| 4.154 | Architecture Design Option Studio | Spring 2019 |

# WORKLIVE: QUEENS

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| 0-10-11 G | TR 1-6PM (7-404) | Prerequisites: 4.153 |

# Subject Description

We are at a critical moment in the history of both working and living. Work has migrated from primarily happening outside the city in agrarian times to within the city during the industrial revolution to a hybrid model post-suburbia whereby white-collar work was primarily performed by commuters and blue- collar work moved to the outskirts. Eventually manufacturing moved ever further under globalization to the Global South and Asia. So we are left in the US today with an urban workforce distanced from nature, increasingly rejecting the semi-nature of the suburbs and essentially engaged in service industries with little or no contact with the means of production.

At the same time, this is a moment where the very understanding of what it means "to work" is being challenged at every level. The gig economy has created an enormous unprotected workforce of day laborers working under the promise of freedom, but increasingly constrained through lack of traditional worker protection. Long-tenured employees at traditional companies, such as in the media, are increasingly asked to become freelance. At the other end of the spectrum, tech workers work in offices populated with slides, endless kitchens, beanbag chairs and pingpong tables and are often reverse commuting, living with all the benefits of the urban metropolis and working in the soulless suburbs. And even with all these cozy, almost infantilizing amenities, workers are increasingly working from home in an attempt at balancing traditional family roles with an increasingly un-gendered workplace.

Architecturally the confusion between what it means to work and to live is also increasingly visible as the imagery and materiality of what used to be considered the domain of the office – primarily glass skyscrapers – has now increasingly been coopted by new residential development. In places such as New York's financial district, the distinction is actually made even more clear as prior International Style corporate

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headquarters are being turned into condos. Siezing on the moment, WeWork is morphing into WeLive. We are living in office towers and working in playgrounds.

Work continues to transform, and with advances in AI and robot technology, it is crucial that we think through how people will engage themselves in the future. As architects this is always our job, as what we propose is always something that does not yet exist. We are Science Fiction writers. Will we have full automation and a universal wage? Will computing reinvigorate commuting? Will the Etsy revolution take over, with Hippie Modernists increasingly engaged in small scale manufacturing and production of niche goods at home?

At the same time, with the increasing threat posed by climate change and the increasing density of cities around the globe, that living will also need to transform in order to become more sustainable, more resilient and – perhaps most importantly – provide some of the visual and emotional relief formerly provided by living closer to nature, even in the watered-down suburban model.

It is clear that work will have an ever-increasing impact on living and that prior distinctions are increasingly irrelevant. For this studio I want to really work through what it means to "WORKLIVE" – and to try to upend the traditional, often banal concept of "Live-work" by thinking through what it would mean to design a work environment where you can live, rather than an apartment building where you can work. A subtle distinction but something that can provide for a reinvention of typologies and a more open, forward-looking and experimental approach to thinking about life in cities in the future.

**Method**

We will study the history or working and living through research and analysis of radical architectural precedents from history. For the final project, each student will individually come up with their own thesis about the future of living and working. Will the Amazon robots take over labor, leaving everyone able to live as a hipster-hippie ETSY-users? Will new communal forms of living appear, in order to harness group creativity? We will create new prototypical hybrids from this conceptual framework.

We will use the opportunity to visit New York to look at two different conditions: Manhattan's financial district, formerly the epitome of "Mad Men" style  corporate office architecture now increasingly transformed into residential and Queens Plaza, a "mini Shenzhen" in New York where what would have been immediately assumed to be office buildings 30 years ago are now being constructed as condos. We will also visit new

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experiments such as WeLive and conduct research into the histories of working and living. Ultimately each student will create a new model for the 21st century work-life.

 **Site**

Our site will be in Queens, the most intriguing, least-studied and fastest-growing of New York City's boroughs. Queens is the most diverse place in the world where over 800 languages are spoken. It is the heart of NYC;'s infrastructure, hosting its largest park, two airports, railyards and one of the world's biggest sewage treatment plants. Queens is also home to some of the most amazing early experimental modern residential developments – such as Sunnyside Gardens, Queens - is also now about to host Amazon's HQ2. Our specific site of focus will be Queens Plaza, where new residential skyscrapers are cropping up at the rate of some notable East Asian cities, and we will take them on at their own scale, designing new high-density, high-rise visions for the future of living and working.

# Subject Objectives

Students will develop their skills in historical and spatial research, developing the design of a building and its attendant representation, and producing a thesis around the future of working and living in an urban context. Ultimately, the goal of the course is to guide students in translating a concept through architectural language. Assignments expect students to work across scales from master planning to materiality, across media from models to perspectives, and across time frames, addressing trends and potentials today and in the future.

# Evaluation Criteria

- **5% Deliverables**
- **5% Attendance/Participation**
    - Attendance for the full duration of each class is mandatory. You are allowed three excused absences for the semester. An excused absence is defined as one that was discussed with and approved by the professor at least 24 hours prior to the date of absence, or a family or medical emergency that is confirmed by your physician or a dean in Student Support Services.
- **15% Concept** how clearly are you articulating your design intentions?
- **25% Process**: how well are you using your concept to develop a spatial and architectural response to the given program or site?
- **25% Final Review:**

○ Did you synthesize your concept into a resolved architecture appropriate for the site and larger spatio-temporal context?
○ Is your architectural response a logical conclusion of your process?
○ Does your design address the needs called out in the given program?
● **25% Representation:**
○ Quality of representation?
○ Evidence of skill/craft?
○ Ability of representation to convey information?
○ Clarity of representation?

Absences beyond the three allotted will result in a decrease in your final grade. If you miss six or more classes, you will be asked to drop the subject or receive a failing grade. Evaluation is contingent on students active participation, contribution to the discourse of the studio, demonstrable design development, as well as conceptual and representational clarity.

# Schedule

| Week 1 | Mon. | 2/4 | Studio Preview | | *Dan/Sam* |
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| | Thr. | 2/7 | First studio, Introductions, schedule | **Assignment 1: The History of Working and Living** | *Dan* |
| Week 2 | Tue. | 2/12 | Pin Up | | *Sam* |
| | Thr. | 2/14 | **Review Assignment 1** | **Assignment 2: Precedents for Working and Living** | *Dan/Sam* |
| Week 3 | ~~Tue.~~ | ~~2/19~~ | ~~Monday Schedule~~ | | |
| | Thr. | 2/21 | Desk Crits | | *Dan/Sam* |
| Week 4 | Tue. | 2/26 | Desk Crits | | *Sam* |
| | Thr. | 2/28 | **Review Assignment 2** | **Assignment 3: Hybrid** | *Dan/Sam* |
| Week 5 | Tue. | 3/5 | Desk Crits | | *Sam* |
| | Thr. | 3/7 | Desk Crits | | *Dan/Sam* |
| Week 6 | Tue. | 3/12 | Desk Crits | | *Sam* |
| | Thr. | 3/14 | **Mid review: Assignment 2** | **Assignment 4: Queens** | *Dan/Sam* |
| Week 7 | Tue. | 3/16 | Desk Crits | | *Sam* |

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| | Thr. | 3/18 | Email progress, Desk Crits | | *Sam/PDF Dan* |
| **Week 8** | ~~Tue~~ | ~~3/26~~ | ~~(Spring break)~~ | | |
| | Wed. | 3/27 | TRIP TO NYC | | *Dan/Sam* |
| | Thr. | 3/28 | Review/Pin-Up Assignment #4 | | *Dan/Sam* |
| | Fri. | 3/29 | Queens Tour, Work tours, Live tours, etc. | **Assignment 5: WORK/LIVE** | *Dan/Sam* |
| **Week 9** | Tue. | 4/2 | Desk Crits | | *Sam* |
| | Thr. | 4/4 | Email progress, Desk Crits | | *Sam, PDF Dan* |
| **Week 10** | Tue. | 4/9 | Desk Crits | | *Sam* |
| | Thr. | 4/11 | Pin up | | *Dan/Sam* |
| *Week 11* | ~~Tue.~~ | ~~4/16~~ | ~~Patriots day~~ | | |
| | Thr. | 4/19 | Desk Crits | | *Dan/Sam* |
| **Week 12** | Tue. | 4/23 | Desk Crits | | *Sam* |
| | Thr. | 4/25 | **Penultimate Review** | | *Dan/Sam* |
| **Week 13** | Tue. | 4/30 | Desk Crits | | *Sam* |
| | Thr. | 5/2 | Pin Up | | *Dan/Sam* |
| **Week 14** | Tue. | 5/6 | Desk Crits | | *Sam* |
| | Thr. | 5/8 | Desk Crits | | *Sam* |
| **Week 15** | Thr. | 5/16 | **Final** | | *Dan/Sam* |

# Grading

**A** Exceptionally good performance demonstrating a superior understanding of the subject matter, a foundation of extensive knowledge, and a skillful use of concepts and/or materials.

**B** Good performance demonstrating capacity to use the appropriate concepts, a good understanding of the subject matter, and an ability to handle the problems and materials encountered in the subject.

**C** Adequate performance demonstrating an adequate understanding of the subject matter, an ability to handle relatively simple problems, and adequate preparation for moving on to more advanced work in the field.

**D** Minimally acceptable performance demonstrating at least partial familiarity with the subject matter and some capacity to deal with relatively simple problems, but also demonstrating deficiencies serious enough to make it inadvisable to proceed further in the field without additional work.

**F** Failed. This grade also signifies that the student must repeat the subject to receive credit.

# Academic Integrity + Honesty

MIT's expectations and policies regarding academic integrity should be read carefully and adhered to diligently:  http://integrity.mit.edu

# Student Performance Criteria: NAAB

**Realm A: Critical Thinking and Representation**
**A1.** Communication Skills: Ability to read, write, speak and listen effectively

**A2.** Design Thinking Skills: Ability to raise clear and precise questions, use abstract ideas to interpret information, consider diverse points of view, reach well-reasoned conclusions, and test alternative outcomes against relevant criteria and standards

**A3.** Visual Communication Skills: Ability to use appropriate representational media, such as traditional graphic and digital technology skills, to convey essential formal elements at each stage of the programming and design process.

**A6.** Fundamental Design Skills: Ability to effectively use basic architectural and environmental principles in design.

**A7.** Use of Precedents: Ability to examine and comprehend the fundamental principles present in relevant precedents and to make choices regarding the incorporation of such principles into architecture and urban design projects.

**A8.** Ordering Systems Skills: Understanding of the fundamentals of both natural and formal ordering systems and the capacity of each to inform two- and three dimensional design.