



# Architecture (ARCH) 420

## Contemporary Architectural Theory and Research (Revision 1)

**Status:**

Replaced with new revision, see the [course listing](#) for the current revision

**Delivery mode:**

Individualized study online with eText

**Credits:**

3

**Area of study:**

Applied Study

**Prerequisites:**

ARCH 330

**Precluded:**

None

**Challenge:**

ARCH 420 is not available for challenge.

**Faculty:**

[Faculty of Science and Technology](#)

**Notes:**

*ARCH 420: Contemporary Architectural Theory and Research* is intended for students enrolled in the BSc (Architecture) program at the RAIC Centre for Architecture at Athabasca University. For those students interested in pursuing a career as a registered architect, this course also

## Overview

*Architecture 420: Contemporary Architectural Theory and Research* examines contemporary architectural theory and practice from the late 1960s to the present. A number of issues and values will be explored through theoretical essays, critical writings and lecture presentations that expose the diversity of contemporary architectural thought and practices.

The first part of the course explores opposing positions and values that coexist within various time frames in both local and global contexts. Course learning activities and assignments are designed to help students understand the theoretical underpinnings that inform and/or explain architectural practices. The ability to apply this knowledge in articulating an architectural proposal with clear personal positioning is essential for students entering graduate level studies.

## Outline

- Unit 1: Research
- Unit 2: Critique of Modernism
- Unit 3: The Rise of Post-modern Theory 1969–1979
- Unit 4: Pluralism of Thought – the 1980s
- Unit 5: Millennial Excursions - 1990s and beyond
- Unit 6: The Research Project and Thesis Preparation

## Learning outcomes

Throughout this course (and beyond) you will be called upon to observe the built environment around you. The built fabric of your city or town is

composed of buildings and spaces produced over a long period of time. When you look at contemporary architecture, that which was built beyond the 1960s, what differentiates it from architecture of the past?

What are the ideas and values embodied in architecture of a past period that make it still valuable today in your community? What are the ideas and values underlying what we are building today that will ensure significance and relevance fifty years from now?

As you move through the course readings and videos you will be confronted with a dazzling array of ideas and thoughts about contemporary architecture, made all the more difficult to sort out without the distillation and clarity that occurs with the passage of time. As you look at contemporary architecture, ask yourself where you stand relative to those ideas as you perceive them. How would you approach the different design problems if you had been given the mandate?

You will have to formulate a problem of your choice, a design or technical issue that would sustain your interest and could be relevant for the community around you, in order to develop a research proposal at the end of the course. While the subject might change later on, it's the thinking process that you will develop throughout the course that will guide you in formulating and situating the project. Make it a reflection of you, your values and ideals!


## Evaluation

To **receive credit**  for Architecture 420 students must achieve a minimum composite course grade of **C+(67 percent)**  or greater.

The chart below indicates the assignments for credit and their weighting toward your final grade:

<b>Activity</b>	<b>Weight</b>
Assignment 1: Research Journal framework and Unit 1 responses	10%
Assignment 2: Reading notes for units 2–5 inclusive	10%


<b>Activity</b>	<b>Weight</b>
Assignment 3a: Journal evaluation at units 2 and 3	10%
Assignment 3b: Journal evaluation at units 4 and 5	10%
Assignment 4: Fiches for units 2 to 5	20%
Assignment 5: Project Proposal	40%
<b>Total</b>	<b>100%</b>


To learn more about assignments and examinations, please refer to Athabasca University's [online Calendar](#) .


Students who wish to be certified by the Canadian Architectural Certification Board must achieve and maintain a final grade point average of 2.3 or greater.

## Materials



Mallgrave, H. F., & Goodman, D. (2011). *An Introduction to Architectural Theory: 1968 to the Present*. Wiley-Blackwell.  (eText)

Borden, I., & Rüedi Ray, K. (2014). *The Dissertation: An Architecture Student's Handbook* (3rd ed.). Routledge. (eBook)  (Print)

Mallgrave, H. F., & Contandriopoulos, C. (Eds.). (2008). *Architectural Theory: Volume II: An Anthology from 1871–2005*. Blackwell.  (Print)

Ott, E. (2011). *Decoding Theoryspeak: An Illustrated Guide to Architectural Theory*. Routledge. (eBook)  (Print)

## eText

Registration in this course includes an electronic textbook. For more information on [electronic textbooks](#) , please refer to our [eText Initiative site](#) .

## Other Materials

**Course Home Page** (online): The course home page houses all the online components of your course.

**Study Schedule** (online): The study schedule on your course home page includes the Course Information, the six units of the Study Guide, links to the online readings, and links to your assignments.





**Course Information** (online): The Course Information provides specific information about how to proceed through the course. Read the Course Information carefully before you begin reading the Study Guide.

**Study Guide** (online): The Study Guide units are embedded in the Study Schedule on the course home page.

**Assignments** (online): The assignments are on the course home page, along with helpful instructions.

**Forms:** Forms you may need are available through the [myAU](#)  portal.

## Important links

- > [Academic advising](#) 
- > [Program planning](#) 
- > [Request assistance](#) 
- > [Support services](#) 

Athabasca University reserves the right to amend course outlines occasionally and without notice. Courses offered by other delivery methods may vary from their individualized study counterparts.

*Updated August 28, 2024*

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