

**ARTH 501-640****MUSEUM METHODS: CHARLES AND RAY EAMES AND  
MID-CENTURY MODERN DESIGN**

Instructor	George H. Marcus Adjunct Assistant Professor of the History of Art
Class hours	Tuesdays 6:00 to 8:50 Jaffe 113
Office hours	Tuesdays 4:30 to 5:30, and by appointment Jaffe 304
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This two-semester course combines a research seminar on the work of Charles (1907-1978) and Ray (1912-1988) Eames, focusing on the Eames Office archives at the Library of Congress and the collection of Eames photographs also housed there, with the creation of an exhibition drawn mainly from those holdings. Students will use the first semester to acquaint themselves with the work of the Eames office, writing an extended research paper and sharing their methodology and their findings with the class. Using their knowledge of the Eames accomplishments and the holdings of the Library of Congress, students will propose an exhibition that will introduce aspects of the Eameses' work to the public and then collaborate on its planning and execution. The exhibition is scheduled to open at the University's Ross Gallery on July 22, 2005.

**Course Requirements (First Semester)**

- 1 Class: Students should be prepared for class by having completed the required reading and video assignments. Attendance and participation in class discussion and critiques are important and what will make the exhibition collaboration successful (35%).
- 2 Paper: A 6,000- to 7,000-word paper on an aspect of the Eameses' work chosen by the student with the approval of the professor is the principal project of the semester (50%). Goals for the paper will be discussed in class and an instruction sheet will be distributed.
- 3 Class presentation: Students will prepare an oral presentation for the class, sharing their methodology, discussing their sources, and presenting a précis of their research and conclusions. These presentations will contribute to our ability to assess possible themes for the exhibition (15%).

**Required Texts**

Eames Demetrios. An Eames Primer. New York: Universe, 2001.

John Neuhart, Marilyn Neuhart, and Ray Eames. Eames Design: The Work of the Office of Charles and Ray Eames. New York: Abrams, 1989.

These are available at the Campus Book Store on Walnut Street.

Course Pack. Additional readings and source materials are included in the Course Pack, which is sold at the Campus Copy Center, 3907 Walnut Street.

## Class Schedule and Syllabus

*Schedule of class meetings is subject to change*

*Note: Read relevant discussions in the Neuhart text in advance of each class. Articles listed for class meetings are in the Course Pack; videos are on reserve in Fisher Fine Arts Library. Additional readings may be assigned.*

- September 14 Introduction: The Work of Charles and Ray Eames, Seminar and Exhibition
- September 21 Charles and Ray Eames and Mid-Century Modern Design  
Goals for research papers and discussion of preliminary paper topics  
Preparation:  
Eames Demetrios. An Eames Primer. New York: Universe, 2001.
- September 28 Introduction to the Eames collections at the Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.  
*Departure time of van from Philadelphia to be announced*  
10:15 Registration  
11:00 Introduction to the Eames archives  
Archivist Margaret H. McAleer, organizer of Eames papers  
Archivist Jeffrey M. Flannery  
Research in archives  
2:00 Introduction to the Eames photograph collection, Department of Prints and Photographs  
Mary Ison, Head, Reference Section  
Review of Eames photographs
- Preparation:  
Submit via e-mail to [gmarcus@sas.upenn.edu](mailto:gmarcus@sas.upenn.edu) up to four archival box numbers you wish to see in Washington, from Library of Congress Finding Aid:  
[http://lcweb2.loc.gov/cgi-bin/query/r?faid/faid:@field\(DOCID+ms998024\)](http://lcweb2.loc.gov/cgi-bin/query/r?faid/faid:@field(DOCID+ms998024))  
Review Photograph Finding Aid (in Course Pack)

October 5 NO CLASS

*Use this period for assessment of your research topic and for research; discussion and approval of topics can be undertaken by e-mail.*

October 12 NO CLASS

- October 19 Planning and Curating the Exhibition  
PAPER PROPOSAL DUE  
Tour of Ross Gallery with Dilys Winegrad, Ross Gallery Director and Curator  
Introduction to installation with the exhibition's designer, Donna Sink, AIA, Associate, Atkin Olshin Lawson-Bell Architects  
*Meet at Ross Gallery in the Fisher Fine Arts building at 6:00*  
Preparation:  
Elaine Heumann Gurian. "Noodling Around with Exhibition Opportunities." In Ivan Karp and Steven D. Lavine, eds. Exhibiting Cultures: The Poetics and Politics of Museum Display, pp. 176-90. Washington, D.C.: Smithsonian Institution Press, 1991.  
Sally Rousham. "Interpretation." In Mike Sixsmith, ed. Touring Exhibitions, pp. 92-95. Oxford: Butterworth-Heinemann Ltd., 1995.

John Nicks. "Curatorship in the Exhibition Planning Process." In Barry Lord and Gail Dexter Lord, eds. The Manual of Museum Exhibitions, pp. 345-66. Walnut Creek, Ca.: Altamira Press, 2002.

- October 26 FALL BREAK
- November 2 Eames: Furniture, Products, and Exhibitions  
Preparation:  
Eliot F. Noyes. Organic Design in Home Furnishings, pp. 10-17, 26-29. New York: Museum of Modern Art, 1941.  
Owen Gingerich. "A Conversation with Charles Eames." American Scholar, 46, part 3 (1977), pp. 326-37.  
George Nelson. "Art X = The Georgia Experiment." In Problems of Design, pp. 14-26. 2nd ed. New York: Whitney Publications, 1965.  
Films  
Fiberglass Chairs; IBM at the Fair; The World of Franklin and Jefferson; The Franklin and Jefferson Proposal Film; The Opening of an Exhibition
- November 9 NO CLASS
- November 16 Eames: Films and Photography  
Preparation (films):  
Paul Schrader. "Poetry of Ideas: The Films of Charles Eames." Film Quarterly, Spring 1970, pp. 2-16.  
  
Films  
Blacktop; Bread; A Communications Primer; Toccata for Toy Trains; Polyorchis Haplus; Mathematics Peep Shows; Powers of Ten; Powers of Ten: A Rough Sketch for a Proposed Film  
  
Preparation (photography):  
Carl Sandburg. Prologue. The Family of Man, pp. 2-3. New York: The Museum of Modern Art, 1955.  
Ansel Adams. "A Personal Credo." In Vicki Goldberg, ed. Photography in Print, pp. 377-80. New York: Simon and Schuster, 1981.  
  
Henri Cartier-Bresson. "The Decisive Moment." In Vicki Goldberg, ed. Photography in Print, pp. 384-86. New York: Simon and Schuster, 1981.  
John Berger. "Understanding a Photograph." In Alan Trachtenberg, ed. Classic Essays on Photography, pp. 291-93. New Haven: Leete's Island Books, 1980.  
  
Films  
SX-70; Something about Photography
- November 23 Class presentations and discussion
- November 30 Class presentations and discussion
- December 7 Review of Possible Exhibition Themes  
RESEARCH PAPER DUE

### **Spring Class Schedule (Advance Planning for Second Semester)**

*Schedule of class meetings is subject to change*

January 11	Selection of Exhibition Themes for Gallery Proposal
January 18	Proposal presentation planning
January 25	Possible trip to Washington
February 1	Presentation of exhibition proposals (to Ross Gallery, Department of Art History, exhibition designer, and colleagues)

*Remainder of Spring schedule to follow*

**Web Sources**

Library of Congress Finding Aid: Charles and Ray Eames: A Register of Their Papers  
[http://lcweb2.loc.gov/cgi-bin/query/r?faid/faid:@field\(DOCID+ms998024\)](http://lcweb2.loc.gov/cgi-bin/query/r?faid/faid:@field(DOCID+ms998024))

Library of Congress Exhibition site: The Work of Charles and Ray Eames: A Legacy of Invention  
<http://www.loc.gov/exhibits/eames/>

Eames Office  
[http://www.eamesoffice.com/eames\\_house/eames\\_house.html](http://www.eamesoffice.com/eames_house/eames_house.html)

## **Additional Sources on Reserve at Fisher Fine Arts Library**

Eliot F. Noyes. Organic Design in Home Furnishings. New York: The Museum of Modern Art, 1941.

Arthur Drexler. Charles Eames: Furniture from the Design Collection, The Museum of Modern Art, New York. New York: The Museum of Modern Art, 1973.

Frederick S. Wight Art Gallery, Los Angeles. Connections: The Work of Charles and Ray Eames. Los Angeles: UCLA Art Council, 1976.

James Steele. Eames House: Charles and Ray Eames. London: Phaidon, 1994.

Pat Kirkham. Charles and Ray Eames: Designers of the Twentieth Century. Cambridge, Mass.: The MIT Press, 1995.

Donald Albrecht et al. The Work of Charles and Ray Eames: A Legacy of Invention. New York: Harry N. Abrams in association with the Library of Congress, 1997.

### *The Films of Charles and Ray Eames, Vol. 1*

Powers of Ten (1977); Powers of Ten: A Rough Sketch for a Proposed Film (1968)

### *The Films of Charles and Ray Eames, Vol. 2*

Toccatto for Toy Trains (1957); House: After Five Years of Living (1955); Lucia Chase Vignette; Kaleidoscope Jazz Chair (1960); The Black Ships (1970); Atlas (1976)

Blacktop (1952)

### *The Films of Charles and Ray Eames, Vol. 3*

The World of Franklin and Jefferson (1976); The Franklin and Jefferson Proposal Film; The Opening of an Exhibition (1976)

### *The Films of Charles and Ray Eames, Vol. 4*

Design Q & A (1972); IBM Mathematics Peep Shows (1961); SX-70 (1972); Copernicus (1973); Fiberglass Chairs (1970); Goods

### *The Films of Charles and Ray Eames, Vol. 5*

Tops (1969); IBM at the Fair (1965); A Computer Glossary (1968); Eames Lounge Chair (1956); The Expanding Airport (1958); Kepler's Laws (1974); Bread (1953); Polyorchis Haplus (1970); Tops (From Stars of Jazz) (1957)

A Communications Primer (1953)

Clown Face (1971)

Something about Photography (1976)

Daumier: Paris and the Spectator (1977)

### Background Readings

Helen Gee. Photography of the Fifties: An American Perspective. Tucson: Center for Creative Photography, 1981.

Elizabeth A. T. Smith, ed. Blueprints for Modern Living--History and Legacy of the Case Study Houses. Cambridge, Mass.: The MIT Press, 1989.

Kathryn B. Hiesinger and George H. Marcus. Landmarks of Twentieth-Century Design: An Illustrated Handbook. New York: Abbeville Press, 1993.

David Halberstam. The Fifties. New York: Fawcett Columbine, 1994.

Lesley Jackson. "Contemporary": Architecture and Interiors of the 1950s. London: Phaidon, 1994.

George H. Marcus. Design in the Fifties: When Everyone Went Modern. New York: Prestel, 1998.