Course Description

This course is designed as an introduction to the key movements, figures, and debates central to American 20th Century architectural theory & practice from approximately 1890 to 1980. Primary attention is given to the architectural ideas behind the works, including precedents and influences, social and cultural contexts and the roles of economics and technology. The complex and contradictory nature of both Modernism and its subsequent critical challenges and interpretations, is of particular interest in the lectures, discussions, visual presentations and student papers/projects. The course is not attempting to be a standard survey, but focuses as much as possible on deeper explorations of specific examples, looking into their ideas, architects, and historic contexts.

The primary goals are to provide, 1) a working knowledge of 20th Century precedents and, 2) a set of critical tools that will inform the students’ own design/preservation work and guide their career choices within the continually evolving fields of architecture and preservation.