

SPRING 2008

**ARC 588-STN THEORETICAL MODELS- The Dematerialization of the Object
Hadas Steiner**

Monday, 10:00 am – 12:40 pm

Hayes 108

This seminar will look at the historical intersection of architectural design and complex technology in the postwar period and the theoretical emergence of the dematerialized object. Once the struggle to establish modernism had been accomplished, the architectural discipline would be ever more subject to reconsideration as the demand for flexibility of program increased, along with the sentiment for user participation in and control over the environment. For some the capacity for architecture to readily accommodate changing conditions was elevated to the primary concern. This agenda relied on the emergence of electronically driven technologies within the popular domain of consumer products and services, with the obvious time lag behind developments in the laboratory. Digital technology indicated a potential way to overcome the limits of the prevalent industrial model and the more commercially viable it became, the more tenable the promise of compliant structures. Images of adaptive architectures that addressed the element of duration began to proliferate at the institutional fringes and even generate new forms of representation. Avant-garde conjectures would range from systems design, biological models and cybernetic planning to ephemerals of all kinds, including tensile, auto-destructive and inflatable structures. The seminar will address how, through experimental practice, the role of architecture shifted from its traditional task of designing hardware (walls, floors, masonry) to that of designing “software” programs to enable diverse situations in a given space.