Syllabus

Goals
This seminar inserts itself within our school theory/history sequence. As such, the idea is to offer the student an opportunity of ---using the Cuban example--- recapping all major events and theories of these 40 years architectural culture. Using always comparative methods, the goal is to make the student aware of both, the main lines of architectural theory in these years, and the contributions of Cuba to architectural culture.

This is a standard reading and discussion graduate seminar intended to develop research techniques, and analytical capabilities. The fundamental requirements are three, reading and participation in all class discussions, one formal presentation to the class, and one graduate research paper.

Course description
This seminar will examine Cuba’s important contribution to modern architecture. Using this focused subject, the students are expected to revise important moments in the general history of modern architecture to which they have been exposed in other courses. The seminar will have a broad scope so that both: students interested in the history of twentieth century modern architecture, and students interested in Latin America and Cuba can be engaged in fruitful discussion.

The seminar draws its relevance from the quantitative and qualitative importance of Cuba’s architectural production at mid century. Cuba, together with Mexico, Venezuela, Brazil and other Latin American countries, were considered in the 1950’s as “modern architecture’s promised land” the place where the dreams of modernism were becoming broadly built.

In the Post Second World War years, all of these countries were very well studied internationally including monographs, magazine special editions, and exhibits by most of the major international providers of architectural information; a good example being the intense attention that MoMA showered on the region. This attention both sharply contrasts with the scarce interest that this architecture received in later years, and offers a wealth of documentary material that allows a graduate seminar like ours to analyze the motives and ideas behind both the production of that architecture and its public dissemination.

The seminar will span the years from 1930 to 1968. Between these dates lies a critical inflexion point: the fateful 1959 Cuban revolution. Even with that in mind, 1968 was still chosen here as a final date because under the strict point of view of architectural production the first decade of the new situation continued various trends of earlier years; and the careers of some of its architects. The panorama changed around 1968, when the country entered a full alliance with the Soviet Union that proposed a different understanding of the role of the architect.

The seminar, although will cover the historical and theoretical context of Cuban architecture in these 40 years, will have a special emphasis in the city of Havana. This is not only because of the importance of the capital in the culture of the country, but also because of the concentration of available bibliographical material in a city that keeps a profound
hold in the world’s collective imagination. As indispensable context, we will plunge into the culture and geography of Havana using cinematographic and other visual sources.

We will start our readings, with a general historical introduction to the country and the era. We will continue in architectural ground with the seminal trips of Le Corbusier to Latin America in 1929 and 1936. Corbu’s arrival to South America was a pivotal event not only for his own ideas, but also for the countries that shaped them. This beginning intends to bring to the seminar the students familiarity with this quintessential figure of twentieth century architecture, and start to play that knowledge into the Latin American background. We will see how his ideas evolved into a continental trend mainly led by Brazilian architecture’s reinterpretation – continental trend of which Cuba is foremost example.

Parallel to this beginning in international culture, we will examine the complex negotiations in art and architecture that created a complex position for the Cuban avant-garde between regional and universal culture., and the pioneer architects that negotiated between modern and traditional ideas such as Eugenio Batista in his seminal ideas about the reuse of traditional concepts such as Cuban courtyards, porches and windows in modern architecture.

We will see how all these issues play in the generation of Post-World War II architects such as Nicolás Arroyo and Gabriela Menéndez, Alberto Beale, Max Borges, Aquiles Capablanca, Juan Ignacio Guerra, Manuel Gutierrez, Frank Martínez, Ricardo Porro, Mario Romañach, Antonio Quintana and Nicolas Quintana among many others.

A fascinating component of interest for North American students is the widespread American influence in Latin American 50’s architecture, a complex issue not only of importance for Cuba but for the whole continent. Of the six Cuban works that MoMA included in his seminal 1955 exhibit, two were designed by American architects, the Hilton Hotel, and the American Embassy both in Havana. The subject of American influence has produced two excellent recent books, “Building the Cold War, Hilton Hotels and Modern Architecture” and “The Architecture of Diplomacy, Building American Embassies”, books that we will discuss in the class. We will examine also the international role and Latin American influence of some fundamental Americanized figures such as Richard Neutra and Jose Luis Sert, both with significant works in Cuba.

Calendar and Lecture schedule: final
(Note critical dates in brackets)
Class 1 August 23
Lecture 01 Introduction to the Topics of the Seminar
Their Relation to Cuba and USA History
By Alfonso Pérez-Méndez

Class 2 August 30
Lecture 02 The Capital City-1
History and Geography of Havana
By Alfonso Pérez-Méndez
Lecture 03 The Quest for a National Identity in Painting
An overiding Passion: 1930-1950
By Alfonso Pérez-Méndez

Class 3 September 6
(Discussion of Seminar Deliverables)
Lecture 04 The generation of the 1930’s
Eugenio Batista: The permanence of tradition: courtyards, porches, and windows
By Alfonso Pérez-Méndez
Lecture 05 The generation of the 1940’s
Max Borges
By student
Class 4  September 13
Lecture 06  The generation of the 1940’s:
Antonio Quintana
By student
Lecture 07  The generation of the 1940’s:
Alberto Beale
By student

(Class Suspended: September 20, D-7 New York Trip)

Class 5  September 27
Lecture 08  The generation of the 1940’s
Mario Romaitach
By student
Lecture 09  The generation of the 1940’s
Emilio Del Junco
By student

Class 6  October 4
Lecture 10  Issues and influences at inflexion
The Plaza Civica (The seat of power)
By student
Lecture 11  Issues and influences at inflexion
Cuba Urban Plans by Jose Luis Sert
By student

Class 7  October 11
(First Draft of Class Deliverables Due)
Lecture 12  Issues and influences at inflexion
The Havana Embassy, By Harrison and Abramowitz
By student
Lecture 13  Issues and influences at inflexion
Neutra in Latin America and the de Schulthess House,
By student

Class 8  October 18
Lecture 14  Issues and influences at inflexion
The Tourist Boom and the Connection to Miami
Igor Polevitzyk and Phillip Johnson’s Havana Riviera Hotel
By student
Lecture 15  Issues and influences at inflexion
Havana Hilton by Welton Becket and Associates and (The Caribe Hilton by Toro-Ferrer and
Torregrosa) Hilton Hotels: Exporting America Lifestyle
By student

Class 9  October 25
(Second Pass Class Deliverables Due)
Lecture 16  The generation of the 1950’s-2
Nicolás Quintana
By student
Lecture 17  The generation of the 1950’s-1
Frank Martinez
By student

Class 10 November 01
Lecture 18 Before and after the revolution
  Ricardo Porro and the National Schools of Art
  By student

Lecture 19 Before and after the revolution
  Humberto Alonso and CUJAE
  By student

Class 11 November 15
(Class deliverables Due)

Lecture 20 The generation of the 1940’s:
  Nicolás Arroyo
  By student

Lecture 21 The generation of the 1950’s-3
  Manuel Gutiérrez
  By student

Class 12 November 22
Final discussion

Required texts and readings
The class will not have a required text.
The following readings will be assigned on a weekly basis from different sources.

To Read before Class 2
1.0. From Differences, Ignasi de Sola-Morales, 1997, Architecture and Existentialism,
  1.1. - From An Intelligent American Guide to the Peace, Sumner Welles, 1945, section dedicated to Cuba
  1.2. - From Columbia University Encyclopedia, 1975, entry about Cuba
  1.3. - From Cuba Frommer's Guide, 2003, historical summary,
  1.4. - From Cuba Moon Handbooks Guide, 2003, Historical Summary
  1.5. - From Cuba, Insight Guides, 2005, Historical Summary

To Read before Class 3
2.1. - From Cruelty and Utopia, Cities and landscapes in Latin America, Princeton Architectural Press 2003
  2.1.1. - Law of the Indies
  2.1.2. - Dreams of Order, Utopia Cruelty and Modernity, by Jean-Francois Lejeune
  2.2. - From the Journal of Decorative and Propaganda Arts, Cuba Theme Issue #22, Wolfsonian Foundation. Miami, 1996
  2.2.1 An overriding Passion, the quest for a national Identity in Painting, by Narciso G. Menocal

To Read before Class 4
  3.2.- From the Havana Guide, by Eduardo Luis Rodríguez, Princeton architectural Press, New York, 2000,
  Introduction pp. I-XXXVI
  3.4. - Biographical Notes on Alejo Carpentier.

To Read before Class 5
  4.1.1. - “Desert and Selva: from abstraction to Desire, Notes on the Regionalist dilemma in Latin American architecture” by Roberto Fernández.
  4.2. - From the Journal of Decorative and Propaganda Arts, Cuba Theme Issue #22, Wolfsonian Foundation. Miami, 1996
  4.2.1. - “On Cuban Culture and the Contents of this Issue” by Narciso G. Menocal
  4.2.2. - “The years of Social” by Ma. Luisa Lobo Montalvo and Zoila Lapique Becali.
  4.2.3. - “Estrada Palma 261: Still Life with Dream about Amelia Peláez” by Juan Antonio Molina.
  4.2.4. - “Enrique Riverón on the Cuban Vanguardia an Interview”, by Giulio V. Blanc.

To Read before Class 6
5.1. - Introduction on “the Cuban House” by Alfonso Pérez-Méndez.

5.3. - From towards a New Architecture, by Le Corbusier, original edition in French 1923, “Mass Production of Houses”, parts of Towards... dedicated to the house.

5.4. - From Arquitectura Cuba # 245, December 1953, “A Project by Architect Antonio Boada, Apartments by the River” by J. M. Bens Arrarte (Architect and Director of the Magazine Arquitectura Cuba). The article above includes a reprint of “The Creole House, Essay about the Cuban House” By J. M. Bens Arrarte, originally published in April 1935, in Social. Translated by Alfonso Pérez-Mendez

5.5.- Herencia, Patios, Portales y Persianas, La Casa Cubana / Heritage, Courtyards, Verandas, and Shutters, the Cuban House, by Eugenio Batista. Although the article was not published until 1960 in the magazine Artes Plásticas # 2, it deals retrospectively with the thinking that led to the construction of the Falla Bonet House in 1939.

To Read before Class 7


To Read before Class 8

7.1.-Special issue dedicated to Cuban Architecture: L’Architecture d’aujourd’hui # 350, January-February 2004

7.1.1 – “Havana Backs Modernity”, by Eduardo Luis Rodriguez
7.1.2. - “Havana 1900-1950, Half a Century of Modernization”, by Juan Luis Morales Menocal
7.1.3. - “The Ups and Downs of La Rampa, Between Nostalgia and Regeneration”, by Isabel Rigol y Angela Rojas
7.1.4. - “Cubal Cubal” by Ricardo Porro.
7.1.7. - “Emilio del Junco” by Ricardo Porro.

To Read before Class 9

The influence of Sert: Mario Romañach, Nicolas Quintana, y Ricardo Porro.


8.2. - From José Luis Sert 1901-1983 , by Josep M. Rovira, Electaarchitecture, Milano, 2000, fragments of “Latin America” and chapter on “Last commissions and end of the CIAMs” that includes Sert Cuba Projects and collaborations.

8.3.- From Sert 1928-1979 Half a Century of Architecture, Complete Work, edited by Josep M. Rovira, Fundacion Juan Miro, Barcelona

8.3.1. - “Introduction” by Jaume Freixa and Josep M. Rovira
8.3.2. - “Introduction to Sert’s New York practice” by Josep M. Rovira
8.3.3. - “Quinta Paladino Project, Havana, 1954” by Timothy Hide
8.3.4. - “Varadero and Isle of Pines Projects, 1953-1955” by Josep M. Rovira.
8.3.5.-“Havana Plan, 1955” by Timothy Hide.
8.3.6. - Presidential Palace in Havana, 1955” by Octavio L. Borgatello

8.4. - From José Luis Sert by Knud Bastlund, Praeger NY, 1967; “The Rebirth of the Patio” by José Luis Sert.

To Read before Class 10

9.2 From *Planning Latin America's Capital Cities 1850-1950*. Edited by Arturo Almandoz: Chapter 8 Havana, from Tacon to Forestier, Roberto Segre


**To Read before Class 11**


- 10.1.1 Introduction
- 10.1.2. Chapter 6 “The commoditization of Space: Making Modernity” (including the Caribe Hilton discussion)


- 10.2.1. - “Igor Polevitzky’s Architectural Vision for a Modern Miami” by Allan T. Shulman. Including Habana Riviera Discussion.


- 10.3.1. - “Merchandising Miami Beach: Morris Lapidus and the architecture of Abundance” by Alice T. Friedman.

**To Read before Class 12**


- 11.1.1 “Miami Meditations” essay from Chapter 6.

11.2. Louis A. Pérez Jr., Biography

11.3. From the *Journal of Decorative and Propaganda Arts, Cuba Theme Issue #22*, Wolfsonian Foundation. Miami, 1996

- 11.3.1. Cuba connections, Key West-Tampa-Miami, 1870- to 1945”, by Paula Harper

11.4. From *Arquitectura Cuba # 278*, September 1956:

- 11.4.1. Havana should not Become Miami’s Architectural Branch, The Opinions of Architect Emilio del Junco” by Armando Maribona. Translated by Alfonso Pérez-Méndez


- 11.6.1. Chapter 8 “Making Prose Speak. (Intended to be able to judge the technique of the readings in the class)

**Additional readings**


12.2. “Reviving Havana”, by David Adams, St Petersburg Times September 10 2001

12.3. “New Cuban Revolution Preservation” by Gary Marx, Chicago Tribune September 18 2005


12.6. From *Havana and Miami, Modernism and the City*, Conference at Cornell University: Conference presentation, Abstracts of papers, and bion of conference participants.


12.8 From *Havana History and architecture of a Romantic City*, by Maria Luisa Lobo Montalvo: Acknowledgements, Prologue by Hugh Thomas, Introduction: My Faraway lost World, Tradition and Modernity (essay of 1950’s architecture)

**Bibliography**

There are just enough —and we will rely upon— English texts, but I add below an addendum of Spanish texts that will provide extra graphic documentation for all students, and valuable research texts for students fluent in Spanish.

*Books in English;*

*About Cuba as part of Latin America*

Building the New World, Studies in the Modern architecture of Latin America, Valerie Fraser, Verso, 2000
Latin America in its Architecture, edited: Roberto Segre, Holmes and Meier 1981
Latin American Architecture since 1945, by Henry-Russell Hitchcock, MOMA, 1955
Brazil Builds, by Phillip L. Goldwin, MOMA, 1953
New directions in Latin American Architecture, by Francisco Bulrich, Braziller, 1969
Art in Latin American architecture, by Paul Damaz, Reinhold, 1963
Anxious Modernisms, experimentations in Post-war architectural Culture, Sarah Williams Goldgagen, MIT press, 2000

About Cuba
The Journal of Decorative and Propaganda Arts # 22, Cuba Theme Issue, 1996
Havana, Cuba, An architectural guide, by M. Elena Martin Zequeira, Junta de Andalucia, 1998
Havana, Two Faces of the Antillean Metropolis, by Roberto Segre, Wiley, 1997
Cuban Forgotten Art Schools, Revolution of Forms John A. Loomis, Princeton Arch. Press, 1999

About American Influence in Cuba
Building the Cold War, Hilton Hotels and Modern Architecture, Annabel Jane Wharton, Univ. of Chicago Press, 2001
Architecture of social Concern in Region's of Mild Climate, by Richard Neutra, 1954
Richard Neutra, by Willy Boesiger, 3 volumes, Praeger, 1951, 1959, 1966
Jose Luis Sert, by Josep M. Rovira, Electa, 2003

Books in Spanish:
First and foremost we will be using the excellent holdings of our library on Cuban periodicals of the era, starting with
the complete collection of Arquitectura Cuba, magazine that alone provides comprehensive graphic documentation of
the era.
Arquitectura en la Ciudad de la Habana, Primera Modernidad, by Carlos Sambricio y Roberto Segre, Electa 2000
500 años de Construcción en Cuba, by Juan de las Cuevas Toralla, Chavin, 2001
La Habana, Arquitectura del Siglo XX, by Eduardo Luis Rodriguez, Blume, 1998
Diez años de Arquitectura Cubana Revolucionaria, by Roberto Segre, Union 1969
Arquitectura Antillana del Siglo XX, by Roberto Segre, Universidad Nacional de Colombia, 2003
Arquitectura y Urbanismo de la Revolución Cubana, by Roberto Segre, E. Pueblo y Educación, 1989

Attendance
Students are expected to attend every seminar meeting listed on the calendar. Students will be notified in advance if
there is any change in schedule. All absences must be justified by necessary documents such as medical notes. One
unjustified absence from, or late arrival to, seminar will impact the student grade. Since the seminar depends on class
discussion and interaction, two unjustified answers will preclude the student from completing the seminar. Justified
absences must be notified via e-mail to the professor, preferably in advance.

Requirements
The requirements of the seminar will be –for each student-- to prepare one ½ hour slide presentation about a particular
Cuban post-second world war architect chosen in agreement with the professor. These presentations will be the
springboard for a final paper in which the students will start working before mid semester. The papers will follow
standard graduate research paper requirements.

The papers that the class favors are what we call “documentation papers”, rather than idea papers. What we mean are
papers where the student writes all the information that they can document about the particular architect that they are
studying. First biographical information, then followed by a systematic compilation of all the works “in Cuba” that they
can find, ordered chronologically. The student is required to carefully document always the origin of the information that
they include.

The idea is that we, as a class, produce papers that other people can use in the future as basic compilation of
documentation for these architects.
Performance and Grades
The final paper, in combination with class presentation and class participation, will be the basis for grading.

EVALUATION OUT 1000
Weekly class participation: 200 points (20%)
Student presentation: 200 points (20%)
Final Research paper: 600 points (60%)

NUMERICAL TO LETTER GRADE CONVERSION
900 and above = A
870 to 899 = A-
830 to 869 = B+
800 to 829 = B
770 to 799 = B-
730 to 769 = C+
700 to 729 = C
670 to 699 = C-
630 to 669 = D+
600 to 629 = D
Below = E

Honor Code
The University of Florida Honor Code applies to assignments completed in this course: “We, the members of the University of Florida community, pledge to hold ourselves and our peers to the highest standards of honesty and integrity.” (Adopted by UF student body in 1995)

Regarding accommodations for students with disabilities
“Students requesting classroom accommodation must first register with the Dean of Students Office. The Dean of Students Office will provide documentation to the student who must then provide this documentation to the Instructor when requesting accommodation.”

Late Work Policy: If have you a documented reason to turn in late work, this should be discussed with the professor before each deadline.

General Information: The instructor will follow most topics outlined above, but these topics are by no means binding as a particular topic may be changed at any time according to the discretion of the instructor.