ARCH S242
Globalization and Architecture in and through China

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Day and Time: M, W at 1-4:15 pm
Place: TBA
Office Hours: Tuesdays 10:00–11:00 (Zoom), before and after each class, and by appointment

Course Description:
This course delves into the complexity and ambiguity of globalization through architecture. From nineteenth-century treaty ports to Special Economic Zones, from the Silk Road to the Belt and Road Initiative, we will investigate how the built environment and global networks have mutually conditioned each other. As information, money, and materials circulate globally, they transform how architecture interacts with its surroundings. Students are invited to consider architecture as a medium through which supranational institutions and corporations thrive and expand. Using China as an entry point, this course enriches the history of modern architecture by investigating how styles, environments, and technologies travel beyond their places of origins.

Capitalizing on old geographical affinities that have been lying dormant for decades, China’s Belt and Road Initiative activates a new mode of globalization, one that materialized through infrastructural investments and architectural constructions. This course contextualizes the BRI through four historical episodes: 1910s-1940s, 1950s-1960s, 1970s-1990s, and 2013 until now. Through a series of architectural projects, this course will show how different globes were conceived and constructed in each episode. As a site and an actor, China is important because stoppages and holes in the global networks are as constructive as the network itself. Contrary to Manual Castells’ notion of flows, we will foreground the mechanisms of regulation and exclusion embedded in architectural and infrastructural spaces. Built environments constrain but also enable the flows. The flows pass through but also transform their channels. To paraphrase Buckminster Fuller, they come to pass AND to stay.

The course will meet ten times. Each session will consist of a 30-minute talk and a 150-minute discussion. The talk will provide the historical background of the period of interest. It will review how the period was covered in the canons to show how the assigned readings enrich the existing scholarship. Apart from the readings, students are expected to complete low-stake exercises each week. These exercises will be shared and discussed in the class. Designed to help the students understand the assigned texts through examples found in real life, these exercises will assist the students in working toward the final project, which is coming up with their own definition of globalization through concrete examples. Students will receive letter grades for each exercise starting from week one.

Requirements:
1. No previous course work is required
2. Compete all the required readings before each session and be ready to actively participate in discussion in class.
3. Upload your weekly assignment to the Miro board (link to be announced each week) before it is due.
4. For specific prompts of each assignment and the final project see below. The due time will be coordinated and communicated at the beginning of each week.

The course is graded as follows:
overall participation 20%
exercise 1–3 15% each (45% total)
final project 25%

According to the Summer Session policy, attendance is compulsory. No extensions or makeup assignments are permitted. It is essential for you to follow the Yale University code [https://catalog.yale.edu/handbook-instructors-undergraduates-yale-college/teaching/academic-dishonesty/] on plagiarism and academic honor. Writing and language tutoring is available through the Yale College Writing Center [https://poorvucenter.yale.edu/undergraduates/writing-center] and the Center for Language Studies [https://cls.yale.edu/].

WEEK 1: OVERVIEW
Session 1
Talk: A Prehistory of Globalization: When, Where, and How

Exercise 1: Globalization Materialized
globalization is not only spatial but also tangible. Rather than a mere concept, it materializes through architecture and infrastructure. Read the assigned text in advance, take concepts such as space of flows, splintering urbanism, and extrastatecraft, and find a place or a thing that embodies the concept of choice, post your example to the canvas discussion session, and be ready to it in class. (due session 2)

Session 2
Talk: Globalization through Architecture
WEEK 2: 1910s–1940s
Session 3
Talk: Beaux-Arts, Streamline Moderne, and Global Economic Integration

Session 4
Talk: Environmental Determinism
Ellsworth Huntington, “The Distribution of Human Health and Energy on the Basis of Climate,” in Civilization and Climate.

WEEK 3: 1950s-1960s
Session 5
Talk: Architecture in the Cold War

Exercise 2: Final Project Proposal
Identify your research object for the final assignment. It could be a building, an infrastructural system, a natural element, or a thing that enables or is enabled by, transforms or is transformed by globalization. In 250 words, please introduce the object and state your reasons of choice. Synthesizing, using, (and possibly critiquing) 2-3 readings in the first half of the class is encouraged.

Session 6
Talk: Architecture and the Non-Aligned Movement

WEEK 4: 1970s-1990s
Session 7
Talk: Globalization and Postmodernism

Exercise 3: Flows
Globalization is characterized by institutionalized flows that transgress boundaries while tying nation states, cultures, climates together. They rely on architectural and infrastructural channels for their movements. Pick one thing that flows, such as cargo boxes, toys, clothes, copper, gold, people, currency, flights, oil, water, or air make a photomontage of the thing of choice using images of their regulation, transmission, reception, storage, and consumption. Pay attention to different scales that connect the very small (macroscopic) to the very large (planetary). Upload your montage to the Miro site and be ready to discuss it in class.

Session 8
Talk: Flows and Stoppages

WEEK 5: 2013-Present
Session 9
Talk: BRI
Student Presentation

Session 10
Talk: The Global and the Planetary
Student Presentation

Exercise 4: Final Project
What is globalization? Define it with one image of architecture, infrastructure, elements, or things and an accompanying essay of 1500 words. Using, synthesizing, and critiquing 2–3 of the texts covered in the course is required.