

OLLI @Berkeley
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Copenhagen: The Bridge to Mainland Europe and The Nordic Countries
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Syllabus

For Europeans, Denmark is the gateway to the Northern territories. It is a small country with pronounced design literacy and home to architects of world renown. Arne Jacobsen and Jørn Utzon (known for his Sydney Opera House) are two of the most prominent masters of the 20th century based in Copenhagen. Its tradition of design excellence continues today with firms such as BIG and 3XN. This course will examine the socio-cultural conditions and the outsized personalities that made this city a required destination for architectural acculturation and enjoyment.

Lesson 1. COPENHAGEN: A CAPITAL IN HISTORICAL ASCENT

Founded in the 10th century. Copenhagen was a late bloomer in urban and architectural discourse. Subject to political and cultural influences from the Germanic world, it reflected the wind of changes blown from European mainland with a particular influence from the Italian Renaissance. Its later Neoclassicism positioned it still as a derivative expression of design trends developed in the continent. This first lecture will articulate the slow coming into being of a capital that will progressively occupy a primary role in architectural history.

Lesson 2. MODERNITY AWAKENINGS BETWEEN THE 19TH AND 20TH CENTURY

The transition from backwater in the architectural scene to a full protagonist of design discourse as Copenhagen is known today is rooted in the incremental awareness of its territory and its latent potential due to a few critical figures. The writings of Poul Henningsen, Kay Fisher, and Steen Eiler Rasmussen were profoundly consequential in awakening a new consciousness in their contemporaries, jumpstarting an upward trajectory in architect, design, and urban planning from which much of the globe continues to learn. This class will explore the ideas of these masterful authors.

Lesson 3. COPENHAGEN IN MODERN ARCHITECTURE

In the cartography of Modern Architecture, Copenhagen occupies a prominent and much-admired position. The two master architects of the 20th century the Danish capital can boast are Arne Jacobsen and Jørn Utzon. The SAS Royal Hotel of the former and the Bagsværd Church of the latter are two of the many masterpieces elevating the design standard of any committed architect. This third intervention will delve into these two extraordinary careers to cast light on the culture of modernity in Copenhagen.

Lesson 4. COPENHAGEN TODAY: RECENT TRENDS IN ARCHITECTURE

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Bjarke Ingels Group (also known as BIG), 3XN Architects, Henning Larsen Architects, and C.F. Møller Architects are but a few of the most well-known practices in the Danish capital today. The professional scene is burgeoning with talents to an unmatched degree compared to the rest of the globe. This renaissance in the architectural relevant of Copenhagen has deep roots in its modernist traditions as well as being a territorial link between European mainland and a Nordic sensibility to light and form making. This conclusive talk will go over some of the most consequential developments.