

METU ARCH PROG GRADUATE SEMINARS

ARCH 604 Spring Semester 2024-25



This is the official document prepared for the graduate seminar course of ARCH 604.

Spring 2025 Semester

Date of the Meeting: 17.06.2025
at Kubbealtı, Faculty of Architecture

Online Meeting Link:
<https://teams.live.com/meet/933106614012?p=EKe1iKM90fXgFSaJgy>

Meeting ID: 933 106 614 012
Passcode: j2m6dy

Course Instructor: İpek Gürsel Dino

13:30 – 13:55

**No Such Thing as a Return:
Representational Value of Motifs and
Treatments on Architectural Surfaces**
Cihat Çağlar

13:55 – 14:20

**Dwelling Beyond the Unit:
Reimagining Public Housing as Place**
İbrahim Alpdemir

14:20 – 14:45

**Searching for Participatory Design
Approaches in Post-Disaster Housing**
Senem Türkkul

14:45 – 15:10

**Habitat in Architectural Theory and the
Biopolitics of Transcorporeal Space**
Ece Gören

15:10 – 15:35

**A Critical Reading of Ankara's
Socio-Spatial Fabric: Decoding Urban
Interstices through Property Relations
as Differential Spaces**
Aysema Ülke

15:35 – 16:00

**In Other Words, In Other Worlds: The
Linguistic Condition of Architecture**
İpek Akın

13:30 - 13:55

No Such Thing as a Return: Representational Value of Motifs and Treatments on Architectural Surfaces

Supervisor: **Cihat Çağlar**
Jury Members: **Ayşen Savaş**
Celal Abdi Güzer
Umut Şumnu

While often dismissed as historical residue or aesthetic surplus, motifs and treatments mediate architecture's negotiations with meaning, memory, and materiality, often without theoretical recognition or conceptual clarity. This introductory investigation questions the representational value of "architectural motifs and treatments" through a critical and thematic interpretation of architectural discourse from the late 19th century to the mid-20th century. Based on the theoretical frameworks on and around "motifs and treatments," the investigation challenges the reappearances of ornament to signify a simple return to historical and traditional styles. In contrast, the study examines how ornaments are reconfigured and by which agents or discourses within architectural understandings. Due to the absence of a more precise term, "motifs and treatments" functions as a term that encompasses ornament, decoration, and various surface supplements. The study steers clear of simplistic classifications, focusing instead on their complex discursive and material aspects. It adopts a post-structuralist perspective that views ruptures, reinventions, and "returns" as significant formations rather than merely nostalgic gestures in a non-linear flow. Instead of a definitive conclusion, the investigation aims to open up further terrain for architectural speculation and theoretical reflection.

keywords: motifs, surface treatments, ornament, decoration, materiality, representation

13:55 - 14:20

Dwelling Beyond the Unit: Reimagining Public Housing as Place

Supervisor: **İbrahim Alpdemir**
Celal Abdi Güzer
Jury Members: **Cânâ Bilsel**
Özlem Erdoğan Erkarlan

As a multifaceted and complex matter, public housing has often been discussed on its failures in efficiency, cost and maintenance, or its stigmatization within political narratives. However, such frameworks often ignore or obscure the deeply human and experiential aspects of dwelling. This study explores how public housing can move beyond its conventional role as standardized shelter to become a meaningful, lived environment rooted in identity, belonging, and spatial quality. Focusing on the phenomenology of place and placemaking, the study critiques current mass housing practices—particularly in Türkiye—that prioritize quantity and cost over human experience. Drawing on the dichotomy of space and place it examines how residents personalize, adapt, and inhabit public housing to create a place. Employing a mixed-methods approach, including cross-cultural case studies, phenomenological interviews, and design and policy analysis, the research compares global and Turkish examples to identify design and policy factors that either foster or inhibit placemaking. By centering the lived experience of residents, the study offers critical insights into how public housing can be reframed as a dynamic and participatory process of dwelling and inductive design, rather than a static product of top-down planning.

keywords: Public Housing, Phenomenology of place, Placemaking, Inductive design, Spatial Justice

14:20 - 14:45

Searching for Participatory Design Approaches in Post-Disaster Housing

Supervisor: **Senem Türkkul
F. Candaş Bilse**
Jury Members: **Celal Abdi Güzer
Serap Kayasü**

Post-disaster reconstruction is a complex and multi-layered process that intersects with urgent humanitarian needs, long-term development goals, and deeply embedded social and cultural dimensions. Numerous studies recognize that efforts to reconstruct must take into account the identities, aspirations, and lived experiences of those affected rather than being just motivated by efficiency or technical expertise. In this context, participatory design has emerged as an alternative model for producing post-disaster housing that is both socially sustainable and resilient. This research synthesizes significant findings from various research on participatory approaches to post-disaster housing, particularly focusing on the improved living environments in the face of the problem of speed and efficiency in construction, the temporality of reconstruction, and the role of diverse actors in these processes. The 2023 Kahramanmaraş earthquakes provide a current and relevant context in which these issues, particularly the case of Antakya, require critical examination. This seminar paper addresses these issues while presenting a literature review conducted on participatory housing design and participatory post-disaster housing reconstruction.

keywords: Post-disaster reconstruction, Community participation, Housing, Spatial and temporal aspects of reconstruction, Kahramanmaraş earthquakes

14:45 - 15:10

Habitat in Architectural Theory and the Biopolitics of Transcorporeal Space

Supervisor: **Ece Gören**
Jury Members: **Funda Baş Bütüner**
Esin Kömez Dağlıoğlu
Gizem Deniz Güneri Söğüt

The conceptualization of 'habitat' in architectural discourse has historically functioned as a medium of division, defined less by its capacity to sustain life than by its function of excluding, classifying and segregating different corporealities of life. Architectural theorizations of habitat have thus often served to classify, separate, and contain rather than aligning with its biological conception as a relational setting that enables life. Situated within the Anthropocenic context of massive and ongoing destruction of habitat, this research is driven by the urgency of rethinking architectural praxis in response to planetary crises. The basic methodology of the research is to conduct a genealogy of habitat in architecture. The analysis is aimed at uncovering the anthropocentric and exclusionary tendencies inherent in the architectural understanding of habitat, foregrounding the absent or neglected relationships within mainstream architecture practice. The theoretical framework of this research builds upon new materialist theory and ecofeminist transcorporeality to challenge the binary distinctions between human and nonhuman, subject and object, built and unbuilt environments, and habitat and the 'other'. Additionally, the research engages Foucauldian conceptions of biopolitics to examine how architectural definitions of habitat operate as techniques of power—regulating bodies, populations, and boundaries in accordance with normative ideals of life. Through these lenses, the research proposes an ecology of practices as a generative medium for enabling the articulation of multiple architectural imaginaries and narratives of habitat that can expand beyond static definitions of the term.


keywords: Habitat, Environmental humanities, New materialist posthumanism, Biopolitics of space, Anthropocene

15:10 - 15:35

A Critical Reading of Ankara's Socio-Spatial Fabric: Decoding Urban Interstices through Property Relations as Differential Spaces

Supervisor: **Aysema Ülke
Güven Arif Sargın**
Jury Members: **İnci Basa
Funda Baş Bütüner**

Urban is a complex organization in terms of both material and immaterial conditions. This complexity requires not only disparate components but also the conditions that could ground the dialectical processes. Among binary components such as urban vs. rural, private vs. public, figure and ground, there is always the said dialectic, which is composed of, melts into, and/or left out by the duals. In the current literature, the connotations of this liminality, the third component – the process itself – vary from the threshold, the in-betweenness to leftover or from the thirdspace to non-space; and yet, I believe that they have clear-cut descriptions that contrast with the nature of the dialectics. On the contrary, interstice, preliminarily deriving from its definition as the space between its essential materialities, is both an ambiguous procedure and an absolute matter. Ambiguity refers to uncertain, vague, obscure or opaque conditions that all suggest a constant process of betweenness, leaving almost no material existence for an absolute spatiality. On the other hand, in an urban context, absoluteness occurs under material socio-spatial traces of a variety of agencies and/or actors; it even derives its essence from the very micro-spatiality, perhaps at the micro-scale.



However, both the conditions of ambiguity and absoluteness are made out of either everyday life's practices or through the mechanisms of planning and architecture, creating a complex array of socio-spatiality. At all events, the dialectic between ambiguity and absoluteness of interstitial spaces co-occurs within the discourses of the property relations, border, boundary, and hence the territory within their shifting relationality. Therefore, this research is to propose a critical reading of Ankara's socio-spatial fabric to problematize its urban interstices through specifically property relations, which are instrumentalized in the production and reproduction of the said urban fabric as well as its discursive practices as exercised through ambiguous and absolute conditions, based on the rights to use or to own. By critically unfolding urban interstices with the employment of neo-Marxian dialectical reading, in this respect, the study aims to problematize interstitial spaces in terms of social and political contestation and thus to map out how and to what extent the said contestation presents its full-force existence in urban sections via differential spaces.

keywords: urban interstices, ambiguity, absoluteness, property relations, differential space

15:35 - 16:00

In Other Words, In Other Worlds: The Linguistic Condition of Architecture

Supervisor: İpek Akın
Jury Members: İnci Basa
Güven Arif Sargın
Berin Gür

This study investigates the evolving mechanisms of language in architectural thinking, critical theory, and practice, approaching not as linear shifts but as a recursive, branching phenomenon with a network of multiplicity in relations and roles. Following a diachronic approach, from the textual beginnings of Vitruvius to contemporary practice and drawing on elementary studies in linguistics, this research explores the close relationship between language and architectural thinking. Architecture uses, produces, and is produced by language. Attempting to map the broader network of architecture's linguistic conditions, this study aims to reveal the plurality of relations in cognitive, epistemological, and practical formations. Language, by performing a myriad of roles, operates as the conceptual infrastructure of architecture, producing and organizing knowledge, articulating meaning, and mediating design in syntactic, semantic, and pragmatic contexts. Drawing on linguistic theory, from Saussure and Jakobson to Derrida and Foucault, this study traces how architecture internalized structuralist, post-structuralist, and deconstructivist models of signification, intertextuality, and difference. The linguistic discourse of architecture takes several critical positions on architecture's relationship with language, elevating the importance of theory at times, criticizing language's limits and misuses, as well as the unprecedented roles of language today, where prompts, codes, metaphors, and intertexts intersect in a polyglot ecology. Understanding this ecology is essential for engaging architecture intellectually, critically, theoretically, and ethically in the age of technology.

keywords: Textuality, Architectural Thinking, Linguistics, Architectural Writing

