THE ARCHITECTURE OF FRANK LLOYD WRIGHT
Laura O’Donnell, instructor
OLLI – Spring 2016

Course Outline:
Week 1: Introduction
A sweeping survey of Wright’s work
Reference Works:
  Frank Lloyd Wright Home & Studio, Oak Park, IL (early experimentation)
  Robie House, Chicago, IL (Prairie Style)
  Unity Temple, Oak Park, IL (public building, poured concrete)
  Millard House (”La Miniatura”), Pasadena, CA (textile block)
  Fallingwater (Kaufmann House), Bear Run, PA (cantilevers)
  Johnson Wax, Racine, WI
  Price Tower, Bartlesville, OK
  Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, New York, NY
Biography / Ideas and circumstances informing Wright’s work
  Emersonian transcendentalism
  Music
  Froebel blocks
Chicago
  The Great Chicago Fire 1871
  Steel-cage construction (curtain wall)
  Louis Sullivan
What is organic architecture?
  natural materials
  relationship to the site
  American democracy
  an architecture of essences
  decentering
Other philosophies informing Wright’s work
  Japan
  the architect as Hero

Week 2: Wright’s Early Work (Oak Park Years)
  Oak Park and developing the Prairie Style
  Prairie style versus Victorian and revivalist styles
  Ward Willits House, Highland Park, IL
  Robie House as manifestation of Prairie ideas
    Emphasis on the horizontal
    Open plan, ”breaking the box”
    Room-within-a-room
    Strategy of “compression and release”
Wright's non-domestic clients
- Larkin Building, Buffalo, NY (Major space – minor space – entry in between)
- Unity Temple, Oak Park, IL

Week 3 & 4:
Wright from 1911 through 1936
- Imperial Hotel, Tokyo, Japan
- Textile Block Houses: Millard House (“La Miniatura”), Pasadena, CA
  - Modular system: concrete block
- the Taliesin Fellowship

Wright’s 1936 reemergence and later building ideas
- Fallingwater (Kaufmann House), Bear Run, PA
  - Cantilevers
  - Integration with the natural site
  - Influence of/ on Modernism
- Johnson Wax, Racine, WI
  - Streamlined exterior
  - “Ivy-pod” columns
  - Pyrex tubing
- Usonian Houses
- Price Tower, Bartlesville, OK
- Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, New York, NY
  - Hilla Rebay
  - Non-Objective painting

Books on Wright:
Gill, Brendan, **Many Masks**. New York: Random House, 1987 (biography of Wright written by architectural critic, friend of Wright, yet does not overly idolize)

Excerpts with additional information posted on OLLI site.
Week 1: FLW Home and Studio Volunteer Manual “Silsbee & Sullivan Wrights Early-Career”

Week 2: FLW Home & Studio Volunteer Manual, “Prairie Style”

  - “Building Fallingwater”, Western Pennsylvania Conservancy, www.fallingwater.org