

# “Architectural Theory: Worldviews, Conceptual Histories and Role Models”

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## MHRD Scheme on Global Initiative of Academic Networks (GIAN)

### Overview

Architectural theory is the act of thinking, discussing, and writing about architecture. Architectural theory is often didactic, and theorists tend to stay close to or work from within schools. It has existed in some form since antiquity, and as publishing became more common, architectural theory gained an increased richness. Books, magazines, and journals published an unprecedented number of works by architects and critics in the 20th century. As a result, styles and movements formed and dissolved much more quickly than the relatively enduring modes in earlier history. In architecture, a theoretical framework ought to explain why buildings affect human beings in certain ways, and why some buildings are more successful than others, both in practical as well as in psychological and aesthetic terms. Architectural theory is crucial for establishing an understanding of architecture, but hardly ever taught in architecture courses. The physical structure of the world has a massive effect on human beings. A crucial task of architectural theory is to explain and predict the impact that living structure — or its absence — has on us. As the architects of tomorrow, today's students must come to understand the role and responsibility of their profession as something intrinsically tied to human existence and the lived experience. Similarly, most building and planning today follow unwritten rules that have no empirical foundation, being based strictly upon visual or ideological constructs from the early twentieth century. Contemporary design avoids any criterion of quality that draws upon evolved precedent and tradition from a prior era, and thinks that this refusal is a great virtue. In this way, architects and urbanists end up obeying simplistic criteria for design, rejecting any sense of beauty that links human beings with their land, tradition, and culture.

Architectural theory imposes a strong constraint on the design process to adapt to the many factors (both known and unknown) that will influence the user on many levels, including emotion. Architectural design is a highly complex undertaking. But, the processes at its base have not been made clear. There have been many attempts to clarify the design process, yet we still don't have a design method that can be used by students and novices to achieve practical, meaningful, nourishing, human results. In the absence of a design method and accompanying criteria for judging a design, things have become very subjective, and therefore what is built today appears to be influenced largely by fashion, forced tastes, and an individual's desire to garner attention through novel and sometimes shocking expressions.

This course puts forward an architectural theory alongwith worldviews; conceptual histories and role models that will create a platform for the participants to have a better understanding of architecture and design process. The course shall have modules that focus on talks; lectures; group discussions; documentaries; tutorials; and, few site visits.

# Objectives

This course has manifold objectives:

- i) Exposing participants to the fundamentals of architectural theory through lectures; talks; discourses; case studies; documentaries; and, assignments
- ii) Building confidence and capability amongst the participants to apply architectural theory; worldviews, conceptual histories and role models in their design (both process as well as product)
- iii) Creating a steering group to develop collaborative platforms and take forward the learning from the course
- iv) Encouraging exchange of ideas and knowledge sharing by linking International scenarios to the National
- v) Developing high quality course material in the field of architectural theory, both through video and print media that can be used by a larger body of students and teachers

# Important Information and Dates

<b>Module &amp; Dates</b>	<p><b>Architectural Theory: Worldviews, Conceptual Histories and Role Models</b></p> <p><b>20<sup>th</sup> -24<sup>th</sup> December, 2017</b></p> <p>* Number of participants for the course will be limited to forty.</p>
<b>You Should Attend if you are</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) Executives, Architects, Researchers from manufacturing, design, service and government organizations including R&amp;D laboratories.</li> <li>2) Students, Entrepreneurs and Self Employed Individuals (with relevant experience) at all levels (B.Arch./M. Arch/ PhD/B. Des./M. Des./History of Art and Architecture/Humanities)</li> <li>3) Faculty from reputed academic institutions and technical institutions</li> </ul>
<b>Fees</b>	<p>The participation fees for taking the course is as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Participants from abroad : US \$500</b></li> <li>• <b>Industry/ Research Organizations: INR 30,000</b></li> <li>• <b>Faculty: INR 10000</b></li> <li>• <b>Students/Self Employed: INR 5,000</b></li> </ul> <p>* The above fees includes all instructional materials, kits, computer use for tutorials and assignments, laboratory equipment usage charges, 24 hr free internet facility. The participants will be provided with accommodation on payment basis.</p>

## The Faculty



**Prof. Axel Sowa** (Dipl.-Ing., Architectural Studies in Berlin and Paris) is currently a Professor at the Department of Architecture in RWTH University, Aachen (Germany). He has been heading the teaching and research field on Architectural Theory since October 2007. Prior to teaching at the universities of Saarbrücken and Aachen, he was

editor-in-chief of the magazine L'Architecture d' Aujourd'hui in Paris. During this period, 50 themed essays, devoted to fundamental questions of architectural theory, were created. Starting from a stay as a chercheur invité at the Center Canadien d'Architecture in Montréal, his current researches refer to the change of the concept of mimesis, to the question of imitation in modern contexts and to the beginning of the industrial serial production of building components in the first third of the 19<sup>th</sup> century.



**Smriti Saraswat** is currently an Assistant Professor in the Department of Architecture and Planning at IIT Roorkee (Uttarakhand, India). She is trained as an architect & interior designer. She has been awarded with a Letter of Merit from the CEPT University, Ahmedabad. She is passionate about Interior-Architecture; Design Research

and Writing; Craft and Technology; Traditional Building Practices; Indigenous Communities; Skill Development; Creative and Cultural Industries; Women Empowerment; Cultural and Architectural Heritage; Narratives; and Pedagogy. She is the author of the book – Interior-Architecture & Narratives: Craft, a Medium. She has received several grants and scholarships; organised varied national and international workshops; training programmes; short term courses, including GIAN and NPTEL; trans-disciplinary academic workshops at IIT Roorkee that focus on materials; craft and technology; interior-architecture; and, design innovations.; set up collaborations with national and international schools and organisations (like Aalto University, DICRC, CEPT, BRICK, NITTR); and authored several papers and publications. She loves to travel; document; read; create photo essays; and tell stories.

## Course Coordinator

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