

Core I Studio, Fall 2022

MIT Department of Architecture

Instructors

Jeff Landman

Carrie Norman

William O'Brien Jr. (Coordinator)

Teaching Fellows

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Teaching Assistants

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Core I Studio Responsibilities and Opportunities

1. Welcome our new M.Arch cohort to the Department, the School, the Institute, the discipline and the profession.
2. Orient our students toward faculty, staff, students, and resources who/that can help them be successful.
3. Frame a cohesive series of design exercises that enable students to rehearse design processes iteratively.
4. Encourage an interpretive understanding of the design brief and context (early stages of the formulation of an “agenda”).
5. Nurture incoming students’ backgrounds, while questioning preconceptions of the constitution of architecture.
6. Foster a culture of drawing and making as an inextricable method of design inquiry.
7. Introduce and experiment with different modes of authorship.

8. Instill healthy and respectful work habits for the duration of the M.Arch and beyond.
9. Draw-out and cultivate a unique identity to the M.Arch cohort.
10. Inspire the pursuit of different forms of agency in architecture.

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. 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 M.Arch students and must be taken in sequence.

Studio Context

The exercises will bracket particular design dilemmas; 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 I 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 I, the foundation semester, are threefold:

- (1) 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).
- (2) The development of three-dimensional dexterity, and an ability to conceive of form and space. This considers “conceive” as both an act of comprehension, and as well as an act of imagination.
- (3) An understanding of the physics of building. This concerns the way that structure works, and the implications of structural typologies on design strategy.

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.

Schedule (38 total meetings)

The schedule of exercises is founded on the idea that each exercise increases in duration by approximately twofold; the first exercise is approximately 2 weeks, the second is approximately 4 weeks, and the third and final exercise is approximately 8 weeks.

The studio will hold meetings with the instructors primarily on Tuesdays and Fridays, with the occasional Thursday being substituted for a Friday where necessary based on holidays or final review(s). Thursdays will be ordinarily utilized as days to hold either (1) TF and TA-run workshops or staff-run tutorials that are topical for the work being conducted in studio that week, and/or (2) mentorship talks*. Generally, activities on Thursdays will not last the duration of the studio session, which will leave some time for working in the studio.

*Mentorship talks are new this year. The talks provide an opportunity for students to understand potential career trajectories and identify commonalities between their outlooks and the outlooks of the faculty, laying the groundwork for potential, eventual mentor/mentee relationships.

Key Dates

Exercise 1 Final Review: Thursday, 9/22

Exercise 2 Final Review: Friday, 10/21

Exercise 3 Mid Review: Tuesday, 11/15

Exercise 3 Final Review: Wednesday, 12/14

Studio Culture

Work in the studio will build sequentially. Therefore, commitment to incremental development on a daily basis is of paramount importance. Charrettes before reviews will not suffice. The demanding nature and pace of the studio course will necessitate your consistent attendance and will require

that deadlines are consistently met. Working in the 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 good reason, as each of you has something valuable to gain from your peers. Therefore, attendance in the studio and for the duration of all formal reviews is required. 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.

In an effort to promote healthy and respectful working habits, we find it our responsibility to articulate and implement a version of a "pens down" policy. We want to encourage habits which allow students to practice architecture in a way that demonstrates self-respect and underscores an awareness of the importance of our health. The intensity of architectural practice can be incredibly rewarding. On the other hand, we recognize the existence of unhealthy, all-consuming work cultures within the discipline. As a way to draw attention to this issue, and to help our students strike the appropriate balance between inspired production and reflective equanimity, we request that students complete and submit their final deliverables by 9:00PM the evening before the Final Review of each exercise.

Instructors' Office Hours

Liam: Monday, 11:30-12:30

Jeff: Tuesday, 11:00-12:00

Carrie: Monday, 11:00-12:00

Z: Monday, 1:00 -4:00

Myles: Tuesday, 11:30-12:30 or by appointment