Instructor: Rebecca Choi
Office: Watt Hall
Office hours: Thursdays 12:00
Class times: Thursdays 9:00 – 12:00 + Saturday Site Visits
Location: Watt 212
Units: 4
Email: choirebe@usc.edu

6 Saturday Site Visits:
1. Gamble House, Thursday September 26 (9:00 am)
2-3. Barnsdall Park, Saturday October 5 (11:00) Freeman (9:00 am)
4-5. Kings Road House, Saturday October 26 (11 am) Falk (9:00 am)
6. Neutra VDL, Saturday November 2 (11-12:15)
7-8. Eames, Saturday November 16 (10:30) and Koenig (12:15) (student cost incurred $28)
9. Lautner Sheats-Goldstein, Saturday November 23 (morning TBD) (student cost incurred $6.25)

“I've been there three or four times, and I can never find my way around. There are no church spires, no squares...I could of course read the street signs but that's a hell of a task. Since I don't drive, that doesn't interest me. [Los Angeles] is an impossible city.”
—Marcel Duchamp

Upon visiting Los Angeles in 1963, Marcel Duchamp described Los Angeles as a place that did not exist. Describing his frustrations that the city lacked wayfinding devices to help orient himself, Duchamp’s quote reveals a moment in urban history when LA was regarded as a city that nobody thought they could see. What Duchamp failed to notice was the city's rich history of domestic architecture produced figures from Frank Lloyd Wright to the architects who participated in the Case Study House Program. The course will situate a range projects within the broader historical shifts taking place in Los Angeles and alongside key disciplinary developments taking place in the history of domestic architecture.

Contrary to Duchamp’s perception of Los Angeles, this course introduces students to the significance of Los Angeles architecture by way of a close examination of homes designed by seven prominent architects—each who practiced in Southern California in the early to mid-twentieth century. Nine site visits to individual houses will take place in combination with selected readings presented and discussed in seminar.

Students will be expected to write short evaluations about three out of the 9 houses/7 architects they study/visit. The short essays will include the student’s understanding of the project in conjunction with or contrast to the architects stated intentions. A 10-page research paper can be substituted for one of the evaluation papers. For this paper, the student must select a research topic approved by the instructor related to materials covered in the course.

Course Schedule:
Week 1
Thursday August 29 Introduction to the course

Week 2
Thursday September 5 The Concept of Domesticity, The Inside, House-ness, and the Private Sphere
Case Studies: The Woman House
Required Readings:
LA County Housing (1935) 37-40


*Optional Further Reading:

Diane Harris. "Rendered Whiteness: Architectural Drawings and Graphics" In Little White Houses: How the Postwar Home Constructed Race in America


Week 3
Thursday September 12  No Class

Week 4:
Thursday September 19  California Bungalow & The Gamble House of Greene and Greene

Required Readings:
The craftsman Vol. XXII, Number 5 (August 1912) pp. 532-547

Cheryl Robertson “Male and Female Agendas for Domestic Reform: The Middle Class Bungalow in Gendered Perspective,” Winterthur Portfolio 16 (Summer – Fall, 1991) 123-41.

The craftsman Vol. XXII, Number 5 (August 1912) pp. 532-547

*Optional Further Reading:

Makinson (1977), pp. 150-87 (The Ultimate Bungalows).

Week 5
Thursday September 26  SITE VISIT -- The Gamble House 9
Guest Curator: Jennifer Trotoux
4 Westmoreland Place, Pasadena, CA

Week 6
Thursday October 3  Regional Character: Frank Lloyd Wright and Southern California Work and Experience

Required Readings:
F.L. Wright Organic Architecture(1910) pp. 25


*Optional Further Reading:
Robert Sweeney (Block System), 72-79 (Freeman)
Jeff Chusid Saving Wright (2011) pp. 72-88 (Freeman House)
James Steele Barnsdall House Architecture in Detail (1992) pp. 1-21 (Barnsdall House)

Saturday October 5  SITE VISITS—Freeman & Barnsdall
Guest Curator: T. Sandmeier
The Freeman House (TBD)
1962 Glencoe Way, Los Angeles CA

The Barnsdall House (11AM-12PM)
4808 Hollywood Boulevard, Los Angeles, CA

Week 7
Thursday October 10  No Class

Week 8
Thursday October 17  Fall Recess No Class

Week 9
Thursday October 24  Schindler in Los Angeles: Between Living Inside and Outside

Required Readings:
R, M, Rudolf M. Schindler, "Shelter and Playground"
(scroll down in the pdf to find this)

Reyner Banham, "The Master Builders."

*Optional Further Reading:
Smith (2001), pp. 7-43
Sweeney + Sheine pp. 75-92
Sarnitz (1986), pp. 66-67

Saturday October 26  SITE VISIT — The Schindler House
(11:00 AM to 12:00PM)
835 Kings Road, West Hollywood

Week 10
Thursday October 31  The VDL House of Richard Neutra

Required Readings:
Sylvia Lavin, Open the Box: Richard Neutra and Psychologizing the Environment (2004) pp 3-23
and (1999) pp. 6-25

Excerpts from chapter 1.


Saturday November 2  SITE VISIT — VDL House (11AM)
2300 Silverlake Boulevard, Los Angeles (Silver Lake) (11:00 AM to 12:00PM)

Week 11
Thursday November 7  No Class

Week 12
Thursday November 14  Pierre Koenig, Charles Eames and the Case Study House Program

Required Readings:
Arts and Architecture, January, 1945, May 1949, and December 1949;

Esther McCoy The Important House, 1948
*Optional Further Reading
Arts and Architecture, May 1949, and December 1949;
Jackson (2007) pp. 5-91
Banham, Master Builders (1971) 39-55

Saturday November 16  SITE VISIT --- Case Study House #8 (Eames)
203 Chautauqua, Los Angeles (Pacific Palisades), CA (10:30 AM-11:30AM)

SITE VISIT --- Case Study House #22 (Koenig)
1635 Woods Drive, Los Angeles, CA (12:15)

Week 13
Thursday November 21  Media: The work of John Lautner

Required Readings
John Lautner oral history transcript, 1994


Campbell-Lange (2005) pp. 7-89

Saturday November 23  SITE VISIT ---
Sheats Goldstein House
10104 Angelo View Dr., Los Angeles, CA

Week 14
Thursday November 28  No Class Holiday

Week 15
Thursday December 5  No Class

Required Readings:
Uploaded to Blackboard

Course Requirements and Grading:
1. 2 evaluation papers 60%
   + one research paper (due end of term) (30% each)
2. Final Exam 20%
3. Attendance/Participation (see below) 20%
   Total 100%

Class Participation
A portion of each class will be set-aside for class discussion. You are expected to come to class prepared to discuss the readings and the field trips. The following are the three specific class participation assignments.
1. At 11:59 pm on the Wednesday before each lecture class you are required to post on blackboard your takeaway from the readings (250-300 words)
2. After each site visit by 11:59 pm on the Wednesday after our Saturday site visit you are required to post on blackboard comments and observations about the site visit experience. (500 words, bullet points acceptable)

1 Evaluation Papers
Synthesize site visit, lectures, and reading material into 7 double-spaced page essay which captures your evaluation/analysis of the house. Due two-weeks after we discuss the house in class. Photos with captions diagrams, bibliography/references, and sketches are not included in the page count. The focus of the paper should be on reconciling the theories, writings, and description of ideas present in the lectures and readings against your own experience of the place. The experience of each setting should include (although need not be limited to) the following criteria:
I. Spatial Perception
1. Spatial hierarchy and relationships
2. Spatial sequence, procession, and organization
3. Indoor-outdoor spatial relationships
4. Introduction of natural light

II. Materials and Structure
5. Structural system and expression
6. Materials expression, detailing, color, and texture

III. Attention to Users
7. Function and response to intended user

Students can choose to evaluate 2 out of the 9 houses we visit, but must include at least one of the following houses:
The Gamble House
Barnsdall or Freeman House
Kings Road House or Falk Apartments

Identifying signature ideas and visual/experiential techniques are essential. Each assignment should emphasize your own formal analysis. Photos/drawings (with detailed captions and/or annotations), diagrams, and plan annotations are an excellent way to communicate your ideas. There are thousands of photos of these houses on the internet from which to choose from. Also, you should come prepared to take photos of the house to illustrate additional points. I am most interested in your detailed analysis and observations of the place—the more ideas the better!

Research Paper
The research paper will detail a topic raised in the readings or through the site visits. For example, you may be intrigued by Frank Lloyd Wright's experiences in Los Angeles and curious about other work he completed in southern California. This could involve a scholarly paper or a comparative analysis of several other houses. You may find the issue of spatial sequence intriguing and want to gain insight about how it can be viewed across other important residential buildings, which have dealt with this phenomena in unusual and effective ways. There are also a number of other early modernists and case study architects in southern California for which considerable material exists in the library. These include Irving Gill, Harwell Hamilton Harris, Rodney Walker, Buff, Straub and Hensman, Craig Elwood, Quincy Jones, and Bernard Maybeck (northern California). Other architects of note that practiced in California during this same period include Wallace Neff, Rafael Soriano, Julia Morgan and Paul Williams. If these architects and their work is of interest, you may research a figure and apply a concept or theory discussed throughout the semester in relation to their projects.

The topic should be one that has been discussed in class but for which a more in-depth investigation would be rewarding and warranted. Please avoid overly general topics, such as "The Life and Times of Frank Lloyd Wright" and do not utilize the houses we have visited as the primary source of information. The paper should be 10 pages in length (double spaced). I will review and approve your outline.

Additional References
Background/Evaluation/Reference:

Millet, Marietta S. Light Revealing Architecture, New York: VNR, 1996.

Greene and Greene
Cigliano, Jan, Bungalow, Salt Lake City: Gibbs Smith, 1998.
Clark, Michael and Jill Thomas-Clark, Stickley Brothers, Salt Lake City: Gibbs Smith, 2002.


**Wright**


**Schindler**


**Neutra**


Neutra, Richard, Mysteries and Realities of the Site, NY: Morgan and Morgan, 1951.

Lautner
Futagawa, Yukio, GA Houses 32, 1993 (Lautner—pages 8-85).

Eames

Koenig/CSH

Gehry

Lavin, Sylvia and Kimberli Meyer, Everything Loos Will Land; 19705 Art & Architecture In Los Angeles, MAK Center for Art and Architecture, Los Angeles, at the Schindler House, 2013


Other Architects/Modernism


Chambers, W., Charles Rennie Mackintosh, Edinburgh: Glasgow School of Art, 1993.


McCoy, Esther, Craig Ellwood, Santa Monica: Hennessey and Ingalls, 1997.

May, Cliff, Western Ranch Houses, Santa Monica: Hennessey and Ingalls, 1997.


