

School of Architecture
University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign

ARCHITECTURE/GENDER AND WOMEN'S STUDIES 424
GENDER AND RACE IN CONTEMPORARY ARCHITECTURE

3 hours

*Graduate students may add 1 extra credit hour for extra work
Ask instructor for info*

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Note: a one-day field trip to Chicago is a key part of this course

PURPOSE

Out of all licensed architects in the American Institute of Architects (AIA), why are only about 18% women and less than 2% African American? What accounts for such staggeringly low figures? Why has architecture lagged so far behind its counterparts of law and medicine, where sizeable advances already have been made? When so-called "minorities" have already become majorities in so many American cities, *what are the consequences when the diversity of the population is not reflected in the architectural profession? And how can this be changed? How can the new generation of architects better respond to diversity and begin to change the culture of the profession? How can you, personally, make a difference?*

This course calls attention to the work of both women architects and architects of color as consumers, critics, and creators of the environment--as clients and users, writers and researchers, design practitioners, educators, and students. Its purpose is to introduce students to an aspect of architecture that has all too often been overlooked: the role of women and people of color (i.e., African Americans, Latino/Latina Americans, Asian Americans, Native Americans, and others). As in many other fields, the work of white males has historically dominated architecture. Furthermore, due to the persistence of the "star system," valuable contributions of women architects and architects of color, for the most part, have not been recognized.

Through your participation in this course, you will supplement the body of knowledge and educational perspectives traditionally conveyed across the architectural curriculum. You will gain an understanding of key issues in this rapidly emerging, dynamic field. And no matter what your career goals, you will become a more sensitive employee and/or employer.

You will meet leading practitioners. Guest speakers and/or field trip hosts include women architects/designers and architects of color from the Midwest who broaden the perspectives of this course by sharing their personal and professional experiences. *A class field trip to Chicago* provides you the opportunity to meet award-winning underrepresented architects and see their work.

Recent seminar discussions and student presentations have included gender and racial issues in the design of:

- birth settings
- athletic facilities
- fraternities and sororities
- houses of worship
- housing
- public restrooms
- facilities for gender-dominated professions (women firefighters, male nurses)

Course alumni have contributed to exciting outgrowths of Arch/GWS 424:

- Mccann, Hannah. "Fair Play: Lots of firms talk about diversity, but what makes an office truly inclusive? A new study offers some answers." *ARCHITECT Magazine* (March 1, 2009).
http://www.architectmagazine.com/design/buildings/fair-play-designing-for-a-woman-friendly-workplace_o
Karen Rust's term paper for Arch/GWS 424 (fall 2007) and subsequent independent study under guidance of Prof. Anthony (spring 2008) formed the basis of this invited publication.
- Gurel, Meltem and Kathryn H. Anthony. "The Canon and the Void: Gender, Race, and Architectural History Texts." *Journal of Architectural Education*. 59:3 (February 2006), pp. 66-76. *Meltem Gurel's term paper for Arch/GWS 424 (fall 2004) and subsequent independent study under guidance of Prof. Anthony (spring 2005) formed the basis of this refereed publication.*
- Anthony, Kathryn H. "An Update on Public Restrooms in the USA." *Presentation at the World Toilet Forum 2006 (November 16-18, 2006), Bangkok, Thailand.* *Crystal Whitters' (Arch/GWS 424 – fall 2006) assisted with Power Point presentation shown to an international audience of approximately 800 people.*

- Collaboration among Kathryn H. Anthony, Rodney Howlett, and Nick Watkins on an interactive exhibit on African American Architecture Alumni at UIUC featured at the exhibit, “Architecture: Pyramids to Skyscrapers” at Chicago’s Museum of Science and Industry (January 13 – February 28, 2006). See our web site:
<http://www3.arch.illinois.edu/Research/AfricanAmericanAlumniSurvey/index.htm>
- The web site was featured on UIUC’s home page, *Inside Illinois*, and *the Daily Illini*. Rodney Howlett re-designed the web site for extra course credit in Arch/GWS 424 and followed up with an independent study course.
- Collaboration between Carla Jackson, Tuskegee University and Kathryn Anthony on a film documenting the experiences of African American women architects, partly funded by the Graham Foundation.

Other course alumni have established themselves as successful practitioners, educators, journalists, and active members of professional organizations such as Chicago Women in Architecture (CWA) and National Organization of Minority Architects (NOMA).

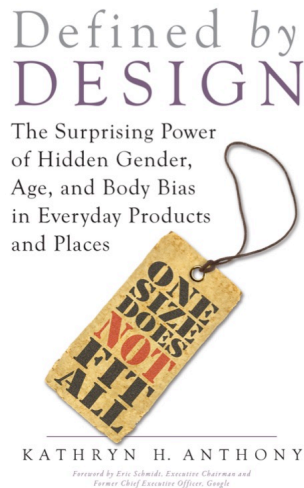
OBJECTIVES

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

- 1) understand and analyze your own experiences as a student
- 2) refer to useful professional networks that may help you in your future efforts to gain employment in the field
- 3) introduce yourself to and establish a professional relationship with a woman architect or an architect of color
- 4) analyze and critique a wide variety of growing literature in the field
- 5) understand some important historical contributions that women and people of color have made to architecture and environmental design
- 6) identify some leading historical figures (i.e., women architects and architects of color) and become familiar with their work
- 7) analyze how the built environment reflects social attitudes toward gender and race, especially in restrooms, housing, urban and suburban spaces, workspaces, birth settings, and elsewhere
- 8) identify and analyze the work of contemporary women and people of color in architecture and related disciplines, and understand some of the major issues that face these practitioners, educators, critics, and students
- 9) understand some efforts currently underway in our major professional organizations to help improve the status of women and people of color in environmental design
- 10) analyze some complex issues surrounding gender and race in architecture, and help chart out some new avenues for future research

Readings

Readings include Anthony, Kathryn H. *Defined by Design: The Surprising Power of Hidden Gender, Age, and Body Bias in Everyday Products and Places*. Prometheus Books, 2017.



Written for a popular audience, Professor Anthony's new book has sparked publicity in *The Boston Globe*, *The Chicago Tribune*, *FastCompany*, *Metropolis*, *The San Diego-Union Tribune*, *The Toronto Star*, KCBS All News Radio San Francisco, Ottawa Today News Radio, and elsewhere.

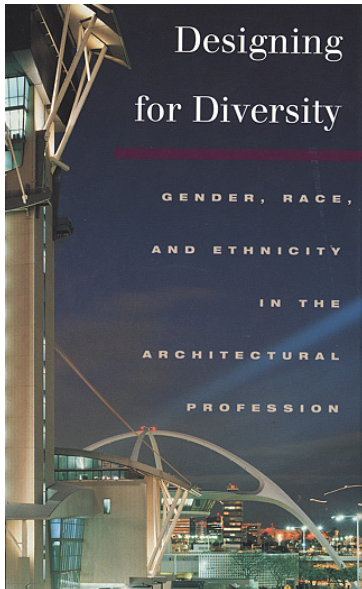
Reviews of *Defined by Design*:

“Every page of this revelatory book offers evidence of the hamfistedness of the design around us — and “us” refers not just to women, but men, young and old, fat and thin, abled and disabled.” —*The Star.com* (*Toronto Star*)

“An eye-opening, comprehensive account of how the design of everyday objects impacts our lives and our health—from cell phones to car seats, from shoes to restrooms, from homes to healthcare. Kathryn H. Anthony has written an immensely readable book that will cause you to look more closely at what you use, buy, and encounter each day, and to become more informed and critical consumers.”

— Clare Cooper Marcus, Professor Emerita, Departments of Architecture and Landscape Architecture, University of California, Berkeley

Anthony, Kathryn H. *Designing for Diversity: Gender, Race, and Ethnicity in the Architectural Profession*. University of Illinois Press, 2001 (cloth), 2008 (paper).



This book and related research earned Professor Anthony three national awards:

- 2003 American Institute of Architects (AIA) Institute Honor for Collaborative Achievement
- 2005 Environmental Design Research Association (EDRA) Achievement Award
- 2009-10 Association of Collegiate Schools of Architecture Distinguished professor Award and lifetime title

Reviews of Designing for Diversity:

- “There is no more important reading for anyone interested in the future of architecture education and practice.”—Lee Mitgang, author of *Building Community: A New Future for Architecture Education and Practice*
- “Some harsh appraisals depict conditions we wish did not exist in our profession, but they suggest how architecture can be made more responsive than it is now to a broadening world.”—Denise Scott Brown, senior partner, Venturi, Scott Brown and Associates

Here is how recent course alumni described this seminar:

“It is an extremely interesting course which is totally different from other architecture courses that you must have.”

“I learned a lot about the issues that minority groups face in architecture not just in the United States, but in other countries....It was gratifying to learn that women were influential, both directly and indirectly, and it was fascinating to start to uncover why these women get left out of history books and history classes.”

“Architecture 424 taught me about how gender issues are reflected in every aspect of physical space...The individual projects and presentations opened my eyes to how rampant this problem is in many different forms of architecture. Gender and race issues within architecture are not exclusive to public spaces, but extended into all facets of our lives.”

“When I heard about this course, I was curious, as I had never come across a course addressing such an important aspect to the field of architecture...Coming out of the course I have gained a lot. Having such an eclectic mix of students from all across the world, I’ve come to learn much more than I expected.”

“Throughout the course I learned about different issues that directly, or indirectly, affect our daily lives, from bathroom layout and design, to spaces of prayer, health clinics, and even advertisements.”

“What we learned from it are issues that affect our lives on a daily basis...It has definitely made me more sensitive as a designer and this is a value I will retain forever.”