

Humanities Seminars Program

Architecture: the Idea of Materials, the Material of Ideas

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Meeting: Wednesdays, 10am-12noon, Dorothy Rubel Room, UA Poetry Center

This seminar aims to elicit attendants' participation in a free-spirited conversation and regain a sense of wonder and intimacy with architecture. The discussion topics will be based on five readings, which are accessible, practical, and poetic. They will offer a generous survey of philosophical and architectural thinking from classical to modern — time is relative — examining the motives and reasons for the making of architecture and the concurrent material consciousness.

1. Feb. 22 *Aristotle for Everybody: difficult thought made easy* *, by Mortimer Adler — reading focus on “Man the Maker,” more specifically on “The Four Causes”: *material, efficient, formal, final*. (p. 39-48)
2. Mar. 1 *Dialogues*, by Paul Valéry — reading focus on “Eupalinos, or The Architect,” a speculative modern version of a classical Socratic dialogue. (p. 65-150)
3. Mar. 8 *The Craftsman*, by Richard Sennett — reading focus on “Material Consciousness,” a humanistic and philosophical modern view of craftsmanship. (p. 119-146)

Mar. 15 No class

4. Mar. 22 *Thinking Architecture*, by Peter Zumthor — a Swiss modern master architect [Pritzker Prize 2009] <http://www.pritzkerprize.com/laureates/2009> reflects on making and living in architecture in familiar language. (p. 9-56)
5. Mar. 29 *Light Is the Theme: Louis I. Kahn and the Kimbell Art Museum***, by Louis I. Kahn — a modern master architect comments and notes on the design and building of the Kimbell Art Museum, Fort Worth, Texas. (p. 7-75) Will also see part of the award winning documentary film *My Architect: a Son's Journey* (2004), produced and directed by Nathaniel Kahn — also accessible in full at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3Mvxzb3FHws>

All readings are required: 1, 2, 3 and 4 will be scanned and accessible electronically through Box@UA, by early December. **Aristotle for Everybody* is also recommended for purchase (on Amazon, \$11.38). ***Light is the Theme*, not accessible electronically, is required for purchase (on Amazon, \$15.00).