

# Post-war history of construction and architecture

## Titulaire

Rika DEVOS (Coordonnateur)

## Mnémonique du cours

ARCH-H406

## Crédits ECTS

5 crédits

## Langue(s) d'enseignement

Anglais

## Période du cours

Deuxième quadrimestre

## Campus

Solbosch et Hors campus ULB

## Contenu du cours

"Post-war history of construction and architecture" expands on current tendencies, selected themes and critical concepts prevalent in the disciplines dealing with post-World War II construction and architecture (period 1940-1991). The course offers an in-depth discussion of themes like: wartime construction and migration; styles and currents; historiography; technology and historical tools; architecture and technology in political discourse (Cold War context); (post-)colonialism; historical concepts on style and discourse, but also on teamwork, comfort, lightweight building, building systems, efficiency, scarcity, etc. The selection of themes can change per annum.

A major part of the course deals with the training in research in this field through various exercises: reading, discussion, research, presentation, writing. Students are introduced to scientific research and writing, including the use of tools for online research, methods of referencing and writing aids.

"Post-war history of construction and architecture" is an advanced history course. It builds on prerequisites acquired in BA level courses on history of modern architecture, theory of architecture (twentieth century) and architecture studio. As advanced history course, it invites students to critically assess the facts and tendencies of the histories of construction and architecture together, to look also beyond those facts and to consider critically disciplinary, technological, socio-economic and political contexts, as well as methodological choices.

## Objectifs (et/ou acquis d'apprentissages spécifiques)

The course confronts students with the overlapping histories of architecture and construction of the second half of the twentieth century (1940-1991) and informs them on the historiographical practices of both fields. Through literature research, reading,

discussion and writing, the course introduces students to research in this field.

As such, the course aims:

(1) at offering general knowledge on relevant historical facts, actors, buildings, technologies, tendencies and practices, and on their complex relations and societal impact as covered in international architecture and construction history. These historical facts are assessed on a thematic basis;

(2) at developing a critical understanding of contemporary historiography and research in the disciplines of construction and architecture history (period 1940-1991);

(3) at training students (in small groups) in scientific research, reading and writing, based largely on a delineated, but broad corpus of primary texts.

On completion of this module students:

- 1 critically understand the major historical themes in the overlap between architecture and construction history during the long post-war period;
- 2 can identify and situate in time and discourse the facts, actors, etc. treated in this course and those encountered in related (new) literature;
- 3 can critically interconnect themes, facts, actors, etc. in the histories of architecture and construction and relate them to societal events, evolutions and issues;
- 4 have gained insight in selected, current topics and research methods in the disciplines of history of construction and architecture. They are able to engage in research activities such as critical reading, bibliographic research (journals, books, databases and when applicable: archives) and writing;
- 5 can assess and analyse a new, related topic in post-war construction and architecture history and situate it in the wider context of the course.

## Pré-requis et co-requis

### Connaissances et compétences pré-requis

BA level course on architecture history, 20th century (including interwar modernism)

BA level course on building technology or history of construction, 20th century

Basic architecture skills (reading drawings), basic knowledge of construction materials, English

## Méthodes d'enseignement et activités d'apprentissages

Ex cathedra teaching (about 10 sessions), by the titular and/or guests, on campus or online.

Autonomous study based on research (online and in libraries) and reading, followed by free discussion and coaching (lecturer and peers).

Exercises on online information retrieval and text analysis.  
Collective critical reading and discussion of texts (in groups).  
Scientific writing with coaching (in group, by lecturer) and peer review.

Presentations by students (in group).

All course materials are available on the Université Virtuelle platform (UV). Students need to get access to the platform (no exceptions) before the second class.

On the UV you will find <https://uv.ulb.ac.be>:

- > slides shown in class (all classes)
- > syllabus
- > further documentation (texts, projects)
- > relevant links to websites
- > all documentation for all exercices
- > submission modules for all exercices
- > exam information

## Contribution au profil d'enseignement

This teaching unit contributes to the following competences:

- > conceive, plan and execute a research project, based on an analysis of its objectives, existing knowledge and the relevant literature, with attention to innovation and valorisation in industry and society
- > correctly report on research or design results in the form of a technical report or in the form of a scientific paper
- > present and defend results in a scientifically sound way, using contemporary communication tools, for a national as well as for an international professional or lay audience
- > collaborate in a (multidisciplinary) team
- > a creative, problem-solving, result-driven and evidence-based attitude, aiming at innovation and applicability in industry and society
- > a critical attitude towards one's own results and those of others
- > consciousness of the ethical, social, environmental and economic context of his/her work and strives for sustainable solutions to engineering problems including safety and quality assurance aspects
- > the flexibility and adaptability to work in an international and/or intercultural context
- > architectural sciences and sustainable design methods and theories with the specificity of their application to complex architectural and urban design projects
- > critically analyse and reflect on the historical and theoretical context of architectural and urban projects

## Références, bibliographie et lectures recommandées

AAVV, *Modern Architecture in History* (book series). London: Reaktion books, 2005-ongoing.

ADDIS, Bill. *Building: 3000 years of design engineering and construction*. London: Phaidon, 2007

BANHAM, Reyner, *The architecture of the well-tempered environment*. London: Architectural press, 1969

BRAHAM, William W. & Jonathan A. HALE. *Rethinking Technology. A Reader in Architectural Theory*. New York: Routledge, 2007

COHEN, Jean-Louis. *The Future of Architecture. Since 1889. A Worldwide History*. London: Phaidon, 2011.

CURTIS, William J. *Modern architecture since 1900*. London: Phaidon, 1982.

WILLIAMS GOLDHAGEN, Sarah & Réjean LEGAULT, eds. *Anxious Modernisms. Experimentation in Postwar Architectural Culture*. Montreal/Cambridge: CCA/MIT Press, 2000.

FANELLI, Giovanni and Roberto GARGIANI, *Histoire de l'architecture moderne. Structure et revêtement*. Lausanne: Presses polytechniques et universitaires romandes, 2008.

FRAMPTON, Kenneth. *Studies in tectonic culture: the poetics of construction in nineteenth and twentieth century architecture*. Chicago: Graham foundation for advanced studies in the fine arts, 1995.

GARGIANI, Roberto, ed. *L'architrave, le plancher, la plateforme. Nouvelle histoire de la construction*. Lausanne : Presses polytechniques et universitaires romandes, 2012.

PICON, Antoine, ed. *L'art de l'ingénieur: constructeur, entrepreneur, inventeur*. Paris: Le Moniteur, 1997

## Support(s) de cours

Syllabus et Université virtuelle

## Autres renseignements

### Lieu(x) d'enseignement

Solbosch et Hors campus ULB

### Contact(s)

Email for appointments: [Rika.Devos@ulb.be](mailto:Rika.Devos@ulb.be)

Service BATir : Av. Buyl, 87, bâtiment C, 5ième étage.

Tél: 02/650 65 53

## Méthode(s) d'évaluation

Autre, Examen oral, Présentation orale, Travail de groupe et Rapport écrit

### Examen oral

Question ouverte à réponse courte, Question visuelle et Question ouverte à développement long

Examen avec préparation

### Méthode(s) d'évaluation (complément)

Students are evaluated on the basis of various assignments, with intermediate submissions. The final, major assignment is the writing of a scientific paper, to be presented in the last session. Students also engage in a peer review procedure during this process. The exercises and paper are completed in group and graded as group work.

Students are also evaluated on the course content by oral examination.

## Construction de la note (en ce compris, la pondération des notes partielles)

The final grade is composed based on the following categories:

- > various assignments (reading, writing, research, discussion, presentation) and a final scientific paper (50 %)
- > oral exam on theory, exercices and paper (50 %)

If the student does not pass the total, both the paper and the oral exam have to be re-done. Students who wish to participate in the second session will need to contact the professor early July (not August) to get the details of the assignment. Only students who handed in the assignment for the second session can take the oral exam.

### Langue(s) d'évaluation principale(s)

Anglais

## Programmes

### Programmes proposant ce cours à l'école polytechnique de Bruxelles

MA-IRAR | **Master : ingénieur civil architecte** | finalité Spécialisée/  
bloc 1

### Programmes proposant ce cours à la faculté des Sciences

MA-GEOG | **Master en sciences géographiques, orientation générale** | finalité Urban studies/bloc 1 et finalité Urban studies/bloc 2

