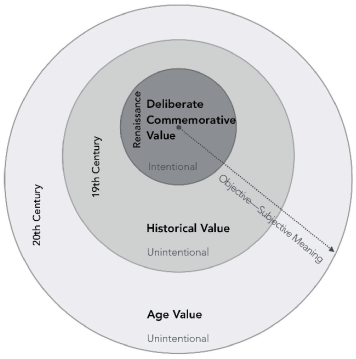
ARCH 591HER: Topics in Architectural History

The Reception of Heritage

Spring, 2027
Thursdays 2 – 4:50pm in ARCH 205
Prof. Heather Grossman



Alois Riegl, *The Modern Cult of the Monument*

How do cultures receive and respond to the architecture of their own past, or of the monuments of other societies? How and when does architecture continue its original use and meanings, and when and how does architectural meaning change? Why is architectural and cultural heritage sometimes targeted for destruction, while in other instances it is safeguarded? What is the value of past architecture, and who determines this?

This seminar examines the relationships between societies and the architectures, monumental arts, and the designed environment of previous groups. We will begin by reading some theories of reception practice as well as heritage and historic preservation, but the majority of the course will be devoted to examining case studies of how and why monuments have been used by later groups, whether directly related or more distant in cultural, space, or time. Our cases will come from both the past and present, and span various regions, including the Mediterranean, northern Europe, South Asia, Africa, and the Americas.

This architectural history seminar is meant to allow students to focus, too, on a significant research project of their own choosing related to these questions. Students will select their own research topic, in consultation with the faculty member, to pursue over the second half of the term. While for most this will result in a research paper of about 15-18 pages, other outcomes are equally possible: a building design, artwork, a website, an exhibition proposal, etc.

3 graduate hours (or 4 with petition). Graduate standing *recommended*, though well-prepared fourth-year students can petition to join the class. Assessment by participation in and leading weekly discussions of each week's reading; personal research project presented orally and in written/graphic/media format. This course seeks students from Architecture, Art, Art History, Landscape Architecture, Anthropology, History, and other fields for a lively, participatory exploration of ideas, giving students considerable flexibility in their personal research and final projects.