



National Museum of Modern Art, 1986, Fumihiko Maki, Kyoto, Japan

Department of Architecture  
School of Architecture and Environment  
University of Oregon

Arch 457/557  
Spring 2019  
James Tice

## The Facade

"...the metaphorical plane of intersection between the eyes of the observer and what one may dare to call the *soul* of the building." Colin Rowe

<b>Class Format</b>	Lectures with discussions, student presentations, peer reviews
<b>Credits:</b>	3
<b>Prerequisites:</b>	Completion of Spatial Composition (ARC450/550); preference will be given to advanced students.
<b>Meeting Times:</b>	4:00 - 5:20 Tuesday and Thursday
<b>Meeting Place:</b>	Room 278 Lawrence
<b>Attendance:</b>	Attendance is required at all lectures and presentations. One unexcused absence is permitted during the term. Unexcused absences beyond this will lower grades.
<b>Requirements:</b>	There will be assigned readings and class discussions centered on exercises; your participation at all levels of the class will contribute 25% of your final grade.
<b>Projects</b>	There will be a series of approximately 10 short graphic/model exercises that will focus on a variety of themes as they influence our thinking about the design of the facade. These projects will constitute 75% of your grade. Late submission of projects will adversely affect grades.
<b>Final</b>	There will be a final review Thursday, December 8 from 8:00 to 10:00 AM Students must be present for the duration of the review to pass this course. No unexcused absences will be accepted.

## Course Description

One of the most important distinctions to be made at the outset of this class is the distinction between 'elevation' as opposed to 'facade'. Whereas elevation implies the *literal translation* of the plan into a vertical surface, the facade implies an *interpretive design process*. The first approach assumes that we simply elevate the plan, the other that we must interpret the plan along with many other factors. In fact, the design of the facade engages a wide range of issues,

from building materials to symbolic meaning. Like the face from which it takes its name, the facade is the primary surface of representation--a principal source of identity--and like that part of the human anatomy from which it takes its name, there seem to be an infinite number of interpretations about what exactly constitutes a beautiful and meaningful facade.

Although there may be no universal agreement on this subject, history is full of building traditions and specific works of architecture that address this problem with intelligence, grace and beauty. The Georgian row house and the Venetian Palace are two types that come to mind. Michelangelo's facade for the Palazzo dei Conservatori on the Campidoglio, Le Corbusier's facade for the Villa Stein and even Frank Lloyd Wright's facade-elevation for Fallingwater demonstrate the range of approaches and richness of ideas which coalesce around this subject.

The facade is perhaps the most value laden of all aspects of architectural design and probably as a consequence is one of the most difficult issues to address 'objectively'. As a consequence there seems to be an "avoidance syndrome" which results in having the design of the facade left to the very last minute—if at all. In most studio projects to which this instructor has been witness, rarely does the facade compare favorably with plan, either in thought or execution. This course intends to redress this failing.

Some of the issues that we will address during the term are summarized below:

The facade as membrane/filter between inside and outside.

The facade as a surface of representation.

The facade as both a result of constructional, material and structural imperatives and ideas about expressing those necessities.

The facade in context, or the validity of designing from the outside in.

Reading: The required texts will be a compilation of essays available as a PDF reader on Canvas. In addition there will be occasional short readings beyond those included in the reader and these will be on reserve on Canvas as well.

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