Georgia Tech Fall 2017
Arch 6350 Theory of Architecture 1
Tues and Thurs 9:30 to 11:00 / Architecture East 309
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About
The aim of Theory 1 is to give students a foundational knowledge of the thought and ideas that have shaped architecture in the recent years. Till the early years of the last century, theory in architecture meant a set of principles that defined correct form-making, and the typical format for presenting such principles was the architectural treatise. With the rise of modernism, faith in the universality of such principles was tested, and theory became associated with a more personal articulation of such principles presented through essays and manifestos. In the period that we will cover beginning with the post-second world war years, theory changed again, becoming concerned less with presenting principles for good design, and more with inquiry into what architecture should or should not do. But the broadening of theory in this sense made the relationship of theory to practice more problematic. What the course will do then, is to help students understand what relationship this kind of theory has had to practice and form-making.

Content
The course will cover major movements and design approaches active in architecture through the twentieth century. Students will also be given an introduction to some broader cultural ideas that directly informed these approaches; these are drawn largely from continental philosophy and from its then intellectually cognate disciplines, including linguistics, anthropology, history, and philosophy of science. Since the number of these approaches is large and their relative relevance still a matter of debate, the focus will be on three underlying sets of questions informing these approaches: questions about the role or purpose of architecture in society; questions about alignment of architectural form to this purpose; and questions about the status of representation and how architects communicate intent. These questions arose specifically with the development of modernity, and remain the best way to connect the very specific concerns of the last century with those of today.

Procedure
The classes will be conducted through a mix of lectures and discussions. Discussions will be based around student presentations. The presentations will be developed in teams and will be charged with addressing the relationship between the theory and form in selected periods. In addition to participating in these presentation teams, students will write a short personal interpretive essay. 30% grades will depend upon participation in discussions; 30% on the presentation, and the remaining 40% on the essay.