**Core 1**

**ARCHITECTURE DESIGN STUDIO**

MIT Architecture

ARCH 4.151 | FALL 2019

TRF 1:00 – 5:00

RM: 7-434

CREDITS: (0-12-9)

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**Syllabus**

**INSTRUCTORS**

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**Studio Overview**

The studio establishes foundations for architectural design through three exercises that build up in scope to engage issues of form, space, organization, structure, circulation, use, and tectonics. The design process is introduced as an iterative form of research that enables students to develop conceptual ideas about architecture and translate them into physical, material, and representational investigations. Each exercise introduces an increasingly fuller set of relationships with regard to site, program, and building systems with the last exercise emphasizing the interrelationship of these fundamental aspects of architectural design. Students are required to work in both physical and digital models, and produce drawings for each exercise. The exercises will test both conceptual and analytical thinking as well as aid in the development of representational skills. The course is intended for entering MArch students and must be taken in sequence.

**Studio Context**

The assigned exercises will give us a way into the discussion of many fundamental concerns in contemporary architecture—artificiality and authenticity, surface and depth, movement and stasis, orientation, manipulation of space and light, a basic, direct, empirical understanding of the technics that enable certain conditions, and the consideration of program. These are some of the concerns that have given shape to the arc of the exercises that we have developed for this semester. We anticipate that the way the exercises are framed will allow us to openly discuss some of the representational, or process-oriented crises and questions of the moment.

For example, (1) within contemporary design processes, the increasingly fraught relationship between three-dimensional modeling and two-dimensional drawing; how, and in what manner, editing of an overly informed three-dimensional model should be done to convey an idea, to make an architectural statement about space planometrically or sectionally, (2) we will raise questions as to the values, both positive and negative, of a variety of modes of production, and procedures of design.

The exercises will bracket particular design dilemmas and, although they are not completely open-ended, they are designed to prompt students to invent and defend their own logics, to experiment with a range of existing biases, or to produce through the lens of appropriated intellectual positions. In a sense, precisely which ideological position students operate within is less crucial for the time being, and it is rather that they are trying on, experimenting with, and becoming well versed in the critical and conceptual languages of a range of intellectual positions. The exercises in Core 1 are aimed at eliciting new forms of architectural coherence—architectures that are forward looking, yet able to communicate with a disciplinary history, and architectures that are able to articulate their unique polemic, and in turn are able to offer the means by which they may be critically-assessed.
Pedagogical Objectives
Our primary pedagogical objectives for Core studio 1, the foundation semester, are threefold:

- An ability to conceptualize abstractly and represent architecturally. This includes modes of drawing and modeling that are analytical (about discovery) and modes of drawing and modeling that are declarative (about provocation).
- The development of three-dimensional dexterity, and an ability to conceive of form, space, and sequence. This considers “conceive” as both an act of comprehension, and as well as an act of imagination.
- A developed discourse and competency surrounding the design process. This includes order of operations, modes of production, and modes of representation.

Completion Requirements
At the end of the course students should be able to translate an idea into an architectural proposition and understand the intentions and consequences behind design decisions. Students should also be able to engage with an increasing level of design-research through iterative studies and move fluidly between different modes and scales of design. Conventions of architectural representation and communication through drawing and modeling should be engaged with clarity and intentionality. Students will need to demonstrate application of design skills, understanding of architectural conventions, and ability to sustain an increasing level of research in the projects over the semester. Completion of each of the exercises, rigor in process and clarity in representation, as well as the overall progress of the semester will be fundamental factors in the final evaluation.

Evaluation Criteria and Grading
The following criteria will be used for the evaluation of your work, both in terms of helping your progress and in final grading:

- Thesis: How clearly are you articulating your conceptual intentions?
- Translation of Thesis: How well are you using your thesis to develop an architectural response to given problems?
- Representation Appropriateness: How well matched is your choice of representational means to your intentions?
- Representation Quality: To what degree do your representations convey what they ought to?
- Oral Presentation Skills: How clearly are you presenting your ideas orally, whether at your desk, or to a more formal jury?
- Participation in Discussions: How actively and how constructively are you involved in class discussions?
- Response to Criticism: How effectively do you take advantage of criticism from instructors, your classmates and outside jurors? (8) Auto-Critical Skills: To what extent are you able to critique your own work regularly and effectively?

A: Excellent - Project surpasses expectations in terms of inventiveness, appropriateness, verbal and visual ability, conceptual rigor, craft, and personal development. Student pursues concepts and techniques above and beyond what is discussed in class.

B: Above Average - Project is thorough, well researched, diligently pursued, and successfully completed. Student pursues ideas and suggestions presented in class and puts in effort to resolve required projects. Project is complete on all levels and demonstrates potential for excellence.

C: Average - Project meets the minimum requirements. Suggestions made in class are not pursued with dedication or rigor. Project is incomplete in one or more areas.

D: Poor - Project is incomplete. Basic skills including graphic skills, modelmaking skills, verbal clarity or logic of presentation are not level appropriate. Student does not demonstrate the required design skill and knowledge base.
F: Failure - Project is unresolved. Minimum objectives are not met. Performance is not acceptable. This grade will be assigned when you have more than two unexcused absences.

**Studio Culture and Absence Policy**

Work in the studio will build sequentially. Therefore, your commitment to incremental development on a daily basis is of paramount importance. Charrettes before reviews will not suffice. The demanding nature and pace of this studio course necessitates your regular attendance and requires that deadlines are consistently met. In addition to lowering your grade, late work will prevent you from following the overall structure of the course. Working in studio, instead of at home, will allow you to participate in the dialogue fostered by the studio setting. Magnification of your development as a designer is made possible by the collective nature of the studio. Group reviews are collective for a reason, as each of you has something to gain from your peers. Therefore, attendance in studio and for the duration of all formal reviews is mandatory. Greater than two absences from studio without medical excuse supported by a doctor’s note or verifiable personal emergency could result in a failing grade for the studio.

**Key Dates**

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