

## The History of Architectural Theory

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### Mid-Term Assignment

1. Choose a piece of architectural theory.
2. Analyze how it works in 10 pages (not more not less).
3. Hand in to the school office by 10:00am Wednesday October 29.

#### Tips:

\*Your selected piece of architectural theory does not have to have been discussed in class, or belong to the historical periods that have been discussed so far. The only restriction is that it cannot be the work of a member of the Columbia faculty.

\*Theory takes many forms and each piece of theory you choose will raise different kinds of issue and needs to be analyzed in its own way, but here are some of the basic kinds of issue that might be relevant:

What is the context? (ie. where is the theory placed)

What is the intended audience? (i.e. who is it directed to)

What is the mission or strategic role of the theory? (ie. what does it try to persuade to who)

What identifies it as "theory"?

What argument is made and in what way?

What does the theory take for granted? (ie. what assumptions, concepts, words are presupposed)

What does the theory think cannot be taken for granted? (ie. what is treated as problematic, needing to be decided, discussed or resolved...etc)

What kind of language is used?

What is the role of graphic layout, typography, images, etc.?

What kind of framing devices are used?

What elements of the theory seem historically specific?

....

....etc, etc, etc

\*You should ask yourself all these kinds of question when looking at your chosen piece of theory, even if you decide to concentrate in detail on only one or several of them.

\*Always remember the basic question of the assignment: **how does this particular piece of theory work?**

Think of it as a kind of device or mechanism, and try to see exactly how this mechanism operates, how does it try to achieve its goal.