18th century into the Romantic period of the 19th century. Writings by Hugo, Ruskin to Pugin will be studied and situated within the philosophical context of Kant and Hegel. The debate on science of beauty will be the focus of investigation.

8. **Modernism in 20th Century**
   The eighth session will investigate the evolution of Modernism in the 20th Century with writings on art, architecture, city planning and philosophy – ranging from Benjamin, Le Corbusier, Giedion and their followers and interpreters. The focus of examination will be on the relationship between human and the machine.

9. **Postmodernism**
   The ninth session will look at Postmodernism from the 1960s to 80s. Texts include Venturi, Jameson and Habermas and their relationship to urban spatial developments in post-industrial societies in America, Europe and Asia.

10. **Poststructuralism and Deconstruction**
    The tenth session will examine Poststructuralism and Deconstruction from literature to architecture. Texts include Foucault, Derrida and Eisenman. The museum as a project type will be used for the focus of investigation.

11. **China and Contemporary Development**
The tenth session will bring the primarily western investigation back to the Chinese context and to develop correlation with possible identification of comparative textual and imagery sources. Emphasis of investigation will be on the relevance of study to contemporary development in China and the Asia Pacific region.

12. Conclusion and Review

Selected References:


**Evaluation:**

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<th>Component</th>
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<tr>
<td>Attendance</td>
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<td>Mid-term presentation</td>
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<tr>
<td>Final Paper/Project</td>
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<td><strong>Total:</strong></td>
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Feedback on evaluation of the course could be given through tutorials or general class discussions. Students could also post their questions and comments through the moodle, or directly by email to the course instructor.

**Honesty in Academic Work: A Guide for Students and Teachers:**

The Chinese University of Hong Kong places very high importance on honesty in academic work submitted by students, and adopts a policy of *zero tolerance* on cheating and plagiarism. Any related offence will lead to disciplinary action including termination of studies at the University. Students must submit their assignments via the Webpage of the Chinese University Plagiarism Identification Engine (CUPIDE) http://cupide.cse.cuhk.edu.hk/student.

Although cases of cheating or plagiarism are rare at the University, everyone should make himself/herself familiar with the content of this website and thereby help avoid any practice that would not be acceptable.

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<th>What is plagiarism [ <a href="http://www.cuhk.edu.hk/policy/academichonesty/p01.htm">http://www.cuhk.edu.hk/policy/academichonesty/p01.htm</a> ]</th>
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<tr>
<td>Section 2</td>
<td>Proper use of source material [<a href="http://www.cuhk.edu.hk/policy/academichonesty/p02.htm">http://www.cuhk.edu.hk/policy/academichonesty/p02.htm</a>]</td>
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<td>Section 3</td>
<td>Citation styles [<a href="http://www.cuhk.edu.hk/policy/academichonesty/p03.htm">http://www.cuhk.edu.hk/policy/academichonesty/p03.htm</a>]</td>
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<td>Section 4</td>
<td>Plagiarism and copyright violation [<a href="http://www.cuhk.edu.hk/policy/academichonesty/p04.htm">http://www.cuhk.edu.hk/policy/academichonesty/p04.htm</a>]</td>
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<td>CUHK regulations on honesty in academic work [<a href="http://www.cuhk.edu.hk/policy/academichonesty/p05.htm">http://www.cuhk.edu.hk/policy/academichonesty/p05.htm</a>]</td>
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<td>Section 7</td>
<td>Guide for teachers and departments [<a href="http://www.cuhk.edu.hk/policy/academichonesty/p07.htm">http://www.cuhk.edu.hk/policy/academichonesty/p07.htm</a>]</td>
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<td>Section 8</td>
<td>Recommended material to be included in course outlines [<a href="http://www.cuhk.edu.hk/policy/academichonesty/p08.htm">http://www.cuhk.edu.hk/policy/academichonesty/p08.htm</a>]</td>
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<td>Recommended declaration to be included in every assignment handed in [<a href="http://www.cuhk.edu.hk/policy/academichonesty/p09.htm">http://www.cuhk.edu.hk/policy/academichonesty/p09.htm</a>]</td>
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