

Gay for Pay

Designing Architecture for Queer Economies

MIT / Department of Architecture / ARCH 4.182
Fall, 2022 / Mondays, 6-9pm / 3-329 (TBC)
Course Credit / 3-0-9 G

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Course Overview

Clients, funding, consultants, contracts—architects are enmeshed in financial mechanisms that forever remind us of our direct reliance on local and global economies. Money talks and architecture follows: our work articulating the interests of those served while fluctuating with the rapidity of the market. And while this relationship may be fixed, perhaps we can find ways to resist its normative logics, which exacerbate social inequalities and consolidate power in the hands of the few and the privileged. This workshop will explore alternative economies and financial arrangements through the lens of queer practice, with its history of instrumentalizing the language of power against itself, to find ways to re-code capitalism's tendencies, desires, and outcomes.

We will ask whether in addition to designing architecture, we can also design the market that demands architecture—to produce economic scenarios under which we might build. Each week we will pair readings in economic anthropology (studying how economies are shaped by behavior, cultural values, and social relationships) and queer theory (identifying strategies of planned failure, makeshift assembly, and reorientation) to invent atypical demand-chains, work against models of optimal performance, and instrumentalize culture to undercut efficiency. We will look at how we might produce clients, programs, and actor networks rather than responding to the whims of the market. We will consider how we might think of economic arrangements as tools for designers.

We will read, write, and compile a compendium of case studies on the topic. Students are encouraged to find broad reaching examples—from the domestication of post-war military technology to the proliferation of sharing economies to recent trends in reuse and the circulation of materials. We will focus on buildings, materials, and products, largely drawn from North America in the 20th and 21st centuries, but may also look further afield. And while queerness provides a shared framework for the workshop, students are encouraged to consider analogous lenses through which we might rewrite the relationship between practice and service. The course will focus on real examples of immaterial and material phenomena, inventing new languages and representational strategies along the way.

Course Structure

Given the constellatory nature of the material, we will be disciplined with our approach to the topic. Each week, we will read two primary texts (one queer, one from economics or economic anthropology) and look at a primary case study. Students are asked to compile a response, and should draw from at least one of the additional readings provided. The weekly responses should include the following:

1. Find and describe 3 key points per text that relate to our workshop and group conversation.
2. Outline 3 key questions per text to the class that spark discussion around the workshop.
3. Bring 3 references/examples that demonstrate some position regarding the texts. The references can be new, old, architectural, or otherwise. They should be 'real world' examples to keep the conversation grounded in practical feasibility.

The weekly responses are structured to keep the discussion dynamic and far-reaching. They needn't be laborious—the goal is to amass examples, questions, and thoughts—nor do they need to perfectly exemplify the topic. The readings should spark something, and the results may be loose, weird, or ill-fitting.

For the final project, each student will pick their own case study for which they will compile and present a research dossier. This dossier should contain a thorough written description and key research, and may also include interviews, diagrams, drawings, video/photography, data, and any other material that may be relevant to the case study. Case studies may be a building, a company, a product, a person, a business, a business model, a method, or something entirely different. We will dedicate a class mid-semester to collectively look over potential topics, determine a structure, and evaluate based on discussions in class.

Course Schedule

Week 1	09/06	<i>Introduction</i> New Affiliates, Testbeds (2018–22)
Week 2	09/12	<i>Rejects & Leftovers</i> Only If, Irregular Development (2017–22)

Primary Reading

1. Latour, Bruno and Vincent Antonin Lépinay. *The Science of Passionate Interests: An Introduction to Gabriel Tarde's Economic Anthropology* (Chicago: Prickly Paradigm Press, 2009): Part 1, 7–32.
2. Halberstam, Jack. *The Queer Art of Failure* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2011): Ch. 3, 87–121.

Additional Reading

- Bataille, Georges. "The Notion of Expenditure" in *Visions of Excess: selected writings, 1927–1939* ed Allan Stoekl (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1985), 116–29.
- Kristeva, Julia. "Approaching Abjection" in *Oxford Literary Review*, Vol. 5, No. 1/2, 1982, 125–149.
- Muzaffar, Ijlal and Jorge Otero-Pailos. "Preservation and Globalization" in *Future Anterior*, Vol. 9, No. 1, Summer 2012, pp iii–vii.
- Thompson, Michael. *Rubbish Theory: The Creation and Destruction of Value* (London: Pluto Press, 2017).

Week 3 09/19 *Externalities of Pleasure*
Assemble, Laguna Viva (2017 – 2019)

Primary Reading

1. Veblen, Thorstein. *Theory of the Leisure Class* (Orig. New York: Macmillan, 1899): Ch. 6 “Pecuniary Canons of Taste”, 54–76.
2. Kolb, Jaffer. “Working Queer” in *Log 41*, Fall, 2017, 63–66.

Additional Reading

Bernstein, Peter L. *Against the Gods: The Remarkable Story of Risk* (John Wiley and Sons, 1996), Ch. 11 “The Fabric of Felicity”, 187–193.

Henry, Michel. *Barbarism* (New York: Bloomsbury Publishing’s Continuum Impacts vol. 95, 2012), Intro and Ch. 1.

Holert, Tom. “Hidden Labor and the Delight of Otherness: Design and Post-Capitalist Politics” in *e-flux journal* #17, June–August 2010, 1–9.

Preciado, Paul. *Testo Junkie: Sex, Drugs, and Biopolitics in the Pharmacopornographic Era* (The Feminist Press, 2008).

Week 4 09/26 *Wild Excess*
Alcoa Forecast Program Houses (1950s)

Primary Reading

1. Bernstein, Ch. 19 “Awaiting the Wildness”, 329 – 337.
2. Halberstam, Jack. *Wild Things: On the Disorder of Desire* (Raleigh: Duke University Press, 2022), 3–32.

Additional Reading

Abrons, Ellie. “For Real” in *Log 41*, Fall 2017, 67–73.

Andreas Angelidakis, “Demos, Polemos” in *Log 41*, Fall 2017, 99–101.

Bismark, Pedro Levi. *The Architecture of Pessimism* (Stones Against Diamonds, 2020), online.

Graeber, David. *Debt: The First 5000 Years* (Brooklyn: Melville House, 2012).

Latour and Lépinay, Conclusion “If You Chase the Big Beast Away, It Comes Galloping Back”, 81–87.

Steyerl, Hito. *Duty Free Art: Art in the Age of Planetary Civil War* (London: Verso, 2017), Ch. 3 “The Terror of Total Dasein: Economies of Presence in the Art World”, 21–29.

Week 5

10/03

Fluid Values

Atelier Office, Opera House (2012)

Primary Reading

1. Hillebrand, Sebastian and Hans-Martin Zademach. "Alternative Economies and Spaces: Introductory Remarks" in *Alternative Economies and Spaces* (transcript Verlag, 2014), 9-22.
2. Wang, Michael. "Queering the System" in *Log 41* (Fall, 2017), 135-140.

Additional Reading

Betsky, Aaron with Jaffer Kolb. "The End of Queer Space" in *Log 41*, Fall 2017, 85-88.

Garutti, Francesco. *Our Happy Life: Architecture and Well-Being in the Age of Emotional Capitalism* (Sternberg Press, 2019).

Lee, Roger. "The Possibilities of Economic Difference? Social Relations of Value, Space, and Economic Geographies" in Hildebrand and Zademach, 69-84.

Muñoz, Jose Esteban. "Ephemera as Evidence" in *Women & Performance: a journal of feminist theory*, 8:2, 5-16.

Polanyi, Karl. *The Great Transformation* (New York: Farrar & Rinehart, 1944).

Scott, Brett. *Cloudmoney: Cash, Cards, Crypto, and the War for Our Wallets* (Harper Business, 2022).

Week 6

10/17

Mutual Exchange

NYU Intergenerational Homeshare (2018)

Primary Reading

1. Mauss, Marcel. *The Gift: The form and reason for exchange in archaic societies* (New York: Routledge Classics, 2002).
2. Muñoz, Jose Esteban. *The Sense of Brown* (Raleigh: Duke University Press, 2020), Ch. 1 "The Brown Commons", 1-7; Ch. 8 "Performing the Bestiary: Carmelita Tropicana's *With What Ass Does the Cockroach Sit?/Con Que Culo se Sienta la Cucaracha?*", 78-85.

Additional Reading

Harney, Stefano and Fred Moten. *The Undercommons: Fugitive Planning and Black Study* (Minor Compositions, 2013).

Graeber, David. *Toward an Anthropological Theory of Value: The False Coin of Our Own Desires* (New York: Palgrave, 2001), Ch. 2 "Current Directions in Exchange Theory", 23-47.

Nagel, Alexander and Christopher S. Woods. *Anachronic Renaissance* (Zone Books, 2010), Ch. 3 "What is Substitution?", 29-34.

Ngai, Sianne. *Our Aesthetic Categories: Zany, Cute, Interesting* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2012), Ch. 3 “The Zany Science”, 174–232.

Orlean, Andre. *The Empire of Value* (Cambridge: The MIT Press, 2014), Ch. 5 “A New Approach to Value.”

Week 7

10/24

Disoriented Benefits

Landing Studio, P.O.R.T. & Rock Chapel Marine (2006)

Primary Reading

1. Boltanski, Luc and Ève Chiapello. *The New Spirit of Capitalism* (London/New York: Verso Books, 2005), Ch. 2 “The Projective City”, 103–163.
2. Ahmed, Sara. “Orientations: Toward a Queer Phenomenology” in *GLQ: A Journal of Lesbian and Gay Studies*, V. 12 no. 4, 2006, 543–574.

Secondary Reading

Butler, Judith. *Gender Trouble: Feminism and the Subversion of Identity* (New York: Routledge, 1990), “From Parody to Politics”, 181–190.

Latour and Lépinay, Part II “The Nature of Economics”, 33–65.

Martin, Reinhold. “Financial Imaginaries: Toward a Philosophy of the City” in *Grey Room 42*, Winter 2011, 60–79.

Willis, Carol. *Form Follows Finance* (Princeton Architectural Press, 1995).

Week 8

10/31

Property, Appropriated

Future Expansion, FoG Farm (2019–in progress)

Primary Reading

1. Gordon Nembhard, Jessica. *Collective Courage: A History of African American Cooperative Economic Thought and Practice* (Penn State University Press, 2014), Introduction, 1– 25 and Ch. 8 “Black Rural Cooperative Activity in the Early to Mid-Twentieth Century, 172 – 187.
2. Herring, Scott. *Another Country: Queer Anti-Urbanism* (New York: NYU Press, 2010), Ch. 2 “Critical Rusticity”, 63–97.

Secondary Reading

Baker, George. “The Space of the Stain” in *Grey Room 05*, Fall 2001, 5–37.

Feher, Michel. *Rated Agency: Investee Politics in a Speculative Age* (New York: Zone Books, 2018).

Ferguson, Roderick. *Aberrations in Black: Toward a Queer of Color Critique* (University of Minnesota Press, 2003), Introduction, “Queer of Color Critique, Historical Materialism, and Canonical Sociology”.

Getsy, David J. "Ten Queer Theses on Abstraction" in Jared Ledesma, ed., *Queer Abstraction* (Des Moines: Des Moines Art Center 2019), 65-75.

Week 9 11/07 *Final Project Introductory Conversation*

Students should bring minimum two ideas for their final research project to discuss. Ideas should have ample evidence and enough material to sustain a rigorous investigation.

Week 10 11/14 *Sharing, Caring, DIY*
Wikihouse (2011)

Primary Reading

1. Esposito, Elena. *The Future of Futures: The Time of Money in Financing and Society* (Cheltenham and Northampton: Edward Elgar, 2011), Ch. 3 "Economy is time: needs and scarcity," 37 - 46.
2. Keeling, Kara. "Queer OS" in *Cinema Journal*, Winter 2014, Vol. 52, No. 2 152 - 157.

Secondary Reading

Blanchfield, Caitlin and Farzin Lotfi-Jam "The Bedroom of Things" in *Log 41*, Fall 2017, 129-134.

Bogost, Ian. "The Internet of Things You Don't Really Need" in *The Atlantic*, June 23, 2015, online.

Cvetkovich, Anne. "AIDS Activism and the Oral History Archive" in *The Scholar and Feminist Online* published by The Barnard Center for Research on Women, Issue 2.1, Summer 2003, online.

Hennessy, Rosemary. "The Material of Sex" in *The Routledge Queer Studies Reader*, eds. Donald E. Hall and Annamarie Jagose with Andrea Bebell and Suan Potter, Routledge, 2013, 134-149.

Hill, Dan. "The Commodification of Everything" in *sqm the quantified home*, ed. Space Caviar, Lars Müller, 2014, online.

Jaque, Andres. "Grindr Archiurbanism" in *Log 41*, Fall 2017, 75-84.

Shao, Qin. "Citizens versus Experts: Historic Preservation in Globalizing Shanghai" in *Future Anterior: Journal of Historic Preservation, History, Theory, and Criticism*, Vol. 9, No. 1, Summer 2012, 17-31.

Week 11 11/21 *Promiscuous Products*
Sigurd Lewerentz, Idesta (1943)

Primary Reading

1. Harcourt, Bernard E. *The Illusion of Free Markets: Punishment and the Myth of Natural Order* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2012), Chapter 8 "The Illusion of Freedom", 176 - 190.
2. Puar, Jasbir. "Queer Times, Queer Assemblages" in *Social Text* 84-85, Vol. 23 Nos. 3-4, Fall-Winter 2005, 121-139.

Secondary Reading

Bernstein, Ch 16 "The Failure of Invariance," 269-283.

Dean, Jodi. "Communicative Capitalism" in *Cultural Politics*, Vol. 1, Issue 1, 2005, 51-74.

Dunne, Anthony and Fiona Raby. *Speculative Everything: Design, Fiction and Social Dreaming* (Cambridge: The MIT Press, 2013), Ch 1 "Beyond Radical Design," 1-9.

Dunne and Raby, Ch 4 "Consuming Monsters," 47 - 67.

Ngai, Sianne. "The Cuteness of the Avant-Garde" in *Critical Inquiry*, Vol. 31. No. 4, Summer 2005, 811-847.

Thanksgiving Holiday

Week 12 11/28 Individual Meetings

Week 13 12/05 Class Presentations

TBD Final Project Submission

Course Expectations

This is a workshop, not a seminar, and students should be prepared to work collaboratively to undertake research and analysis. Students are asked to bring their own interests, their own attitudes, and their own interpretation of the material. They may incorporate other disciplines, conversations, and passions into the work for the workshop. Discussion and conversation will be paramount to the success of the workshop, and students are expected to be engaged, and importantly respectful of others. Grading will be determined through balancing participation, weekly assignments, and the final project.