

## ARTH 2608 Essay

**This essay is due on March 26**

**Please do not confuse it with the essay question that is part of the mid-term exam!**

Your assignment is to pick one Ottawa building and discuss its relationship to the theoretical system that underlies its style. There are two options, Gothic Revival and Modern. Please pick **one** of those two categories, then choose **one** of the buildings suggested for that option as the subject of your essay.

This is *not* a research paper. The history of the building you choose is not important. Your question is, what is the relationship between this building and the theoretical framework that is at the root of its style? To answer this question, you will have to understand both the theory and the building.

There is a temptation in projects like this to stand in judgement of the building you write about – you have the theory, you identify ways in which the building does not match the theory, and conclude that the building has therefore fallen short. That is *not* the point of the exercise. The relationship between theory and practice in architecture is complex and often difficult. Your job is to explore that relationship, not to give the building a thumbs-up or a thumbs-down. This is an analysis, not an opinion piece.

You will need to **read ahead to the appropriate sections of your textbook** for this assignment. In addition, I have listed supplementary readings that you will need to consult. Please remember that, as always, **all** sources used **must** be listed in a bibliography and footnoted within your text when appropriate.

**Length:** 1000 - 1250 words.

**Due date: The beginning of class, March 26. Essays will be collected as soon as class begins; anything not handed in at that time will be considered late, including essays handed in later that day or even later in class.** As stated in the Departmental/Faculty regulations on the course outline, the late penalty is 5% per day for five working days, after which no assignment will be accepted without documentation of medical or legal emergency and consultation with the instructor or Registrar's Office. **Please read the Undergraduate Calendar statement on plagiarism.**

### Topics

#### **Option 1, Gothic Revival**

Underlying Gothic Revival is a theory as rigorous as any in the history of architecture – and unlike Neo-Classical theory, much of it was formulated by an architect, A.W.N. Pugin, who intended it to be applicable in practice. The other pivotal figure was John Ruskin. You should refer to both of them in your essay. For

Ruskin, discuss the two “lamps” that you feel are most relevant to the building you choose.

**Gothic Monuments:**

- Christ Church Anglican Cathedral, Sparks Street west of Bay, **or**
- Notre Dame Cathedral Basilica, Sussex Drive (opposite the National Gallery), **or**
- Rideau Chapel, National Gallery of Canada

**Supplementary Reading:**

William Hay, “The Late Mr. Pugin and the Revival of Christian Architecture”, from *The Anglo-American Magazine* (1853).

<http://books.google.ca/books?id=ESQIAQAIAAJ&pg=PA70&lpg=PA70&dq=The+Late+Mr.+Pugin+and+the+Revival+of+Christian+Architecture&source=bl&ots=YbeTFLi653&sig=eKZtwgohEbhAzERmasxrUOxb59g&hl=en&sa=X&ei=wIAvT8PLGKuP0QHxmfbAw&sqi=2&ved=0CC4Q6AEwAw#v=onepage&q=The%20Late%20Mr.%20Pugin%20and%20the%20Revival%20of%20Christian%20Architecture&f=false>

In addition there is a very brief but useful summary of Ruskin’s *Seven Lamps* in *The Penguin Dictionary of Architecture*. I will put a copy of this on reserve in the AVRC (SP 460) for you to consult. If you’re *really* keen (although it’s certainly not required), you can read (or even listen to on MP3) the whole book at:

<http://librivox.org/the-seven-lamps-of-architecture-by-john-ruskin/>

or

<http://www.archive.org/details/sevenlampsarchi03ruskgoog>

**Option 2, Modernist**

The pivotal figure in the early formation of a theory of Modernism was Louis Sullivan, who tackled head-on the brand new problem of how to make tall office blocks beautiful. Two of the buildings listed here are relatively early Modern buildings, and the text is one of Sullivan’s most famous and influential, so you will be right in the thick of a debate that never really ended.

**Modern Monuments:**

- Dunton Tower, Carleton University, **or**
- Medical Arts Building, 180 Metcalfe, between Lisgar and Gloucester, **or**
- the Blackburn Building, 85 Sparks Street

**Supplementary Reading:**

Louis Sullivan, “The Tall Office Building Artistically Considered” (1896)

<http://academics.triton.edu/faculty/fheitzman/tallofficebuilding.html>

**Note:** You may choose a building other than the ones listed here, but **you must clear your choice with me first**. By that I mean you must inform me what building you’d like to use, why it would make a good choice, and show me photographs of it. Please contact me by e-mail about it, and CC your TA.