

ARCHITECTURE: NOW I GET IT!

Thursdays, January 11 to March 15, 2018 10:00 a.m. to 12:00 noon
Fairfield Senior's Centre, 80 Lothian Avenue, Etobicoke
www.learningunlimitedetobicoke.com

Coordinator and Presenter: Marta O'Brien, architectural historian

Course Overview: Architecture is everywhere: it affects our daily experience of a street, a neighbourhood, and a city – often subconsciously. Through hundreds of images, this stimulating course will help you really see the architecture around you and understand your reactions to buildings. We'll examine the use of ornament, proportion, and other architectural elements, and explore how and why their uses have changed. You'll discover the ways that these elements and their combinations in building design, affect your enjoyment of architecture.

January 11. Fundamentals of Visual Perception. Our brains process what we see from a physical standpoint (similar among people), then this is affected by our knowledge and experiences as we view buildings.

January 18. Perceived Structural Integrity. Although building collapses are rare, we feel uneasy if a building or a component appears unsteady. We'll view examples of architecture that flirt with this concept.

January 25. Materials: Wood & Clay. We assign certain attributes to materials, and often mentally describe a building's surface as soft or hard, warm or cold. We'll explore why wood and brick usually elicit positive responses.

February 1. Scale Architects and their clients have used scale to send strong messages. Scale refers to more than a building's overall volume: it comprises the general size relationship between the building, its environs, and – most importantly – humans.

February 8. Solids & Voids. Research shows we subconsciously survey and assess the ratio of solids (walls) to voids (window and door openings), making this relationship a significant consideration in design.

February 15. Materials: Stone & Glass. We'll see how the many textures and colours of stone affect the appearance of buildings. Glass, once used for windows alone, now encases whole buildings and can play with our perceptions.

February 22. Proportion. Various systems have been used by Western architects to regulate the proportions of buildings and seek the magic formula for pleasing design. You can judge the success or failure of a selection of systems illustrated in this lecture.

March 1. Complexity & Ornament. People enjoy looking at buildings which reward observation with interesting or surprising elements. See how discoveries of such details enhance our experience of architecture.

March 8. Materials: Metal & Concrete. These two materials have often been considered unappealing and cold by members of the public. We'll see imaginative architectural uses of metal and concrete that may surprise you.

March 15. Beauty. Widely considered a subjective concept, some maintain it is feasible – even essential – to explore the role of beauty in people's experience of architecture. Let's see if you agree.

Researcher/Committee Contact and Chair: Loretta Fines