
Participant Narratives

Ateya Khorakiwala

I imagined that the GAHTC Teacher to Teacher Workshop would be an opportunity to think through the problems thrown up in designing the syllabus for a lecture course that I might teach as a requirement for Architectural History undergraduates or towards a general education requirement. The workshop's vision was somewhat grander than I had imagined. There was a point where military metaphors best explained this: Was this workshop a space where we think as generals and plan the future of global history? Or were we foot soldiers researching details and teaching courses in the war against Eurocentric histories of architecture?

I brought two of my syllabi to the workshop. The first was a survey course that I might teach as a modern architectural historian in an art history program entitled Architecture from the Industrial Revolution to the Cold War. The second syllabus was tentatively titled: Food and Architecture, A Global History. I imagined that I would use the workshop to structure these two very different courses so that they both reflected the methodology of global architectural history. Further, at the moment, they tended towards reading lists where I wanted to transform them into courses with an idea of what students would take away from them and how they would stitch the material together in their heads to gain an early familiarity with the field of architectural history.

We spent most of our time discussing my food and architecture syllabus. It was suggested that I present it as a boutique course offered that crossed departmental boundaries, drawing in students from public health, the environmental humanities, anthropology, political science, and so on. The biggest criticism directed at global architectural history survey courses was that they lacked a viable and cohesive metanarrative that offered students a story of the development of form and structure over time. Rather, our surveys tended to be an aggregate of case studies that didn't do the work of history.

One way to bridge the gap between case studies and history, it was suggested, was to arrange my syllabus as a matrix of themes and stories. Some of the themes suggested were markets, commodities, and exchanges. Under them, the course could organize different examples that would then be tied back to the theme in each class. At one point, we visited "the duck" – Venturi's and Scott Brown's foundational example of a decorated shed, and it was pointed out to me that the duck should be on my Food and Architecture syllabus.

Concluding Thoughts:

A question that is simultaneously central and unproductive haunted our conversations on global architectural history: Why the word global? Is it different from world history? Why not planetary history? The question echoes with an anxiety of the end of the age of globalization, even while it misses the fundamentally utopian nature of a global history project. Additionally,

it is a project that is impossible without collaboration and exchange. My history is only history until it encounters that of my colleagues. It is somewhere in between colleagues that those histories turn global. It was this encounter within the framework of the teacher to teacher workshop that most informed my orientation between my research work and the teaching of global histories.

Joseph Godlewski

A “Global” Anthology of Architectural Theory

I suspect many historians are like me— at home in the silence of the archive and in the solitude of my own work. The GAHTC Teacher-to-Teacher workshop focused on destabilizing established conceptions of the “global” in architectural history, which also destabilized my entrenched habits as a scholar. In many ways it enforced sharing ideas, emphasized collaboration, and encouraged debate. It seems I had labored too long on my own work without sharing it with colleagues working on similar projects. The value of this face-to-face peer review is inestimable.

The research I shared at the workshop was a book project I’ve been working on, mostly alone, for the past two years. Though I’ve been helped at times by research interns and the questions of students, I’ve chosen to curate and write the book largely by myself without feedback. *Introduction to Architecture: Global Disciplinary Knowledge* (Cognella, Preliminary Edition, 2017) is envisioned as a sourcebook to the undergraduate lecture course ARC 141: Introduction to Architecture at the Syracuse University School of Architecture. In many ways, the course is also an introduction to architectural theory and the book is an attempt to bring together a “global” anthology of architectural theory. It collects and frames key texts in architectural discourse providing students a conceptual foundation for their academic and professional careers. Taken from an explicitly transnational perspective, it introduces students to lively debates about the built environment while providing clear and concise explanations and illustrations of key vocabulary, concepts, and design precedents. Specifically, I shared the table of contents and the main objectives of the book at the workshop. I wanted to know what my colleagues thought of the book’s premise and if there were areas I could improve upon for the first edition of the book scheduled for publication in 2018. Questions I had for the group included: What does one include in a “global” anthology of architectural theory? What is excluded? What are the key theoretical concepts (and definitions) of global architectural theory? Is such an anthology the best way forward? Does it merely update a problematic model?

I’m not sure what I expected (or feared?) in terms of critique, but what I received was a lot of positive feedback and constructive criticism. The discussion also yielded a thought-provoking conversation about how the course for which the book was designed was a remnant of an earlier time and reveals some weaknesses about the field of architectural theory generally. While the 1990s witnessed a proliferation of architectural theory books and anthologies, theorists have largely been resigned to peripheries of debates surrounding “global history” upon which the GAHTC is premised. Architectural theory needs to be reimagined in order to prepare students for contemporary global practice. While architectural historians have, for decades, examined

Western and non-Western traditions in an attempt to create a more “global” history of architecture, architectural theory has lagged behind. Existing theory anthologies remain Euro-American in scope and resistant to the rich array of people and trends shaping architecture today. Participants in the workshop made suggestions for other theories to include such the writings of Ibn Khaldun or the Hindu Vastu Shastra. Others participants asked if the current book was another example of what Sylvia Lavin called the “will to anthology”?¹ Is the course a history of theory? All of these insights helped further the project.

These critiques and lines of questioning, however, did not paralyze the project. Instead, they provided avenues for discussing the material contained within in a more critical, rather than merely inclusive, manner. Further, when I suggested shopping the book chapters out to specialists in each area, the workshop participants cried foul and advised I maintain the capacity to draw connections between texts and make the material accessible to non-experts. Perhaps the most important way the workshop helped develop this and future projects was to demonstrate the capacity for collaboration and to minimize the very real impulse to keep my research hidden from view until complete.

Mrinalini Rajagopalan

At the first GAHTC Teacher to Teacher Workshop (August 22-25, 2017) I presented a draft syllabus of a course that I will be offering for the first time at the University of Pittsburgh in Fall 2018. Designed to be the first in a two-part series of courses titled Global Architecture I (Antiquity to the Early Modern World) and Global Architecture II (Modernisms) the course is intended for a wide constituency of students that includes undergraduates in the Architectural Studies and Urban Studies majors and those students who are looking to satisfy the “International” and “Diversity” components of the general education curriculum at the university.

My course titled “Bodies, Buildings, and Global Imaginations in the Pre-Modern World” has three broad goals: First, it aims to equip students with a broad, if incomplete, knowledge of architectural and urban systems through three human perspectives: travelers, makers, and believers. The first module: travelers allows a perspective of architecture that encompasses the themes of pilgrimage, seafaring, trade, and the buildings of the dead meant for journeys to the afterlife. The second module of makers includes themes of technology, craftsmanship, architects, and planners. The third module of believers deals specifically with architecture shaped by world-views forwarded by philosophers, reigning sovereigns, and religious actors. This coverage of content is achieved by lectures focusing on case-studies (6 per week or 3 case-studies per lecture) and bi-weekly quizzes. A second goal of the course is to encourage students to develop global imaginations and their own positionality as global citizens as they encounter historical and cultural difference through the class material. This, more ambitious, goal of pedagogical ethics requires students to read a framing text: Martha Nussbaum’s *Cultivating Humanity: A Classical Defense of Reform in Liberal Education* through the semester and working through the philosophical arguments in that text by way of the case-studies presented in lectures. This

¹ Lavin, Sylvia. "Theory into History; Or, the Will to Anthology." *Journal of the Society of Architectural Historians* 58.3 (1999): 494-499.

discussion and analysis would take place in weekly recitation sections led by Graduate Student Instructors. The third goal of the course relates to its “global” mandate, and seeks to do this not only by providing coverage of formerly understudied geographies and building typologies; but also through the heuristic device of “provincializing Europe” whereby Europe is only one node amongst many in the study of the world. This is achieved by the structure of class lectures where only one case-study is dedicated to the canonical buildings of Europe (ex: Parthenon, Chartres cathedral, the Duomo in Florence) which are arrived at by way of equally impressive architecture in other parts of the world.

At the three-day workshop I received constructive feedback in the following ways. While several participants commended the more ambitious ethical goals of the class, they rightly asked if architecture was only a footnote or an appendage to what seemed to be a social or cultural history emerging from a template of human types. One colleague asked what this course might look like if an architectural survey text book replaced Nussbaum’s text and if students were asked to do the same kind of intellectual work—i.e. learning to navigate cultural and historical difference—with the aid of the architectural text rather than a strictly philosophical text. A second productive line of feedback was about readings and assignments: What kinds of readings (specifically about architecture) would be prescribed to help the students understand both the specifics of each case-study and the broader histories of each place that had produced such an object? Equally, what might assignments that tested students on their factual as well as critical understanding of the class material look like? A third and valuable line of feedback came in the form of a question regarding the architectural canon and more traditional lines of inquiry such as the “genius” male architect, which have been bypassed in my syllabus. One colleague asked if the course should overturn all such narratives and if so what would be the utility of such discursive iconoclasm, especially in an undergraduate classroom where students may not be arriving much information about the subject at all? To put it more simply, this colleague asked would it be appropriate to teach one session on three “genius” male architects as only narrative approach amongst the many others offered by the class? It should also be mentioned that my colleagues at the GAHTC workshop also offered several pragmatic tips on case-studies: for example, switching the case-study of the church of St-Quentin in France in the “Gods, Goddesses, and Queens” lecture to the Palace of Knossos and the cult of the mother goddess there.

This workshop has given me a lot to think about and I hope to engage more deliberately with these questions as I continue to polish this syllabus and start putting together the materials for the lecture. No doubt GAHTC’s website will be a valuable resource as I begin organizing the lectures. I am also currently participating in a faculty seminar titled “Globalizing the Curriculum” where I am developing the global aspects of this course more thoroughly. This workshop was very beneficial to me as I was exposed to the various global approaches of peers and was encouraged to ground my broad pedagogical and philosophical goals more concretely (forgive the pun!) in histories of the built environment.