Ghost House
ARCHITECTURE DESIGN STUDIO

Syllabus

INSTRUCTOR
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Introduction

The Ghost House Studio breaks the 30-year timeline of residential architecture into two modes: temporal and eternal. The existing model is sold through a false idea of permanence; one that is shored up by societal constructs such as settling-down, landownership, and capitalism financed by 30-year mortgages. While we suggest homes are built for forever, the reality of construction tells a different story. In North America, we build homes in 90 days: fast for forever. Not only does construction mis-align with the use proposition, but the suggestion that nuclear families purchase land, build a house, and hand that house down to their children is also a misnomer. The average homeowner lives in their home for only 8 years before selling. Whether it be through necessity of climate migration, or through societal shifts, we are a nomadic civilization.

Alternatively, North America's foundational architecture is arguably mound-building: eternal structures created by nomadic civilizations. These enigmas upend the assumption that nomadic architecture is dedicated to lightweight, deployable, temporary structures. Therefore, this studio will explore how alternative models of architecture can shift residential timescales. It requires students to design homes to last a short amount of time, while leaving a legacy behind for future residents, community, and society. By designing for two timescales: immediate and eternal, students will confront the societal constructs that have shaped our default approaches to residential architecture.

Methods

The following design methods will explore this problem.

- *Thesis Core* – Within the bracketed framework of the two timescales outlined above, students will research and construct specific arguments that project possible futures for housing in North America. With these projections, particular opportunities will emerge surrounding customization, radicalization, and the shifting of what we understand to be typical residential cores: the irreducible components of architecture like kitchens, bathrooms, storage, structure, etc. Through the combination of these position statements and rigorous dimensional studies of the human experience, students will propose new residential cores.
- *Physical Models* – Expanding from the cores, students will construct models that imagine transformations through time to accommodate the new nomadic living.
- *Stop Motion Animation* – Documentation of the physical models will be the resulting product to help tell stories through time about how this new model of architecture is more in-sync with societal shifts.
- *Temporal Drawings* – While the stop-motion documentation is a living process, temporal drawings will identify particular snapshots worth detailing and expanding into moments in time that resonate with each other.

Travel

The Ohio River Valley contains many of the most well-preserved mounds in North America. These range from ring mounds to conic, constellation clusters, and effigy mounds. Over the course of 4-5 days, students will experience the relationship between these multi-thousand-year-old mounds, their sites, and the impact they have beyond the immediate occupation of the grounds as well as the societies that created them. The goal of this experience will be to impart the students with a better understanding of scale and legacy that come naturally with these mound sites.

Reference Material

Colavito, Jason. *The Mound Builder Myth: Fake History and the Hunt for a "Lost White Race".* University of Oklahoma Press, 2020.

Hancock, Graham. *America Before: The Key to Earth's Lost Civilization*. St. Martin's Press, 2019.

Jarzombek, Mark. *Architecture of First Societies: A Global Perspective.* John Wiley & Sons, 2014.

Pauketat, Timothy. *Cahokia: Ancient America's Great City on the Mississippi*. Penguin, 2009.

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?
- **Completion**: Are the objectives of the assignment completed?
- **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?
- **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 that 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, model-making skills verbal clarity or logic of presentation is 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.

Policies

Attendance at all class meetings is mandatory. If any meeting is to be missed, please notify the instructor prior to the scheduled class. Do not photograph or record any component of the course without express permission. Please remember to silence cell phones and be courteous when using laptops in class.

Schedule

Week 01
9/6	Preview Event
9/9	Introduction

Week 02
9/13	Desk-Crits
9/16	Small-Group Pin-Ups

Week 03
9/20	Desk-Crits
9/23	HOLIDAY – Student Day

Week 04
9/27	**Review – Exercise 1** Introduction of Ex. 2: *The Time Split*
9/30	Travel

Week 05
10/4	Travel
10/7	Studio

Week 06
10/11	HOLIDAY – Indigenous Peoples Day
10/14	Workshop

Week 07
10/18	Studio
10/21	**Mid-Review**

Week 08
10/25	Studio
10/28	Workshop

Week 09
11/1	Studio
11/4	Studio

Week 10
11/8	ELECTION DAY – day off
11/11	HOLIDAY – Veteran's Day

Week 11
11/15	**Penultimate Review**
11/18	Studio

Week 12
11/22	Studio
11/25	HOLIDAY - *Thanksgiving*

Week 13
11/29	Studio
12/2	Studio

Week 14
12/6	Studio
12/9	Studio

Week 15
12/13	**FINAL REVIEW** – 1:00PM-5:00PM (*tentatively*)