Open Work

4.154
Architecture Design Option Studio
Spring 2019

Instructors:
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Daniel Marshall

Teaching Assistant:
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Credits:
0-10-11 G
Room: 3.415
Schedule: Tuesday, Thursday 1-5pm
Prerequisites: 4.153
Half a century ago, architecture became open-ended. Buildings would change and grow, architects argued, not unlike cities. Architects embraced impermanence, promoted flexibility, timed obsolescence, and welcomed uncertainty, just as Umberto Eco proclaimed the birth of the open work and Roland Barthes pronounced the death of the author. Architects also questioned authorship. Many would no longer strive to prescribe outcomes, let alone inscribe meanings. Against the backdrop of modern masters and modern monuments, and as a result of cultural, social, political, and technological developments, buildings became systems. Paradoxically, architects would pioneer new building types, in unprecedented ways, by openly disregarding program.

Design theories for open-ended buildings differed, but they all implied, almost invariably, free plans and modular structures, as well as building components discriminated by their rate of renewal: frame versus clip-on, core versus capsule, structure versus envelope. By the mid-sixties, just a few years after speculation on openness had begun in earnest, several projects materialized. Over the following years, many changed: some according to plan, some according to other, or no plan. Many others did not. Some were demolished against the architect’s will, some preserved against the project’s principles. Today, those buildings stand as monuments of architecture’s attack on Permanence.

This studio will examine the vestiges of that debate. It will collectively address two buildings in the U.S. that both promoted openness and made openness a design polemics, but also clashed with one another in their design theories, namely: the Institute for Scientific Information Headquarters (1979) in Philadelphia by Venturi, Scott Brown, and Associates, and the Patscentre (1985) in Princeton by the Richard Rogers
Partnership. (Two buildings that, paradoxically, challenged through unstable organizations the institutions they were asked to represent, while they focused through their design techniques on questions of representation: the former, an ordinary shed that freed space by reducing design to external decoration; the latter, a sophisticated shed that freed space by reducing design to external structure). The studio brief is simple. You will join a team, be assigned a building, and asked to double its surface. Do you endorse openness, and observe, refine, or redefine the original script? Do you question it, and address the building as an architectural monument? What is at stake is to design in conversation with, and take a position on, a building and the arguments it advanced, as well as to tackle a longstanding question within the field, again, half a century later.
Schedule

Week 1
Tuesday 3 September
Thursday 5 September
Week 2
Tuesday 3 September
Thursday 12 September
Week 3
Tuesday 10 September
Thursday 12 September
Week 4
Tuesday 17 September
Thursday 19 September
Week 5
Tuesday 24 September
Thursday 26 September
Week 6
Tuesday 1 October
Thursday 3rd October
Week 7
Tuesday 8 October
Thursday 10 October
Saturday 12 October
Sunday 13 October
Week 8
Monday 14 October
Tuesday 15 October
Thursday 17 October
Week 9
Tuesday 22 October
Thursday 24 October
Week 10
Tuesday 29 October

Studio Preview
Studio kick off
Precedent analysis

Review - PAC + ICI
Design Options

Depart for Studio Trip
Return from Studio Trip

Design Development
Mid-term Review

Enrique/Daniel
Daniel (Enrique Skype)
Enrique/Daniel
Daniel (Enrique Skype)
Enrique/Daniel
Daniel (Enrique Skype)
Enrique/Daniel
Daniel (Enrique Skype)
Enrique/Daniel + Critics
Daniel (Enrique Skype)
Enrique/Daniel
Daniel (Enrique Skype)
Enrique/Daniel + Critics
Thursday 31 October
Week 11
Tuesday 5 November
Thursday 7 November
Week 12
Tuesday 12 November
Thursday 14 November
Week 13
Tuesday 19 November
Thursday 21 November
Week 14
Tuesday 26 November
Thursday 28 November
Week 15
Tuesday 3 December
Thursday 5 December
Week 16
Tuesday 10 December

Design Development
Daniel (Enrique Skype)
Enrique/Daniel
Daniel (Enrique Skype)
Enrique/Daniel
Daniel (Enrique Skype)
Enrique/Daniel
Daniel (Enrique Skype)
Enrique/Daniel
Daniel (Enrique Skype)
Enrique/Daniel

Thanksgiving
- 
Enrique/Daniel

Final Review (t.b.c)
Enrique/Daniel + Critics
Absence Policy:
Please include the following line in your syllabus: Work in the studio will build sequentially. Therefore, student commitment to incremental development on a daily basis is of great importance. The demanding nature and pace of this studio necessitates regular attendance and requires that deadlines are consistently met. 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.

Studio Culture:
Please include the following in your syllabus:The Department of Architecture promotes a learning environment that supports the diverse values of the entire MIT community of students, faculty, administration, staff and guests. Fundamental to the mission of architectural education is the stewardship of this diversity in a positive and respectful learning environment that promotes the highest intellectual integrity and cultural literacy. As architectural design learning is often accomplished through project-based activities during and outside of class times, maintaining this environment at all times is the responsibility of the entire community. Faculty and students should strive to understand and mutually respect the varied commitments of each other and work together to manage expectations of time and effort devoted to assignments, pin-ups, and public reviews.

Academic Integrity:
Please include the following line in your syllabus: MIT’s expectations and policies regarding academic integrity should be read carefully and adhered to diligently: http://integrity.mit.edu/
Grades:
In addition to defining evaluation criteria, it is essential to define what the grades represent. See the Institute’s definition of grades. http://catalog.mit.edu/mit/procedures/academic-performance-grades/#gradestext
Refer to that page for additional grade definitions. The standards are included below. Please feel free to modify and adapt the Institute’s descriptions.
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 advisable 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.

Student Performance Criteria NAAB:
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, con-
sider 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.

Realm B: Integrated Building Practices, Technical Skills and Knowledge:

B9. Structural Systems: Understanding of the basic principles of structural behavior in withstanding gravity and lateral forces and the evolution, range, and appropriate application of contemporary structural systems.

Realm C: Leadership and Practice

C3. Client Role in Architecture: Understanding of the responsibility of the architect to elicit, understand, and reconcile the needs of the client, owner, user groups, and the public and community domains.