AR-485

Political economy of design

Tombesi Paolo

Cursus	Sem.	Type
Architecture	MA2, MA4	Opt.

Language of teaching	English
Credits	3
Session	Summer
Semester	Spring
Exam	During the semester
Workload	90h
Weeks	12
Hours	**2 weekly**
Courses	2 weekly
Number of positions	

Summary

Political Economy of Design seeks to position and discuss architecture in relation to the world of production, economic interests and community benefits, at a local and global scale.

Content

By integrating yet moving beyond the stylistic, technological or sociological aspects of the discipline, the discussion reviews the industrial elements that are likely to affect programmatic objectives, formal directions and technical outcomes of building projects. Such discussion has a strong comparative bent, and is coloured by the notion of innovation - what it means from a social, technical and cultural point of view, and how it enters and affects different building markets. Attention is directed at understanding the distinction between innovation on one side and invention and technological change on the other. In this context, architecture's connection with planning and building disciplines is examined and criticised in the attempt to formulate a strategic framework for its use as an environmental policy instrument.

Learning Prerequisites

Recommended courses

AR-487 Technological Innovation
AR-402(n) Theorie et critique du project MA2

Learning Outcomes

By the end of the course, the student must be able to:

- Identify the various types of environmental conditions that have an impact upon the role of the design professions.
- Analyze the configuration of the building industry and the nature of its products in any given region.
- Demonstrate a critical understanding of the relationship between design practice, cultural values, spatial needs and industrial landscapes.

Transversal skills

- Plan and carry out activities in a way which makes optimal use of available time and other resources.
- Set objectives and design an action plan to reach those objectives.
- Communicate effectively with professionals from other disciplines.
- Assess one's own level of skill acquisition, and plan their on-going learning goals.
- Demonstrate the capacity for critical thinking
- Take feedback (critique) and respond in an appropriate manner.

- Access and evaluate appropriate sources of information.
- Collect data.
- Respect the rules of the institution in which you are working.

Teaching methods

The subject has a lecture component and a research component. The lecture component provides a general theoretical framework largely borrowed from political economy, industrial theory, innovation theory and labour studies literature, but adapted to the analysis of the design and building sector. The research component seeks to apply the elements of this framework to a specific situation providing opportunities for applied research.

Assessment methods

Assessment revolves around three components:

- Class participation, or the display of one's ability to discuss how project outputs can be used to reflect about economic means, social priorities, and technological alternatives.

- Gathering of discussion-specific data, showing one's ability to research and collate information about relevant technological options in given industrial contexts /situations.

- Essay due at the end of the term, demonstrating one's ability to identify and address key design and construction issues against availability of resources and types of social conditions.

Resources

Bibliography

General references provided by the instructor in the course of the semester.