

The Hong Kong University of Science and Technology

UG Course Syllabus

Understanding Western Architecture

HUMA 2680

3 Credits

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Course Description

This course gives students fundamental knowledge of the masterpieces of Western architecture and the variation in styles in different epochs and cultures, from ancient Greece to the 21st century.

Intended Learning Outcomes (ILOs)

By the end of this course, students should be able to:

- ILO1. define, explain and use the basic terminology of Western architecture;
- ILO2. recognize the chronology and typology of Western architecture from ancient Greece to the 21st century;
- ILO3. identify the stylistic characteristics of different epochs in different Western countries and examine them in relation to structural and tectonic systems, architectural theories and historical, socio-economic and cultural conditions of their emergence.

Museum/Gallery Visit

A museum/gallery visit will be arranged during the term. Participation is strongly recommended.

Class Schedule and Topics

LT-K, Mon & Wed, 10:30-11:50

Venue for quizzes and final exam: to be announced

SEPTEMBER

Monday		Wednesday		Week
		2	Introduction and Chronology	1
7	Terminology	9	Greek Architecture 1	2
14	Greek Architecture 2	16	Roman Architecture 1	3
21	Roman Architecture 2	23	Early Christian Churches	4
28	Byzantine Architecture	30	Carolingian and Romanesque Architecture	5

OCTOBER

Monday		Wednesday		Week
5	Short Quiz 1	7	Romanesque Architecture	6
12	Gothic Architecture 1	14	Gothic Architecture 2	7
19	NO CLASS	21	Renaissance Architecture 1	8
26	Renaissance Architecture 2	28	Baroque Architecture	9

NOVEMBER

Monday		Wednesday		Week
2	Short Quiz 2	4	Baroque Architecture & Rococo Style	10
9	Classical Revival Styles 1	11	Classical Revival Styles 2	11
16	New Trends in 19 th Century	18	Modern Architecture 1	12
23	Modern Architecture 2	25	Contemporary Architecture 1	13
30	Contemporary Architecture 2 Review & Conclusion			

Study break: 1-5 Dec 2026

Final exam period: 7-19 Dec 2026

Assessment and Grading

This course will be assessed using criterion-referencing and grades will not be assigned using a curve. Detailed rubrics for each assignment are provided below, outlining the criteria used for evaluation.

Assessments:

Assessment Task	Contribution to Overall Course grade (%)	Due date
Short Quiz 1	25%	2026-10-05*
Short Quiz 2	25%	2026-11-02*
Final Examination	40%	to be announced
Attendance	10%	not applicable**

* Assessment marks for individual assessed tasks will be released within two weeks of the due date.

** Attendance will be checked 10 times randomly after the add/drop period.

Communication and Feedback

Assessment marks for individual assessed tasks will be communicated via Canvas within two weeks of submission. Students who have questions about the marks should go to the paper-checking sessions to be held within five working days after the release of the marks.

Make-up Policy

No arrangement in advance for quizzes or exam. Make-up quiz/exam will only be offered to those who cannot attend owing to unpredictable reasons and with possible mark deduction.

Course AI Policy

The use of AI tools or any digital devices in assessment tasks is strictly prohibited. Discovery of any such devices during quizzes or exam will be reported immediately to ARO as academic misconduct.

Academic Integrity

Students are expected to adhere to the university's academic integrity policy. Students are expected to uphold HKUST's Academic Honor Code and to maintain the highest standards of academic integrity. The University has zero tolerance of academic misconduct. Please refer to [Academic Integrity | HKUST – Academic Registry](#) for the University's definition of plagiarism and ways to avoid cheating and plagiarism.

Required Texts and Materials

Books:

1. Basic Literature

Sutton, Ian. *Western Architecture: From Ancient Greece to the Present*. Thames and Hudson, 1999.

Norwich, John Julius (Ed.). *Great Architecture of the World*. Da Capo Press, 1991 (reprinted 2003).

2. Further Reading

Glancey, Jonathan. *The Story of Architecture*. Dorling Kindersley, 2003.

Online resources:

"Western architecture". *Encyclopedia Britannica*. <https://www.britannica.com/art/Western-architecture>
 "Art History", Arts and Humanities. *Khan Academy*. <https://www.khanacademy.org/humanities/art-history>
Online videos and articles will be recommended topic by topic.

Reading List:**Week 1-13**

Terminology-Fall26.pdf

Greek and Roman architecture

Sutton, chapter 1, pp. 10-23 (strongly recommended)

Norwich, pp. 56-76 (strongly recommended)

Glancey, pp. 24-35

Early Christian and Byzantine architecture

Sutton, chapter 2, pp. 24-35 (strongly recommended)

Norwich, pp. 78-87, 89-91 (strongly recommended)

Glancey, pp. 36-41

Carolingian and Romanesque architecture

Sutton, chapter 3, pp. 38-67 (strongly recommended)

Norwich, pp. 92-105, 107 (strongly recommended)

Glancey, pp. 42-45

Gothic architecture

Sutton, chapter 4, pp. 74-99, 105-107 (strongly recommended)

Norwich, pp. 114-129 (strongly recommended)

Glancey, pp. 52-59, 64-65

Renaissance architecture

Sutton, chapter 5, pp. 126-151, 157-163 (strongly recommended)

Norwich, pp. 142-161, 168-171 (strongly recommended)

Glancey, pp. 66-77

Baroque and Rococo architecture

Sutton, chapter 6, pp. 168-179, 205-209, 215-223 (strongly recommended)

Norwich, pp. 172-177, 178-181, 188-191, 184-185 (strongly recommended)

Glancey, pp. 78-81, 84-85, 87-89

Classical Revival Styles

Sutton, chapter 7, pp. 224-250, 255-264; chapter 8, pp. 268-274 (strongly recommended)

Norwich, pp. 192-195, 200, 210-213 (strongly recommended)

Glancey, pp. 118-131, 146-149

New trends in the 19th century

Sutton, chapter 8, pp. 290-295, 298-299; chapter 9, pp. 304-315 (strongly recommended)

Norwich, pp. 202-209, 218-219, 222-227 (strongly recommended)

Glancey, pp. 134-143, 156-159, 166-169

Modern architecture

Sutton, chapter 9, pp. 316-349

Norwich, pp. 228-241, 254-261 (strongly recommended)

Glancey, pp. 160-163, 172-179, 182-183, 188, 190-191

"Western architecture. 20th-century architecture, The Modernist Moment ". *Encyclopedia Britannica*, 2 Dec. 2023. Accessed 7 August 2025. (strongly recommended)
<https://www.britannica.com/art/Western-architecture/20th-century-architecture#ref47416>

Contemporary architecture

Sutton, chapter 10, pp. 354-371

Glancey, pp. 198-201, 204-207, 218-225

"Western architecture. 20th-century architecture, Postmodernism". *Encyclopedia Britannica*, 2 Dec. 2023. Accessed 7 August 2025. (strongly recommended)
<https://www.britannica.com/art/Western-architecture/Postmodernism>

"Western architecture. Architecture at the turn of the 21st century, Deconstruction & Millennial Trends". *Encyclopedia Britannica*, 2 Dec. 2023. Accessed 7 August 2025. (strongly recommended)
<https://www.britannica.com/art/Western-architecture/Architecture-at-the-turn-of-the-21st-century>

Mapping of Course ILOs to Assessment Tasks

Assessed Task	Mapped ILOs	Explanation
Quizzes	ILO1, ILO2, ILO3	This task assesses students' mastery over the terminology (ILO1), chronology and typology of the subject (ILO2), as well as their knowledge of the stylistic characteristics of Western architecture (ILO3).
Final Examination	ILO1, ILO2, ILO3	This task assesses the extent and the accuracy of the knowledge acquired by the students (ILO1, ILO2, ILO3). The essay question in the exam will check their abilities to analyze and reason the emergence of architectural types and styles (ILO3).
Attendance	ILO1, ILO2, ILO3	Attendance is checked to ensure students' in-class participation in which open discussion will be conducted from time to time (ILO1, ILO2, ILO3).

Grading Rubrics**Descriptors of Range of Scores for Quizzes:**

Scores	Short Description	Elaboration on the description
23-25	Excellent Performance	Demonstrates a comprehensive understanding of the topics covered in the quiz. Shows a maximum degree of accuracy. Answers are complete, insightful and well-articulated.
19-22	Good Performance	Exhibits a strong understanding of the quiz content. Answers contain some inaccuracies. The student has a solid grasp of the knowledge acquired.
15-18	Satisfactory Performance	Displays a satisfactory understanding of the quiz material. Answers are basic and lack detail. The student shows a general familiarity with the taught content.
9-14	Poor Performance	Demonstrates limited understanding of the topics covered. Answers are incomplete or contain significant errors. The student exhibits a poor grasp of the subject.
0-8	Extremely Poor Performance	Exhibits a poor understanding of the quiz material. Answers are missing or entirely inaccurate. The student shows extremely poor comprehension of the essential content.

Final Grade Descriptors:

Grades	Short Description	Elaboration on subject grading description
A	Excellent Performance	Demonstrates a comprehensive understanding and in-depth knowledge of the key concepts of Western architecture. Shows excellent ability to identify the stylistic characteristics of Western architecture of different periods and write about architectural theories analytically and critically.
B	Good Performance	Shows good knowledge and understanding of Western architecture. Displays high motivation to learn and a good level of critical thinking and analysis.
C	Satisfactory Performance	Possesses adequate knowledge of Western architecture and some capacity for critical thinking and analysis. Shows persistence and effort to achieve broadly defined learning goals.
D	Marginal Pass	Has limited understanding of Western architecture. Knowledge is incomplete and inaccurate. Shows a low level of critical thinking and analysis.
F	Fail	Demonstrates poor understanding of Western architecture and shows limited ability to think critically or analytically. Exhibits minimal effort towards achieving learning goals.

Edited 11/08/2026