



MASTER OF SCIENCE IN ARCHITECTURE (HISTORY & THEORY)

CURRICULUM

45 credits: 26 credits of required courses + 17 credits minimum of selective courses relevant to student's research

The MS in Architecture stream in History and Theory provides the opportunity for architects, recent architecture graduates and other qualified individuals to pursue advanced research on the history and theory of architecture applying a variety of historical and critical lenses. Although general faculty interests are in nineteenth and twentieth century architecture, the program is broadly conceived to encompass the architectural, cultural and political forces that have shaped the continuing discourse of modernity in architecture, including all of its contemporary manifestations.

Particular areas of faculty research include the many forms of modernity in architecture and urbanism in the traditional theatres of the West as well as the rest of the world. Subsets of these interests are: modern architecture and the decorative arts; the history and theory of preservation; architectural representation; the arts and crafts movement; and vernacular and domestic architecture. Faculty expertise also includes issues in regional and global modernity— an area of research that addresses the current demand to re-conceptualize the local-global duality and ensuing conversations of dialectical identity. Modernity in architecture is studied in both micro and macro environments. Examples of specific locations of interest include Pacific Northwest regionalism as well as colonial and postcolonial architecture in South Asia, Japan, Africa and the Middle East.

The degree can be completed in 5-6 quarters (two years).

Required Courses: 26 credits

AUTUMN QUARTER – YEAR 1

ARCH 560 Graduate Seminar in Architectural Theory	(3 credits)
BE 551 Contemporary Built Environment	(3 credits)
BE 598E Contemporary Built Environment Seminar	(2 credits)

WINTER QUARTER – YEAR 1

ARCH 541 Modern Architecture & the Critical Present	(3 credits)
+ ARCH 600 Independent Research	(2 credits)

Together these courses replace the 5 credit ARCH 597 Research Practicum previously offered in spring.

SPRING QUARTER – YEAR 1

ARCH 597 Research Practicum	(5 credits)
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Not offered in 2026. See note above.

AUTUMN QUARTER – YEAR 2

ARCH 599 Thesis Research Prep	(4 credits)
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WINTER QUARTER – YEAR 2

ARCH 700 Master's Thesis	(9 credits)
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Selective Courses: 19 credits

Selectives must be graduate courses (400-level and higher) related to student's research. Regularly offered History & Theory courses from the Department of Architecture are listed below. Courses outside of the Department may count towards degree with approval of the program director.

Full time enrollment (minimum 10 credits) is required each quarter for financial aid or scholarship disbursement. Full time enrollment is mandatory for international student F1/J1 visas. [Tuition is the same from 7-18 credits.](#)



Contact Info

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Descriptions of Required Courses

ARCH 560: Graduate Seminar in Architectural Theory (3 credits)

Recent developments in architectural theory, urban design theory, criticism, and the methodology of criticism. This course seminar concentrates on architectural theory and practice which are influenced by recent developments in cultural studies, literary theory and philosophy.

BE 551: The Contemporary Built Environment (3 credits) + BE 598 Built Environment Seminar (2 credits)

Covers major or landmark cases of complex built environment projects, emphasizing the multiple dimensions involved and their interconnections. (Autumn quarter, year 1)

-or-

BE 553: Ethics in Practice, Research, and Teaching (3 credits) + BE 598 Ethics in Practice, Research, and Teaching (2 credits) Preparation for ethical challenges facing professional practice, research, and teaching in the built environment. Coverage of general and professional ethics, and examination of principles and rules and application through case studies. (Spring quarter, year 1) If BE 551 + BE 598 are completed in autumn, student may take either or both BE 553 + BE 598 in spring as Selectives.

ARCH 597: Research Practicum (5 credits)

Designed for students in the MS Program to develop a clear framework to conduct their research. Provides a mentored research opportunity where students apply their research and writing skills and knowledge of methods and theory to an advanced research topic.

ARCH 599: Independent Thesis Research and Preparation (4 credits)

Explores development of a proposal for thesis-level research. Participants identify a research area, find relevant literature and prepare an annotated bibliography, articulate a specific question within the research area, and write, present, and defend a proposal. Participants may use this course to develop a thesis proposal.

ARCH 700: Master's Thesis (9 credits, minimum)

This capstone to the Master of Architecture is a student-initiated, faculty supervised and department-approved project. Topics vary and are developed in concert with supervising faculty.

Architecture History & Theory Selectives

List of Eligible Architecture History and Theory Selective Courses – consult with program director for additional courses available outside of our department. Contact academic adviser, for course schedule for current academic year.

ARCH 441: Visions of the Japanese House	Ken Tadashi Oshima
ARCH 442: Africa and Middle East Seminar	Brian McLaren
ARCH 445: South Asian Architecture I	Vikram Prakash
ARCH 446: South Asian Architecture II	Vikram Prakash
ARCH 452: History of Architecture in Seattle & Environs	Jeffrey Ochsner
ARCH 538: Building Reuse Seminar: Investigating the Value of Existing Buildings	Kathryn Merlino
ARCH 541: Visions of the Japanese House	Ken Tadashi Oshima
ARCH 559: American Utilitarian Architecture	Louisa Iarocci
ARCH 561: Urban Design Theory	Nicole Huber
ARCH 563: Seminar in Architecture and Cultural Theory	Vikram Prakash
ARCH 579: Technical Issues in Preservation Design	David Strauss
ARCH 590: Urban and Preservations Issues in Design	Jeffrey Ochsner
ARCH 598: Critical Practice in a Globalizing World	Ken Tadashi Oshima
ARCH 598: Mediterranean Cities, 1300-1600	Ann Huppert
ARCH 598: Modern Architecture and the Critical Present	Ken Tadashi Oshima

The following courses from the URBAN department are open to ARCH majors on a space available basis. Email udp@uw.edu for permission.



DEPARTMENT OF ARCHITECTURE / COLLEGE OF BUILT ENVIRONMENTS

URBAN 527 Urban History, Ethics, Form, and Theory I

URBAN 528 Urban History, Ethics, Form, and Theory II

URBAN 586 Implementation in Preservation Planning

Manish Chalana

with permission of instructor

with permission of instructor