FALL 2018
WESTERN UNIVERSITY
DEPARTMENT OF VISUAL ARTS

VAH 3388F
HISTORIES OF ARCHITECTURE AND URBANISM:
ARCHITECTURES OF TRANSPORTATION

CLASSTIME: MONDAYS 11:30AM—2:30PM
LOCATION: VAC 247

INSTRUCTOR: SUSANNA SANTALA
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OFFICE HOURS: MONDAYS 10:30—11:30AM ROOM 240

The first flight, 120 feet in 12 seconds, December 17, 1903, 10:35 a.m. at Kitty Hawk, North Carolina. Courtesy of The Library of Congress Prints and Photographs Division, Washington, D.C.

COURSE DESCRIPTION
This course examines architectures of transportation and analyzes how railways, highways and airports, terminal buildings and logistical networks emerged in the processes of modernization. In this seminar students will explore two interrelated lines of inquiries. First, how has architecture related to technologies? Second, when does infrastructure become architecture?

Transport architectures are seldom discussed in the histories of architecture. What were some of the reasons why the historians did not, for example, notice the airport terminal as a building type emerging at the beginning of the twentieth century? If its absence in the histories was related to its role as infrastructure for aviation, then, when does infrastructure become architecture? How did the instability of the emerging building type result in a recognizable form leading to its acknowledgement by historians? Furthermore, should architectural monuments be considered as infrastructural nodes?

To answer these and other questions, we combine traditional histories of modern architecture with histories of technology. Using the Science and Technology Studies theory lens we first discuss technological artifacts, such as the aircraft. We then question the techno-deterministic view of their supposedly linear developmental trajectory assumed to run in parallel with the evolutionary pattern of modern architecture. Instead of taking the techno-deterministic view, we consider instances, when transport architecture transcended its utilitarian-technological nature as infrastructure, and was or should have been, acknowledged in the histories of architecture. We also consider how the expanding networks of modern infrastructure have changed the status of architecture.

More concretely, in this course students will identify types of infrastructure of their interest and develop research projects examining the interpretation of the infrastructure using theoretical and methodological tools available to architectural historians. In doing so, students will contribute to lessening the myopia in the classification of architecture. They will learn to view architectural monuments as infrastructural nodes. After all, architectures of transportation, such as the airport terminal, are the very avatars of technological modernity, without which architectural histories remain incomplete.

LEARNING OUTCOMES
Depth and Breadth of Knowledge: Students will have a thorough knowledge of the key critical and theoretical frameworks that pertain to the period being studied and will be able to analyze architecture from that period according to those frameworks. Specifically, this course will familiarize students with the key concepts of modern architecture and Science and Technology Studies.

Knowledge of Methodologies: Students will acquire the discursive/theoretical vocabularies that are utilized in debates within architectural history and will demonstrate their knowledge of the field through the deployment of the vocabulary in describing and analyzing the built environment in presentations and research papers.

Application of Knowledge: Students will utilize their knowledge of appropriate methods, the vocabularies pertinent to the field, and their ability to make appropriate judgements, in order to develop a sound argument regarding a particular historical development and will be able to defend their argument according to knowledge of scholarly works. Students will learn to read critically and explain their own point of view in class discussions. They will learn to conduct research and support arguments using appropriate evidence in a research paper.

PREREQUISITE / ANTI-REQUISITE
The prerequisite is two of VAH 1041A/B, 1042A/B, 1043A/B, 1044A/B, 1045A/B, or VAH 1040E.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS
There is no required textbook for the course. Students are expected to complete weekly readings posted on OWL course site.

EVALUATION:

Attendance and participation	10%	weekly
Reading responses	10%	weekly
Proposal	15%	October 22
Test	20%	November 12
Presentation	15%	November 19—December 3
Research paper	30%	December 3

ATTENDANCE AND PARTICIPATION:
Your attendance will be monitored and will count for a portion of the 10%. The participation portion of your grade will be based on your contributions to discussions and other in-class activities. You are expected to come to class having read and made notes on the weekly readings and will be asked to present a viewpoint (question or remark) to each text in class. Arriving late to class, leaving early, not completing required readings, and not participating in discussions and activities will reduce your participation remark.