

Course Syllabus

The “Architecture as Concept” seminar takes as its starting hypothesis that there is no architecture without a concept, and that concepts are what differentiate architecture from mere building. It will attempt to demonstrate that the most important works of architecture in any given period are the ones with the strongest concept or idea rather than simply those with the most striking form or shape.

We will discuss one hundred projects or buildings and city plans from 1968 to the present, in terms of their ability to mark the history of ideas and concepts in architecture. It will also discuss differences between concepts, “partis”, diagrams and compositions as well as between concepts, percepts and affects.

For each historical moment in the past forty years, we also intend to identify one or several major concepts that have either become out of date (“against”) or are still relevant today (“for”), as measured in relation to today’s in moral, ideological, economic, or formal standards. We will question whether after modernism and post-modernism, we are witnessing a phase of ‘hypermodernism’ or modern iconism.

Students will be required to make in-class presentations and write a final research paper. Class sessions will be focused around presentations and discussions of weekly readings and occasional contributions by invited guests.