

**ARCH 4113 Architectural Theory and Interpretation**

CREDIT HOURS: 3

Classes: Monday, 9:30–11:30; Room B015 and Thursday, 9:30–11:30; 1202, 1208, 2135+a+b

Instructor: Dr. Ted Cavanagh (ted.cavanagh@dal.ca)

Office hours: Monday, 11:30–12:30

Teaching assistant: Matthew Beck (mt530242@dal.ca)

Brightspace: <https://dal.brightspace.com/d2l/home/358496>

For this 3-credit-hour course, an average of 9 hours per week is expected for all course-related activities, including classes. If most students are spending substantially more time, please notify the instructor.

**Calendar Description**

This course studies primary sources in architectural theory, situated in their cultural context and compared to our local situation. It examines modern architectural terms, concepts, and roles, along with their historical equivalents. It also provides a basic theoretical framework and references for considering humanities-related topics in architectural design projects.

**Additional Course Description**

This course concentrates on “a basic theoretical framework and references for considering humanities-related topics in architectural design projects” -- theory and methods that emphasize the consequences of architecture rather than its intent; things rather than ideas. These theories and methods are helpful when analyzing the acts of designing and building -- the process of architecture.

**Learning Objectives**

Each student explores research/creation and the various ways design can be researched. Students learn how to unpack the implicit assumptions found in the design studio, and in architectural practice generally. The content and critical insights from this course are early steps in formulating a design exploration based in theory, a required part of your future architectural thesis.

**1. Methods Review**

Lecture 1 – Introduction to the course and the methods below

1. Studying artefacts (material culture, material history)
2. Discourse Analysis, Content Analysis, Coding for the Social Sciences
3. Applied Theatre
4. Grounded Theory, Situated Analysis
5. Design Anthropology, Ethnography
6. Action Research, Participatory Action Research
7. Controversy Mapping
8. Actor-Network Theory
9. Social Construction of Technology
10. Research/Creation, Artistic Research

**2. Research Project**

This course assignment is research-creation. It is interdisciplinary, at least architecture plus one other. It is intermodal, encompassing one mode of presencing (making, science experimenting, dancing, acting, singing, ...) and a second mode of presencing OR another critical mode (report, essay, social media, video, ...) Presencing in the sense of live performance.

Four stages and four lectures (lectures 2-5)

2.1 (check list) — defining an individual area of research

2.2 (progress report and map) — investigations in research/creation, gathering data, and coding

2.3 (poster and process map) — theory originating in these investigations, data, and coding; then establish a focused literature search

2.4 (intermodal presentation) — theory testing, reporting out, areas of further investigation

## Lectures:

2. the case for theory and research in design and construction
3. socially-engaged research in design and construction
4. technologically-engaged research in design and construction
5. research through design

## Assignments:

Methods Review– illustrate a method of research (no necessary connection to research project).

Split your design group in half. Group (15%) and individual (10%) work.

**January 9.** Group. Submit to Brightspace bibliography of 18 references, 3 per group member.

**January 20.** Group. Consolidate references to 6, 3 references that describe method and 3 references that report on examples of the method applied. Write a 200-word description of the method and a 100-word description of each example. Present to the class. Discuss. Respondents take notes.

**January 23.** Individual. Present written and oral response to the other half of your design group.

**January 27 and 30.** Group. Present final version updated based on response. Organize a discussion.

Research Project (2.1 - no grade; 2.2, 2.3, and 2.4 - 25% each) – details posted separately

|                            | MONDAY 9:30 – 11:30<br>B015                                    | THURSDAY 9:30 – 11:30<br>1202, 1208, 2135+A+B |
|----------------------------|--|---|
| WEEK ONE<br>JAN 6 & 9      | Lecture 1  | Group work 1. Methods Review (all rooms) *    |
| WEEK TWO                   | No class   |   |
| WEEK THREE<br>JAN 20 & 23  | Present discuss progress<br>1. Methods Review<br>2.1 Checklist | Hand-in and discuss respondent (all rooms)    |
| WEEK FOUR<br>JAN 27 & 30   | Due & Present<br>1. Methods Review (25%)                       | Present 1. Methods Review (cont'd) (1202)     |
| WEEK FIVE<br>FEB 3 & 6     | Lecture 2  | Sketch pin-up 2.2 (1202)                      |
| WEEK SIX<br>FEB 10 & 13    | Lecture 3  | Sketch pin-up 2.2 (all rooms)                 |
| WEEK SEVEN                 | No class   |   |
| WEEK EIGHT<br>FEB 24 & 27  | Due & Present 2.2 (25%)  | Present 2.2 (continued) (1202)                |
| WEEK NINE<br>MAR 3 & 6     | Lecture 4  | Sketch pin-up 2.3 (all rooms)                 |
| WEEK TEN<br>MAR 10 & 13    | Due & Present 2.3 (25%)  | Discussion: Research Methods (1202)           |
| WEEK ELEVEN<br>MAR 17 & 20 | Lecture 5  | Sketch pin-up 2.4 (all rooms)                 |
| WEEK TWELVE<br>MAR 24 & 27 | Due & Present 2.4 (25%)  | Present 2.4 (continued) (Exhibition Room)     |
| WEEK THIRTEEN<br>MAR 31    | SLEQ<br>Exhibition 3/27 to 4/1                                 | No class                                      |

\*TC in Lunenburg

### Criteria and Standards for Individual Assignments

Grading is done by the course instructor and is based on the rubric below. Participation will be judged during group meetings and reviews. Prepare by becoming familiar with the arguments and the sources of the research projects in your group.

| Component   | 8.75 points  | 7.50 points   | 6.25 points  | weight | points |
|---|--|---|--|--------|--------|
| methods review presentations (group)  | Content is complete, relevant & accurate. <b>The material is presented in a logical, organized manner and includes creative ways of engaging the class.</b> Most of the content shows good critical thinking and/or an original perspective.   | Content is appropriate. Although some information may be missing, or irrelevant material included, adequate command of material is demonstrated. The content may lack or fail to maintain focus and may be disorganized. The content shows some thought about the information. Adequate oral presentation and engagement of class.  | Content is weak because material is omitted, inaccurate or marginally relevant, demonstrating limited understanding of the material and/or limited ability to apply the material. Organization is a problem. Major deficiencies in oral presentation skills. Class is not engaged.   | 1.5    | 15     |
| methods review respondent (individual)  | <b>It's a clear, focused and incisive critique of the group presentation</b> that initiates a focused class-wide discussion  | good ability to grasp an argument and develop a critique. Initiates some class-wide discussion  | General misunderstandings and inability to translate theories into a critique  | 1      | 10     |
| research project (individual)<br>including participation in seminars, workshops, and discussion | Content is complete, relevant & accurate. <b>An exceptional command &amp; depth of the material.</b> Explored in a logical & organized manner. <b>Many aspects of the content show good critical thinking or an original perspective.</b> Participates in class and group discussions with insightful analytical thinking and/or an original perspective | Content is appropriate. Although some pieces of the argument may be missing, or irrelevant material included, adequate command of the material is demonstrated. The content might fail in aspects of focus or logic and may be disorganized. Informational content, presentation style, level of engagement, quality of activities provided & class discussion were adequate. | Content is weak because material is omitted, inaccurate or marginally relevant, demonstrating limited understanding of the material and/or limited ability to apply the material. Organization is a problem. Informational content, presentation style, level of engagement, quality of activities provided & class discussion had major deficiencies. | 2.5    | 25     |

### Undergraduate Grade Standards for the Course

| Letter | Percent | Definition                     | Description   |
|--------|---------|--------------------------------|---|
| A+     | 90–100% | Excellent                      | Considerable evidence of original thinking; outstanding capacity to analyze and synthesize; outstanding grasp of subject matter; evidence of extensive knowledge base.                    |
| A      | 85–89%  |                                |   |
| A–     | 80–84%  |                                |   |
| B+     | 77–79%  | Good                           | Evidence of grasp of subject matter, some evidence of critical capacity and analytical ability; reasonable understanding of relevant issues; evidence of familiarity with the literature. |
| B      | 73–76%  |                                |   |
| B–     | 70–72%  |                                |   |
| C+     | 65–69%  | Satisfactory                   | Evidence of some understanding of the subject matter; ability to develop solutions to simple problems.  |
| C      | 60–64%  |                                |   |
| C–     | 55–59%  |                                |   |
| D      | 50–54%  | Marginal pass                  | Evidence of minimal familiarity with the subject matter; minimal analytical and critical skill.   |
| F      | 0–49%   | Fail                           | Little evidence of understanding of the subject matter; weakness in analytical and critical skills; limited or irrelevant use of the literature.  |
| INC    |         | Incomplete                     | (counts as zero in GPA calculation)   |
| W      |         | Withdrew after deadline        | (neutral in GPA calculation)  |
| ILL    |         | Compassionate reasons, illness | (neutral in GPA calculation)  |

Other, exceptional grades are noted in the undergraduate calendar.

The comments for group assignment 1 are oral in class; work is submitted and grades are posted on Brightspace. Individual assignment work is submitted and grades are posted on Brightspace. Comments for each stage posted on Brightspace with the grade. Intermediate course grades are numerical out of 25. Total numerical grade is converted to a final letter grade.

### Due Dates and Late Submissions

Deductions for late submissions encourage time management and maintain fairness among students. [Customize the contents of the table to suit the course.]

|                         | Max. grade | Due date | Is a late assignment accepted? | The deduction per weekday | Final deadline for late submission | After that?       |
|-------------------------|------------|----------|--------------------------------|---------------------------|------------------------------------|-------------------|
| Assignment 1 group      | 15         | Jan.27   | no                             | --                        | --                                 | 0                 |
| Assignment 1 individual | 10         | Jan.23   | no                             | --                        | --                                 | 0                 |
| Assignment 2.1          | --         | Jan.20   | yes                            | --                        | Feb.3                              | no comments       |
| Assignment 2.2          | 25         | Feb.24   | yes                            | 4%                        | Mar.3                              | 12/25 no comments |
| Assignment 2.3          | 25         | Mar.10   | yes                            | 4%                        | Mar.17                             | 12/25 no comments |
| Assignment 2.4          | 25         | Mar.24   | yes                            | 4%                        | Mar.31                             | 12/25 no comments |

\* For example, if an assignment is evaluated at 20/25 before applying a 4%-per-weekday deduction, it would receive 19/25 for being 1–24 hours late; 18/25 for 25–48 hours late; etc.

Note: The following University or School policies take precedence over course-specific policies:

- No late assignments are accepted after the last day of weekly classes (the Friday before review week).
- With a Student Declaration of Absence (maximum two per course), an assignment may be submitted up to three weekdays late without penalty. An SDA cannot be used for the final assignment. For the SDA form and instructions, go to [tinyurl.com/dalhousie-sda](https://tinyurl.com/dalhousie-sda).
- With a medical note submitted to the School office, a course assignment (including a final assignment) may be submitted more than three weekdays late without penalty. The number of weekdays depends on how long you were unable to work, as indicated in the medical note. If more than one course is affected, you should consult with the Undergraduate Coordinator to set a new schedule of due dates.
- A student with an accessibility plan that allows for deadline extensions does not need to submit an SDA.

### **Academic Integrity**

To avoid the risk of plagiarism, including self-plagiarism, please refer to the university's regulations:

[tinyurl.com/dal-academic-integrity](https://tinyurl.com/dal-academic-integrity)

Students may record lectures.

The Faculty of Architecture and Planning is committed to recognizing and addressing racism, sexism, xenophobia and other forms of oppression within academia and the professions of architecture and planning. We, the faculty, are working to address issues of historic normalization of oppressive politics, segregation, and community disempowerment, which continues within our disciplines today.

The Dalhousie University Senate acknowledges that we are in Mi'kma'ki, the ancestral and unceded territory of the Mi'kmaq People and pays respect to the Indigenous knowledges held by the Mi'kmaq People, and to the wisdom of their Elders past and present. The Mi'kmaq People signed Peace and Friendship Treaties with the Crown, and section 35 of the Constitution Act, 1982 recognizes and affirms Aboriginal and Treaty rights. We are all Treaty people. The Dalhousie University Senate also acknowledges the histories, contributions, and legacies of African Nova Scotians, who have been here for over 400 years.

At Dalhousie, “thinking and acting globally” enhances the quality and impact of education, supporting learning that is “interdisciplinary, cross-cultural, global in reach, and oriented toward solving problems that extend across national borders.” At Dalhousie University, we are guided in all of our work by the values of academic integrity: honesty, trust, fairness, responsibility and respect. As a student, you are required to demonstrate these values in all of the work you do. The University provides policies and procedures that every member of the university community is required to follow to ensure academic integrity.

**Accessibility:** The Student Accessibility Centre is Dalhousie's centre of expertise for matters related to student accessibility and accommodation. If there are aspects of the design, instruction, and/or experiences within this course (online or in-person) that result in barriers to your inclusion please contact the Student Accessibility Centre). Your classrooms may contain accessible furniture and equipment. It is important that these items remain in place, undisturbed, so that students who require their use will be able to fully participate.

**Conduct in the Classroom – Culture of Respect:** Substantial and constructive dialogue on challenging issues is an important part of academic inquiry and exchange. It requires willingness to listen and tolerance of opposing points of view. Consideration of individual differences and alternative viewpoints is required of all class members, towards each other, towards instructors, and towards guest speakers. While expressions of differing perspectives are welcome and encouraged, the words and language used should remain within acceptable bounds of civility and respect.

**Diversity and Inclusion – Culture of Respect:** Every person at Dalhousie has a right to be respected and safe. We believe inclusiveness is fundamental to education. We stand for equality. Dalhousie is strengthened in our diversity. We are a respectful and inclusive community. We are committed to being a place where everyone feels welcome and supported, which is why our Strategic Direction prioritizes fostering a culture of diversity and inclusiveness (Strategic Priority 5.2).

**Code of Student Conduct:** Everyone at Dalhousie is expected to treat others with dignity and respect. The Code of Student Conduct allows Dalhousie to take disciplinary action if students don't follow this community expectation. When appropriate, violations of the code can be resolved in a reasonable and informal manner—perhaps through a restorative justice process. If an informal resolution can't be reached, or would be inappropriate, procedures exist for formal dispute resolution.

**Fair Dealing Policy:** The Dalhousie University Fair Dealing Policy provides guidance for the limited use of copyright protected material without the risk of infringement and without having to seek the permission of copyright owners. It is intended to provide a balance between the rights of creators and the rights of users at Dalhousie.

## UNIVERSITY POLICIES, GUIDELINES, AND RESOURCES FOR SUPPORT

Dalhousie courses are governed by the academic rules and regulations set forth in the Academic Calendar and the Senate.

- <https://academiccalendar.dal.ca/catalog/viewcatalog.aspx>
- [https://www.dal.ca/dept/university\\_secretariat/university\\_senate.html](https://www.dal.ca/dept/university_secretariat/university_senate.html)

### University Policies and Programs

- Important Dates in the Academic Year (including add/drop dates)
  - [https://www.dal.ca/academics/important\\_dates.html](https://www.dal.ca/academics/important_dates.html)
- Classroom Recording Protocol
  - [https://www.dal.ca/dept/university\\_secretariat/policies/academic/classroom-recording-protocol.html](https://www.dal.ca/dept/university_secretariat/policies/academic/classroom-recording-protocol.html)
- Dalhousie Grading Practices Policy
  - [https://www.dal.ca/dept/university\\_secretariat/policies/academic/grading-practices-policy.html](https://www.dal.ca/dept/university_secretariat/policies/academic/grading-practices-policy.html)
- Grade Appeal Process
  - [https://www.dal.ca/campus\\_life/academic-support/grades-and-student-records/appealing-a-grade.html](https://www.dal.ca/campus_life/academic-support/grades-and-student-records/appealing-a-grade.html)

- Sexualized Violence Policy
  - [https://www.dal.ca/dept/university\\_secretariat/policies/human-rights---equity/sexualized-violence-policy.html](https://www.dal.ca/dept/university_secretariat/policies/human-rights---equity/sexualized-violence-policy.html)
- Scent-Free Program
  - <https://www.dal.ca/dept/safety/programs-services/occupational-safety/scent-free.html>

### Learning and Support Resources

- Academic Support - Advising [https://www.dal.ca/campus\\_life/academic-support/study-skills-and-tutoring.html](https://www.dal.ca/campus_life/academic-support/study-skills-and-tutoring.html)
  - [https://www.dal.ca/campus\\_life/academic-support/advising.html](https://www.dal.ca/campus_life/academic-support/advising.html)
- Student Health & Wellness Centre
  - [https://www.dal.ca/campus\\_life/health-and-wellness.html](https://www.dal.ca/campus_life/health-and-wellness.html)
- On Track (helps you transition into university, and supports you through your first year at Dalhousie and beyond)
  - [https://www.dal.ca/campus\\_life/academic-support/On-track.html](https://www.dal.ca/campus_life/academic-support/On-track.html)
- Indigenous Student Centre and Indigenous Connection
  - [https://www.dal.ca/campus\\_life/communities/indigenous.html](https://www.dal.ca/campus_life/communities/indigenous.html)
  - <https://www.dal.ca/about-dal/indigenous-connection.html>
- Elders-in-Residence program provides students with access to First Nations elders for guidance, counsel and support. Visit the office in the Indigenous Student Centre or contact the program at [elders@dal.ca](mailto:elders@dal.ca) or 902-494-6803.
- Black Student Advising Centre
  - [https://www.dal.ca/campus\\_life/communities/black-student-advising.html](https://www.dal.ca/campus_life/communities/black-student-advising.html)
- International Centre
  - [https://www.dal.ca/campus\\_life/international-centre.html](https://www.dal.ca/campus_life/international-centre.html)
- South House Sexual and Gender Resource Centre
  - <https://southhousehalifax.org/about-us>
- LGBTQ2SIA+ Collaborative
  - <https://www.dal.ca/dept/vpei/edia/education/community-specific-spaces/LGBTQ2SIA-collaborative.html>
- Dalhousie Libraries
  - <https://libraries.dal.ca/>
- Copyright Office
  - <https://libraries.dal.ca/services/copyright-office.html>
- Dalhousie Student Advocacy Service (DSAS)
  - <https://www.dsu.ca/dsas>
- Dalhousie Ombudsperson
  - [https://www.dal.ca/campus\\_life/safety-respect/student-rights-and-responsibilities/where-to-get-help/ombudsperson.html](https://www.dal.ca/campus_life/safety-respect/student-rights-and-responsibilities/where-to-get-help/ombudsperson.html)
- Human Rights & Equity Services
  - <https://www.dal.ca/dept/vpei.html>
- Writing Centre
  - [https://www.dal.ca/campus\\_life/academic-support/writing-and-study-skills.html](https://www.dal.ca/campus_life/academic-support/writing-and-study-skills.html)
- Study Skills/Tutoring
  - [https://www.dal.ca/campus\\_life/academic-support/study-skills-and-tutoring.html](https://www.dal.ca/campus_life/academic-support/study-skills-and-tutoring.html)

### Safety

- Faculty of Architecture and Planning: Work Safety
  - <https://www.dal.ca/faculty/architecture-planning/current-students/inside-building/work-safety.html>

## Research assignment – 2.1 and 2.2

The output of the course assignment is based on method 10. research-creation. It is interdisciplinary, at least architecture plus one other discipline. It is tightly focused. It is intermodal, encompassing one mode of presencing (making, science experimenting, dancing, acting, singing, ...) and a second mode of presencing OR another critical mode (report, essay, social media, video, ...)

### 2.1 (check list) — defining an individual area of research

The project involves theoretical and analytical interpretation. This is an opportunity to hone in on a particular aspect of architecture through theory, empirical observation and analysis. You should consider this as a side project, parallel but not necessarily related to your design work. It should stand alone as a focused research project.

Consider a design concept that focuses on an aspect of an issue, concern, or phenomenon. One way to develop a focus is to think like a skeptical architect. Issues, concerns, and phenomena include light, topography and flows; nested scales and the human body; craft and production; prospect, aspect and the controlling gaze; casting and tactile surfaces; participation; and making. Raise a question such as: Is glass really transparent? How can a specific haptic quality be explored? Be represented? Be expansive, don't limit the exploration to its application to your design studio project.

Submit [the form posted on Brightspace](#). This is to check that you answer the question in the assignment. Submit to Brightspace > Assignment > 2.1 Checklist. If you decide on a new focus, then submit a revised checklist.

### 2.2 — investigations in research/creation (report and map of process - 500 words, 10 illustrations)

The investigation you undertake is iterative. It involves describing, analyzing, theorizing, and imagining in any sequence. For instance, material or field investigation can precede theory. In Research-Creation, doing or making is an essential part of any investigation. Abductive, inductive, and deductive reasoning are all possible ways of operating. Generally, the more you are specific or focused, the more effective the work.

Record the work as it progresses. Break down the process that you are taking into simple, key actions. Connections between the actions are important. You are creating a graphical representation in words and images that is part log and part calendar. Identify questions rising from the work, respond, identify connections, the paths not taken, the dead ends, ...

11 x 17 landscape format – can be tiled, no page limit

Details of 2.3 and 2.4 to follow.