ARCH 407: ROME, CITY OF VISIBLE HISTORY
SPRING 2027

Rome, the so-called Eternal City, has also been dubbed “the city of visible history.” While perhaps primarily associated in popular imagination with antiquity, Rome has always been a vital, changing, and challenging urban center from the time of the Roman Republic to the present. Medieval and Renaissance Rome saw the city’s form and architecture develop in new ways, following the social, political, and spiritual needs of its inhabitants. Reunification of the Italian state declared Rome the capital of the new nation in the nineteenth century, and Italians from around the country swelled Italy’s capital in the following decades, changing its urban topography and building typologies. In the early twentieth century, Fascism remade Rome and following its defeat, post-war Rome became synonymous world-wide with glamorous Italian design and cosmopolitan living. Recently, diverse immigrant communities have made their homes in the city, and Rome has seen both starchitects’ monuments and grass-roots projects, as well as significant efforts to protect and renew the city’s layered heritage within the contemporary cityscape.

This course considers the city of Rome from its foundation until today, using critical strategies for understanding urban environments as well as study of individual monuments. Rome’s many layers allow for the study of multiple historical periods and styles of architecture (and how these intersect) within a single urban fabric, and the effects of politics, economics, religion, culture, and societal change upon architecture and vice versa. We will look at this history of Roman urbanism and architecture with the aid of a variety of evidentiary materials: individual monuments, maps, photographs, prints, primary texts, and films. We will emphasize critical histories of the city, analyzing why differing architectural monuments and ensembles were created and how they have affected the lives of Romans over time.

3hrs; sophomore standing required; for architecture students ARCH 210 is prerequisite. Students from Landscape Architecture, Art History, Art and Design, Classics, Medieval Studies, History, and other disciplines are welcome!

T/Th 11am-12:20pm
Lecture/Discussion
Prof. Heather Grossman