This course investigates critical issues in Africa’s rich architecture and urban history. You will learn about major pre-colonial African cities in the sub-Saharan area, as well as about Western colonial city planning and traditional culture. Coming to terms with decolonization and contemporary Africa we will look at the built, unbuilt, and written work of architects, designers, and city planners, such as Rex Martienssen and Amancio ‘Pancho’ Guedes. Particular attention will be given to the social and political role of traditional architecture in expressing and shaping ideas about the environment, technology, and identity.

The theme will be explored in a series of lectures, readings, discussions, and assignments where architectural history, literature, and anthropology will be interwoven to provide the basis for further interdisciplinary forays into “African architecture.”