

# Course Syllabus

[Jump to Today](#)

*Note: This course will be run in parallel with my work at the Guggenheim as the curator of the forthcoming exhibition ["Countryside: Future of the World" \(Links to an external site.\)](#)Links to an external site. with Rem Koolhaas / AMO.*

This seminar is part of an attempt to develop a new architectural canon by a study of the occult, from magic and religion to psychedelics and telepathy. It proceeds from the hypothesis that architecture has an origin, or series of early archetypal forms and functions, that have only very recently become decipherable after millennia of confusion.

Implicit in this approach is the idea that architecture's beginnings have been systematically occulted—which is to say, simply, hidden—allowing architecture history as we know it to grow in a vacuum of verifiability. Amateurs untethered to dominant paradigms of theory have long chipped away at the underlying cosmologies and codes that informed sacred and public architecture, from the pyramids to post-modernism, but it's only after decades of Internet connected sharing, collation, and comparison of this information with the hard data of maps and artifacts and new scientific methods of analyzing them that the hegemony of the Official Story is breaking down.

A new story is emerging in the cracks between architecture history, contemporary science and technology, and the reemergence of the practice of magic in plain sight. It is a conspiratorial counter-history that you won't read about in architecture discourse because it was constructed under the very veil that architecture discourse provided. We will piece together this story as a codex to unlock mysteries hidden in architecture past and present that have lessons for our contemporary crises of climate and authority.

This story requires turning most of what you think you know upside down. It takes place down the rabbit hole of anomalous events and impossible evidence. It is built on a science of telepathy and psychokinesis, the acrobatics of mind recently verified by science. It traces the connection between cave art and psychedelics and CIA mind control programs to Burning Man and Elon Musk's rockets and Lana Del Rey's music videos and Instagram trends. It incorporates quantum mechanics and artificial intelligence into a new rendering of ancient cosmologies. It passes through the darkness of eugenics and neo-monarchism into decentralized currencies like Bitcoin and conspiracy theories of aliens and UFOs. Ultimately, you will be given a wide spectrum of informational contraband from the front lines of contemporary culture with which to construct your own metaphysics by recontextualizing architecture and the meaning of the term "architect" for your own practice.

## **Syllabus Note**

This seminar is a constant evolution of what I think are the most interesting insights from my own ongoing research. The syllabus is always a work in progress, shaped first by me then shaped in concert with the students once the semester starts. You can view where we left off last year at this link: <https://github.com/troyth/age-of-the-architect> (Links to an external site.)[Links to an external site.](#)

I've begun to flesh out the Fall 2018 syllabus here, but it will likely be updated again before class starts: <https://github.com/troyth/age-of-the-architect/blob/2018/README.md> (Links to an external site.)[Links to an external site.](#)

## Age of the Architect

---

Graduate seminar at Columbia University (Fall 2018). Listings at [GSAPP](#), [university directory](#), and [student courseworks](#).

*Note: I am using Github because this syllabus will be updated regularly. Changes will be reflected in the [commit logs](#).*



## Syllabus [v.1.0](#)

---

This class is part of an attempt to develop a new architectural canon by a study of the occult. It proceeds from the hypothesis that architecture has an origin, or series of early archetypal forms and functions, that have only very recently become decipherable after millennia of confusion.

Implicit in this approach is the idea that architecture's beginnings have been systematically occulted—which is to say, hidden—allowing architecture history as we know it to grow in a vacuum of verifiability. Amateurs untethered to dominant paradigms of theory have long chipped away at the underlying cosmologies and codes that informed sacred and public architecture, from the pyramids to post-modernism, but it's only after decades of Internet connected sharing, collation, and comparison of this information with the hard data of maps and artifacts and new scientific methods of analyzing them that the hegemony of the Official Story is breaking down.

A new story is emerging in the cracks between architecture history, contemporary science and technology, and the reemergence of the practice of magic in plain sight. It is a conspiratorial counterhistory that you won't read about in architecture discourse because it was constructed under the very veil that architecture discourse provided. We will piece together this story as a codex to unlock mysteries hidden in architecture past and present that have lessons for our contemporary crises of climate and authority.

This story requires turning most of what you think you know upside down. It takes place down the rabbit hole of anomalous events and impossible evidence. It is built on a science of telepathy and psychokinesis, the acrobatics of mind recently verified by science. It traces the connection between cave art and psychedelics and CIA mind control programs to Burning Man and Elon Musk's rockets. It incorporates quantum mechanics and artificial intelligence into a new rendering of ancient cosmologies. It passes through the darkness of eugenics and neo-monarchism into decentralized currencies like Bitcoin and conspiracy theories of aliens and UFOs. Ultimately, you will be given a wide spectrum of informational contraband from which to construct your own metaphysics to recontextualize architecture and the meaning of the term "architect" for your own practice.

### *Premise*

The purpose of this course is to end the semester with each student having a viable definition of "architect." It begins from the premise that "architect" is unable to be defined in abstract, that an absolute architecture is not possible. Rather, to define "architect" we must begin with a metaphysical frame. This course will present a particular cosmology as a starting point for each student to branch off into their own. We will encounter it through occult ideas, contemporary philosophy, and digital culture, and challenge it with bleeding edge science.

## *Deliverables*

You will collectively develop a *Playbook of Inclusions*, a catalogue of various architecture-specific techniques for stretching reality to be more inclusive of experiences outside of Official Reality.

## *Methodology*

We will update our methodology this year. See [here](#) for a breakdown from last year.

Each class will be split into two parts: discussion and lecture. The lectures will provide a lens for making sense of the readings in a new way. The texts will be architecture writings, canonical and fringe, new and old, well-known and obscure. The objective will be to collectively decipher architecture history by borrowing theoretical frameworks from very recent new discoveries in a myriad of fields, from particle physics and the ethics of artificial intelligence to occult literature and declassified CIA projects.

## *Bibliography*

The lectures will introduce ideas from [this ever-growing long list](#) of books, manifestoes, essays, papers, reports, articles, videos, and social media posts. The readings will come from architecture discourse to be determined.

## Schedule

---

### Week 1

#### *Lecture: The Dominant of Wider Inclusions*

Venkat Rao's Great Weirding; Shel Drake's *The Science Delusion*; NASA's EM Drive, Hawking's model-dependent reality, the opioid crisis; witchcraft in contemporary culture; NDE research, UVA's reincarnation science; Charles Fort's Dominant of Wider Inclusions and Ian Cheng's portal art...

## Week 2

### *Lecture: Real Magic*

Dean Radin's consciousness research on the scientific proof of telepathy/precognition, psychokinesis, and theurgy; psi spies from Project Stargate and Stanford Research Institute; Kahneman's systems of thinking, Haidt's moral foundations theory, Hanson and Simmler's elephant in the room, the Jungian archetypal stories of alt-right whisperer, Jordan Peterson; the limits of artificial intelligence; Stephen Skinner's conjuring of crows, Aleister Crowley's Egyptian rite, Josephine McCarthy's Quareia, Peter Carroll's chaos magic, K-Hole, sigil magic, *War of Witches*; Catland and Rachel Rose's alchemical art...

### *Readings*

- Wren

## Week 3

### *Lecture: The Chemical Muse*

Psychedelics and entheogens in the paleolithic, neolithic, and ancient/classical world around the world; Terrence McKenna's stoned apes, aquatic apes, pig-chimps, CRISPR-CAS9 and contemporary chimeras; Ruck's *Road to Eleusis* and Plato's cave; Neanderthal cave art and cave architecture; shamanism; contemporary neuroscience of ayahuasca, DMT, LSD, psilocybin; synthetics, molly, Berghain, and rave culture; Suicide Club, Cacophony Society, the Entheogen Review, Erowid; Bruce Rimmel's *The Shimmer Within*; Pablo Amaringo's art...

### *Readings*

- selections from Plato's *Republic* and *Statesman*
- Reyner Banham

## Week 4

### *Lecture: Star.Ships*

Using architecture as a cipher to unlock prehistory through stone circles and pyramids from Egypt to Indonesia to the Yucatan to Turkey and Sudan; channeled texts from RA; diffusionism versus convergent evolution; David Rohl's *New Chronology of Egypt*; cataclysmism versus uniformitarianism; psychotropics; alt-archaeologists; history of religion; Witzel's comparative mythology; Eduardo Kohn's *runa puma*; the history of Christianity; Frances Yates's Hermeticism; celebrity in the 18th century; Elizabeth Gilbert's *Big Magic*, Vasari's *Lives of the Artists*, Michelangelo's art...

### *Readings*

- Brophy and Bauval's *Imhotep*
- Rem Koolhaas, *Delirious New York*
- selections from George L. Hersey, *Promethean Palaces*

## Week 5

### *Lecture: Cosmic Womb*

Astrobiological accounts of the panspermic origins of DNA in distant galaxies brought to earth through cometary vectors as mainstream science is only beginning to admit; Orion Correlation Hypothesis; extinct meteorites; the Big Bang and the inflation problem; from the closed system obsessions of the cybernetic cipher to the open system dynamics of complexity science; Jenna Sutela's art...

### *Readings*

- Leonidov and Federov (cosmic task)

## Week 6

### *Lecture: The Cosmic Hologram*

Tying it all together into a an emerging cosmological theory of everything from the frontiers of science that places consciousness at the base of reality; Jude Currivan and Klee Irwin; pixelation and the E8 crystal; information theory and Zipf's law; 12 stand DNA...

### *Readings*

- Meier's essay on cybernetics (how wrong he was)
- Mark Wigley, "Network Fever"

## Week 7

### *Lecture: Dark Enlightenment*

The dark anti-democratic politics of Silicon Valley and alt-right meme magic and their origins in the hyperstition of Ccru's Nick Land and Sadie Plant and their contemporary clash with the New Age counterculture at Burning Man; Cthulhu, techno-paganism, *Techgnosis*, Autonomatrix, Lovecraft, PKD, rave culture; cyberpunk, hackers, cryptoanarchy, Julian Assange's definition of conspiracy, Kevin Kelly's computational metaphor; Amy Ireland's Black Circuit; the Basilisk; Daniel Keller's *Seasteaders*; Ed Fornieles's art...

### *Readings*

- Denise Scott Brown, "Laughing Not to Cry"
- Urbit

## Week 8 (Midterm)

### *Lecture: Secret Body (TBD)*

Jeff Kripal's comparative religious studies and the role of sexuality in spirituality; Nathaniel Mellors's artwork, "Progressive Rocks"

## *Presentations*

Students will give short presentations of their final deliverables for feedback.

## Week 9

### *Lecture: Behold a Pale Horse*

The back story on the contemporary conspiracy theory nexus of Alex Jones, Waco and the American militia movement, Evangelical eschatology, white Christian identarianism, Nazis and American intelligence; William Cooper, Robert Anton Wilson, Jim Marrs; SRA, Operation Paperclip, MKULTRA, initiation; limited hangouts, *Stranger Things*, and Chris Knowles; central banking, economic hitmen, the petrodollar, the Godfather and Narcodollars, the Council on Foreign Relations and Norman Dodd's revelations...

### *Readings*

- Wittkower, *Principles of Architecture in the Age of Humanism*

## Week 10

### *Lecture: Alien Agenda or Secret Body (TBD)*

Roswell, Whitley Strieber's *Communion*, types of aliens and gods and demons and spirits, Jeff Kripal's comparative religious studies, Jaques Vallée's UFO control theory, Tom DeLonge's *To the Stars... Academy*; Ingo Swann's *Penetration*, Puharich's seance; Duchamp's art...

### *Readings*

- Alberti

## Week 11: The Secret History of the World

Putting it all together using Mark Booth's account of the lineage of esoteric knowledge from classical Mystery schools to contemporary secret societies...

### *Readings*

- The RA Material

## Week 12

### *Lecture: The Pleiadian Agenda*

Putting it all together with Barbara Hand Clow's "cosmic party"; Madame Blavatsky's Theosophy, Hilla Rebay, Frank Lloyd and the Guggenheim as a "temple of spirit"; Kandinsky's art and Hilma af Klimt's channeled art...

### *Readings*

- Vitruvius

## Week 13

### *Short Lecture: Cosmotechnics*

How to really learn from the East: Hui's cosmotechnics, quantum computing and encryption, *The Three Body Problem*; reenchanting techné with cosmological awareness toward a neo-Hermetic architecture in our moment of Heideggerian flickering.

### *Presentations*

Students will give short presentations of their final deliverables for feedback.