

## 48634 “Architectural Theory” Course Description -- F’21 -- Prof. Kai Gutschow

This graduate seminar starts with the conviction that Architecture is not only buildings, technology, form, program, environment, or space... but also culturally constructed discourse and ideas. Architecture is concepts and meanings, inequality driver and social justice machine, economic, ecological, and political change-agent, and above all debate: or theory.

The course will begin with the fundamental questions: What is theory in architecture today? How has our understanding of architecture and theory evolved historically to get to this point? What are the most important issues being discussed in the profession, discipline, and academia today? How does architectural thinking connect to the pressing social, political and scientific agendas and challenges of our day? How will theory continue to transform into the 21st century? Students will discover how architectural ideas evolve and reoccur, and even the most radical contemporary ideas have roots and histories.

The seminar will cover a variety of topics that vary from year to year to acknowledge the dynamic nature of the program, profession, environment, and global context. Building on the SoA’s “Race & Inclusion” Pedagogy of the last year and the new “Design Ethics” focus of the School, this seminar will focus on alternative ways to practice architecture, on issues of social justice in the community, on questions of diversity, equity, and inclusion in the profession and the environments we help imagine for people.

The work of the seminar will focus on readings, weekly presentations and discussions about the sources. For additional units, students may elect to do a research paper on a theoretical aspect of architecture that connects to the co-requisite course “Situating Research” and might lead to a thesis or grant proposal.

