Architecture and Power

This course is an introduction to the socio-political dimension of architecture, looking at the built environment as an active participant of structuring our everyday lives. We will examine some asserted, disguised, and unconscious ways in which design reflects, reinforces, or resists power relations. Looking at architecture as a discourse where knowledge production, social practice, and power relations cooperate, we will explore themes like racial and gender hierarchies, control and surveillance, capitalism, expression of identity, aesthetics, and architectural representation.

The goal of the course is to expose students to a set of theories, concepts, and questions regarding architecture’s social impact and ethical responsibilities and help them develop methods and tools for analyses and assessment of concrete examples. Taking a seminar format, the class will consist of concurrent modes of inquiry including reading, discussion, case studies, and writing. Each student will select a subject of interest as the focus of their research.