

**ARCH 4803/6352/8803 Elective – Spring 2019**  
College of Architecture / Georgia Institute of Technology  
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## **Spring Semester 2019 – On Growth and Form**



This Theory Elective is a combination of aesthetic theory, history, and digital design theory. Generally, the problem with digital design is that it is understood as either fully instrumental or as easy access to complicated forms. In contrast, this series of lectures and discussions we will trace digital design (or generative design) back to its roots in Romanticism. During this period architects and scientists were trying to understand how forms are “grown.” At first only natural forms of plants and animals, but later all forms—*natural and artificial*—were seen as generated by temporal processes. We will see how this idea of growing form becomes part of the aesthetics of the Picturesque and the Gothic Revival, advocated by the brilliant theories of John Ruskin and the beautiful designs of William Morris. Step by step we will move toward *an ecological notion of aesthetics*, which started around the 1770s with the German concept of *Einfühlung* (“feeling-into”) and develop it into a broader notion of a “sympathy of things.”

The elective will partially follow the structure of my 2016 book, *The Sympathy of Things*, published in a revised and expanded edition with Bloomsbury, though the lectures will provide many more references to the aesthetic ideas offered in the book. It is structured in six lecture-weeks (two lectures per week) which are alternated by discussion weeks, where the students present selected readings.

The workload of each student consists of two parts: A) during the semester, a number of Power Point presentations of selected readings that will be the topic of the discussion; and B) at the end of the semester, a written paper (2,500 words) on a chosen topic within the framework of the seminar.

Lars Spuybroek is Professor of Architecture and the author of several books on architecture and digital design. To get a better idea of *The Sympathy of Things*, have a look at my lecture in Austria in 2012, published on YouTube: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CfAg14dhuFs>