# History of Contemporary Architecture

## Prof. Paola Proverbio

***COURSE AIMS AND INTENDED LEARNING OUTCOMES***

The aim of the course is to provide students with the historical and critical tools for understanding contemporary architecture, from the mid-nineteenth century to present-day developments.

In particular, taking account of the complex relationship between design ideologies and modernity in the first few decades of the twentieth century, as well as the variety of expressive forms to emerge from the post-WW2 era, the course will highlight the range of architectural “languages” and the various themes and problems that have characterised the discipline and continue to distinguish today’s complex scenario.

By the end of the course, students will have acquired an essential grasp of the discipline, enabling them to analyse architectural design from a historical and critical perspective; they will be able to communicate using the themes of contemporary architecture and appropriate lexicon, and will have gained the ability to understand the main aspects of the cultural debate and contemporary architectural production.

***COURSE CONTENT***

The course is divided into two parts:

The first part is dedicated to the most important stages in the culture of design from the mid-19th century to the 1960s: from Crystal Palace to the birth of the skyscraper and Art Nouveau; from the contribution of avant-garde (Futurism, De Stijl, Expressionism and Constructivism), to the work of the masters of modern architecture (F. L.Wright, Le Corbusier, L. Mies van der Rohe) and other figures and design trends (H. Scharoun and A. Aalto).

The second part of the course focuses more on the relationship between architectural design and the development or regeneration of the city through the paradigm of three significant urban contexts - 1980s Paris, 1990s Berlin and 2000s Milan - a testimony to the changing approach to architecture that is no longer substantially based on the development of frameworks and models to be replicated anywhere in the world, but based instead on *inventive design*, bound closely to a specific environmental, temporal and local context. This condition is profoundly shaped by the transition to digitised design processes, the variety of design “languages” (deconstructivism, high-tech and minimalism), materials and themes related to sustainability.

***READING LIST***

A textbook from the following:

W. Curtis, *L’architettura moderna dal 1900,* Phaidon, 2006.

K. Frampton, *Storia dell’architettura moderna,* Zanichelli, Bologna, 2008.

Details regarding the chapters to study for each text will be provided at the start of the course. An anthology of additional texts on topics not covered by the above textbooks will also be available from the UC photocopy office.

***TEACHING METHOD***

The course will be delivered by means of frontal lectures with images and videos. There will also be educational visits.

***ASSESSMENT METHOD AND CRITERIA***

The final assessment, which consists of an oral exam, is designed to assess knowledge of the reading list and lecture content. Students will be assessed primarily on their ability to summarise and analyse critically, as well as on their ability to use specialist language.

***NOTES AND PREREQUISITES***

The course is introductory in nature. Consequently, there are no prerequisites. Any gaps in students’ knowledge will be remedied by means of targeted reading recommendations or, on request, specific interventions.

Further information can be found on the lecturer's webpage at http://docenti.unicatt.it/web/searchByName.do?language=ENG or on the Faculty notice board.