

10 February 2016

Dr. Sep Eskandari, Chair
Academic Senate
California State Polytechnic University, Pomona

GE COMMITTEE REPORT GE-009-145 ON ARC 111: "AN INTRODUCTION TO THE THEORY AND PRACTICE OF DESCRIPTIVE GEOMETRY" (GE SUB-AREA C2)

Dear Chair Eskandari:

I am writing to offer some reflections on the Academic Senate's consideration of ARC 111, Dr. Alexander Ortenberg's proposed lecture course "An Introduction to the Theory and Practice of Descriptive Geometry" and the concurrent activity section ARC 111A. ARC 111 has been proposed for GE Sub-Area C2, Philosophy and Civilization.

The main argument for including ARC 111 under GE Sub-Area C2 is the opportunity it provides to all Cal Poly Pomona majors to be exposed to a general introduction of theory and practice in Architecture. Architecture is an impacted major, with most of the department's courses taken by Architecture majors only. This is an opportunity for non-majors to take a general ARC course.

Dr. Ortenberg's goal is to make ARC 111 a course that will be accessible to a mixture of Architecture majors and non-Architecture majors. He believes that an architectural theory course with a special focus on the history of representational conventions will introduce a large sector of Cal Poly Pomona students to the notion of "ocular-centrism" as a distinct feature of Western civilization.

A number of contemporary philosophers have actively participated in the production of architecture, approaching it as the physical embodiment of their philosophical concepts. On the other hand, in the course of the last four decades, architectural theory also has increasingly relied on philosophical concepts effectively treating architecture as an applied philosophy. Dr. Ortenberg points out that there is significant precedent for the conjoining of architectural theory and applied philosophy in the highly reputable Architecture programs at other universities such as UCLA, UC Berkeley, and Yale, to name only a few. If this approach is good enough for UCLA, Berkeley, and Yale, why can't Cal Poly Pomona be broad-minded enough to allow Architecture and non-Architecture majors to appreciate the insights to be offered in ARC 111?

It also is important to note that the process of establishing this course has become muddled. I hope that the politics of defining a C2 course does not deflect from consideration of the content of ARC 111.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,



MICHAEL WOO

Dean, College of Environmental Design