

The Bauhaus emerged in Germany amid the revolutionary turmoil in 1919, during the transition from monarchy to republic. After the catastrophe of World War I, the initiators of the school saw the need to break with tradition; the preceding era of the German Empire with its decades of nationalistic policy, laissez-faire capitalism, and grandiose historicism had led to a dead end. What was needed was a fresh start in every respect. By returning to basic forms and colors as well as to the spirit of the Gothic era, one sought to set the stage for a kind of “zero hour”. At any rate the Bauhaus arose out of a vehement rejection of the immediate past.

And it met with resistance just as quickly. Its founding was intensely opposed by groups on the right, and from the outset the school was marked by conflicts both external and internal.....

*Phillip Oswalt
Bauhaus Conflicts, 1919-2009
Controversies and Counterparts*

“Architecture and Politics: The Bauhaus and The Aesthetics Of Globalization”

(PSCI 5008/PSCI 4002/ LDAR 6686)



Though its actual existence was short-lived, the Bauhaus is still one of the most influential movements within the realm of art, design, and architecture. In the brevity of its life, the school crystallized arguments for the arts and architecture that to this day still serve as foundational concepts for arguments involving the role of the arts and architecture within our current rapidly globalizing society. Through powerful artistic work, imagery, and discourse such as the international style in architecture as well revolutionary ideas in a myriad of other disciplines ranging from theater, photography, and furniture design, the Bauhaus has continually caught the revolutionary imagination of the left/modernism and continually drawn the “Ire” of the right and more traditional views concerning the arts. The contention surrounding its oft-mythological status with modernists and the scornful attitude directed towards its legacy by traditionalists has survived the actual existence of the school for almost eight decades. Outside of the political connotations of its program and curriculum it has been equally influential due to the innovative work of its faculty, a number of which became quite influential architects/artists in their respective disciplines ranging from painting/sculpture to architecture/photography.

Though the Bauhaus was only in existence for approximately 13 years, the impact of its legacy has been unparalleled within the arts and highly influential within social and political discourse. Part of the reason for its enduring legacy is that the Bauhaus articulated a fairly consistent vision relating to the power of the collaborative artist activity to potentially transform modern democratic societies. This vision ran so counter aesthetically and politically to the “blood and Soil” traditionalist rhetoric expounded by National socialists in Hitler’s rise to power that an inevitable collision between these divergent ideals forced the permanent closure of the school by the Nazi’s in 1933 and the forced exile of many of its talented and influential faculty. Ironically, it was this forced exile that seemed to have ensured the Bauhaus’s enduring legacy especially in North and South America. Its existence temporally within the political chaos between the two great world wars and its forward-thinking revolutionary engagement with many of the technologies that are still transforming our contemporary globalized lives today makes its ideas and history rich in material to construct interpretative “frames” of investigation regarding globalization from the political perspective as well. The central question that the Bauhaus raised involved seeking to define the potential societal role of the artistic endeavour as an agency for positive social change. This line of questioning still resonates in our rapidly globalizing world today. Therefore, the course will explore the history, legacy, and foundational concepts of the Bauhaus, as well as its continued relevance to the social and political climate of today.

In the fulfillment of the quest to understand this highly influential institution, this course will examine the ideals and political context of the school’s origins during World War I and the German Revolution through its contentious development during the Weimar republic that culminated in its eventual demise at the hands of the National

Socialists. It will examine the conceptual ideals and fundamental rationale behind its innovative and integrative curriculum. A cross section of the work of its most influential architects such as Walter Gropius, Hannes Meyer, and Mies Van de Rohe, as well as artists and designers such as Paul Klee, Moholy-Nagy, Herbert Bayer, and Oskar Schlemmer will also be investigated to comprehend how their aesthetics, social ideas and personalities contributed to its highly charged intellectual atmosphere. Within this context, we will also explore some of the external and internal conflicts that plagued its existence, infected its legacy, and were openly propagated by some of the “larger than life” creative personalities that were involved. Finally, the course will conclude with material that explores the legacy of the Bauhaus and its role in shaping the processes of rapid globalization that exemplified the latter half of the twentieth century and still inspire us to transform our lives to this day.

Within this course, students will be responsible for independent work, as well as intensive reading, writing, and research as well as be actively engaged in all discussion formats on canvas and field trips in Berlin and Dessau.

Hybrid Course:

This course is a Hybrid Course consisting of both in-person and online class formats. It will be expected that attendance and participation by students will occur in both venues. Canvas will be primarily used to offer support materials, assignments, discussions and other types of collaborative opportunities. Online comments and assignments must be formatted and labeled properly as well as be uploaded to Canvas by the date and time stipulated in each assignment or announcement. The face to face portion of the course will occur in Berlin and Dessau in a series of “field trips/site visits” during March and April. During the F2F sessions in Berlin, the class will meet briefly at the Ecological Institute to receive logistical information for the day’s trip and then leave together as a group for travel to the sites.

Course Material Structure:

Canvas Modules:

01 BACKGROUND: POLITICS, SPACE, AND ARCHITECTURE/THE BAUHAUS & GLOBALIZATION

Module 01: Foundational/general concepts: politics, space, and architecture

Module 02: What was the Bauhaus/why was it important? (short history)

02 BACKGROUND II: FOUNDATIONAL CONCEPTS/CONTEXT OF THE BAUHAUS

Module 03: Gropius’s vision/societal goals of the Bauhaus

Module 04: Context/curriculum/specific educational goals

03 BAUHAUS: CENTRAL FIGURES/POLITICS AT THE BAUHAUS/ DISCIPLINES/ARTISTS/FACULTY

Module 05: Daily life/internal politics/pedagogical clashes

Module 06: Specific disciplines & artists represented

04 BAUHAUS: IMPACT & LEGACY

Module 07: Closing the Bauhaus: A Clash of Cultural Visions

Module 08: Legacy/continued & future global influence (Its importance today)

05 FINAL PROJECT: PAPER ASSIGNMENT

ASSIGNMENT: Detailed discussion at Ecological institute /Berlin (TBD)

F2F Course Meetings (Berlin/Dessau):

The face to face portion of the course will unfold in a series of site visits to historically significant sites in Berlin and Dessau related to either the Bauhaus or the activities of the Nazis. They will take place during the end of March and the beginning of April. Logistical information for site visits will be handed out and discussed in the

meetings held at the Ecological Institute before departure to each site visit. On the dates below, these sites will be visited:

03/18/19: museum für gestaltung: b a u h a u s - a r c h i v

03/19/19: Jewish Museum/Memorial to the Murdered Jews of Europe (The Holocaust Memorial)

03/25/19: Waldsiedlung Zehlendorf or Onkel Toms Hütte (Bruno Taut's "Other Estate") & Waldsiedlung Krumme Lanke (SS housing)

03/26/19: "Topography of Terror" (Topographie des Terrors)/Gropius Bau (/en/museums/martin-gropius-bau/)

04/02/19: Bauhaus: Dessau

04/03/19: Bauhaus: Dessau

Please Note: This is a tentative schedule and is subject to change

Grading:

Question and summary answer sheets (1-2 page/short papers/4 total) – 40%

Discussion Participation/short written description of sites visited in Dessau and Berlin- 10%

Final Presentation/Paper – 50%

Participation Evaluation:

On Canvas, readings and films will be assigned for the completion of each module. The organization of the material contains four sections broken into two modules each for a total of eight modules. The participation requirement for the course will be evaluated in two ways: at the completion of each module, students will submit a one-page summary of the course material. It should be in a "question posed/answer provided" format derived exclusively from course material presented within each module. In other words, each student will pose 3-5 questions from the material covered in the module and then provide a paragraph or two that answers the questions by summarizing and directly referencing the material covered in the relevant module. These sheets will be submitted for evaluation via Canvas.

Final Presentation/Paper:

The main project for the course will be a written paper and power point presentation with visuals on some aspect of the Bauhaus or its legacy as chosen and defined by each student. A detailed description involving the final project will be released just before the instructor's arrival in Berlin so it can be discussed and students can ask specific questions of the instructor concerning this project.

Required Texts/Visual Material:

Texts, Videos, etc., and their acquisition for the course will be outlined throughout the semester by the instructor as needed.

Policies, Rules, And Regulations:

Students with Disabilities

Students with disabilities who want academic accommodations must register with Disability Resources and Services (DRS), 177 Arts Building, 303-556-3450, TTY 303-556-4766, FAX 303-556-2074. DRS requires students to provide current and adequate documentation of their disabilities. Once a student has registered with DRS, DRS will review the documentation and assess the student's request for academic accommodations in light of the documentation. DRS will then provide the student with a letter indicating which academic accommodations have been approved. Once you provide me with a copy of DRS's letter, I will be happy to provide those accommodations DRS has approved.

Absences, Tardiness, Quizzes and Examinations, and Homework

Except for documented health or disability reasons, I will not accept excuses for absences, tardiness, missed examinations, or homework not submitted. Documentation of disability or health related issues must be provided to me and to Disability Resources and Services, 177 Arts Building, 303-556-3450, TTY 303-556-4766, FAX 303-556-2074, no later than 72 hours past the missed class time.

Classes begin and end on time. (1) absence will be allowed before an academic penalty of (one half) (one) grade reduction is imposed. If you are late to class and/or leave class early (2) times, an academic penalty of (one half) (one) grade reduction will be imposed. Homework, papers, projects, or any other required assignments that are turned in late will receive (one half) (one) grade reduction for every day they are late. Any student who does not participate in pin-ups/reviews, misses quizzes and/or examinations or fails to turn in homework and/or papers will receive either a zero (0) or an F for the work missed.

Returning Papers, Quizzes, and Examinations

Papers, quizzes, and examinations will be distributed via canvas.

Plagiarism

Students are expected to know, understand, and comply with the ethical standards of the university, including rules against plagiarism. Plagiarism is the use of another person's ideas or words without acknowledgement. The incorporation of another person's work into yours requires appropriate identifications and acknowledgement. The following are considered to be forms of plagiarism when the source is not noted: word-for-word copying of another person's ideas or words; the "mosaic" (interspersing your own words here and there while, in essence, copying another's work); the paraphrase (the rewriting of another's work, while still using their basic ideas or theories); fabrication (inventing sources); submission of another's work as your own; and neglecting quotation marks when including direct quotes. All assigned work, including drawings and models must be the individual product of each student. Collaborative work must be credited to all participants.

Classroom Decorum

The following ground rules apply to all students and are designed to ensure a classroom environment conducive to learning:

1. Pagers, beepers, cellular telephones, and handheld internet devices must be deactivated before class begins and remain deactivated throughout the entire class period.
2. Please do not bring children to class.
3. Students who engage in disruptive classroom behavior will be reported to the Office of Student Life for appropriate disciplinary action under the UCDenver Code of Student Conduct and, when appropriate, to the Auraria Campus Police for investigation of possible criminal action. The Code of Student Conduct can be found on the UCDenver website, under Office of Student Life and Student Activities. Disruptive behavior includes, but is not limited to, arriving late to class without explanation or apology; leaving class early without explanation or apology; reading a newspaper or magazine; reading a book with no connection to the content of the course; engaging in prolonged private conversations; sleeping in class; eating, drinking, and/or gum chewing; passing notes; being under the influence of drugs or alcohol; harassment or verbal or physical threats to another student or to the instructor; failing to deactivate pagers, beepers, cellular phones, and/or handheld internet devices; bringing children to class.

Intellectual Property Copyright (© Michael Jenson 2019) on this syllabus and all lectures. Students are prohibited from selling, or being paid by any person or commercial firm for taking, notes or recording class lectures without the advance express written permission of the faculty member teaching this course. Exceptions are permitted for students with a disability who are approved in advance by Disability Resources and Services for note taking or tape recording as an academic accommodation.