ARCH 4202/5202: FROM MODERN TO POSTMODERN

LECTURES: TR 9:30-10:45AM, RECITATIONS: F 9:30-10:45AM (as assigned)

Instructor: Charles L. Davis II (charles.davis@uncc.edu)

COURSE DESCRIPTION: This course is designed to provide professional architecture students with a cultural history of modern architecture. Considering history from this perspective requires one to look beyond the explicit intentions of a single designer to examine the broad range of factors that influenced the creation, dissemination, and popular reception of modern architecture. These factors included the social values that predominated in each region of the world, the political and economic function of building projects, and the conflicting representations of architecture that existed in each phase of modernization. Modern architecture may have originated in European countries, but it quickly spread to American, Far Eastern, and Colonial territories. This historical pattern often challenged most European architects’ social and cultural assumptions about the purpose of design. To better outline the global reach of modern architecture, this course examines the work of both Western and non-Western architects in the nineteenth and twentieth century.

Another goal of this course is to prepare professional architecture students to understand the ideological function of history in architectural education. History, like all other aspects of architectural education, implicitly communicates certain values about professional culture. The historical figures we celebrate in class inevitably create a mental image of the architect in each students mind. In the past, this celebration was reserved for the heroes of Western architecture, as evidenced with titles such as David Watkins textbook *The History of Western Architecture* (1986). In Watkins’ text, the image of the professional architect was largely of European origin, he was male, and heterosexual; all of these characteristics fit the stereotypes of European and American culture. Today, however, we recognize that the political and economic dominance of ‘the West’ no longer exists in isolation. We now live in a global society that is becoming more and more integrated everyday. This reality places new pressures upon future architects: not only will they be asked to serve a more diverse public, but they will be asked to accommodate the diverse peoples who now fill their ranks. Learning to identify the assumptions of Western history, and to move beyond them in the present, will prove invaluable for those wishing to create designs within a global context.