

UNDER ONE ROOF

PUBLIC WORKS
MIT architecture

Under One Roof

4.154 Architecture Design Option Studio
MIT Department of Architecture

Instructor: Matteo Ghidoni
Teaching Assistant: Alexandros Gravalos

Location: Studio 3-415

Schedule: Tuesdays & Thursdays, 1:00–5:00 PM

Course description

Under One Roof explores the agency of the roof as public device.

Following two semesters focused on *Enclosures*, and on the primacy of the plan, *Under One Roof* will continue our investigation on collective form through a radical 90-degree turn, placing the section (and the worm’s-eye view) at the center of the discourse.

As for the previous iterations, the studio intends to stimulate an accurate research into the possibilities generated by a fundamental act of spatial delimitation. The project will be explored as selective device, capable of framing contemporary rituals, activating possible *scenes of public life*.

Under One Roof is not so much about the object roof itself as the covered space beneath it, understood as a plural and shared territory. A portion of space that interests us because of its specific spatial qualities: structure, proportions, light, atmospheric conditions, material expression.

Criteria of rationality, efficiency and climatic performance will meet the monumental, the archaic, the symbolic, the unconscious.

The expression *Under One Roof* can be read both literally and metaphorically. It describes an act of collective recognition - the effort of a multitude - as well as the form of the thing: the way it manifests itself to the sensible world.

Under One Roof celebrates the value of being physically present: the risk of bringing one’s own body in a specific place - sharing it with other bodies - as a basic form of democratic participation. It also celebrates the city as a place of material and immaterial accumulation, injecting architectural meaning and providing a condensed collective experience.

The studio will operate as a project-driven research unit.
The design work will unfold in two segments:

I. A Roof for 10-100 (A Pavilion in the Park) - weeks 1-5
and

II. A Roof for 100-1,000 (A Hall in the City) - weeks 7-14

Throughout the semester, we will conduct local site visits to examine architectural precedents.

The students will engage in a series of *Rooftalks*: online conversations with the authors of some of the proposed case studies. Every talk will focus on one project, that will be presented and discussed in depth.

Calendar

Wk 01

Tue Sept 02 (In-Person)

Studio Previews and lottery

Thu Sept 04 (In-Person)

Studio Introduction

Wk 02

Tue Sept 09 (In-Person)

Rooftalks: VG13, Pavillon im Park, 2020

Collective Review: Site proposal

Thu Sept 11 (In-Person)

Rooftalks: Piovenefabi, 7 Garden Pavilions, 2017

Collective Review: Study models

Wk 03

Tue Sept 16 (In-Person)

Rooftalks: Andrea Faraguna, Heatwave, 2025

Collective Review: Study models

Thu Sept 18 (In-Person)

Rooftalks: Nuno Melo Sousa, Engenho, 2019 + Harambee, 2023

Collective Review: Study models and drawings

Wk 04

Tue Sept 23 (In-Person)

Rooftalks: Lanza Atelier, Kioskos y Banos Publicos, 2015

Collective Review: Study models and drawings

Thu Sept 25 (In-Person)

Rooftalks: VG13, Associates Architecture, Stones Venue, 2025

Collective Review: Study models and images

Wk 05

Tue Sept 30 (In-Person)

Rooftalks: Leopold Banchini, Moon-Ra, 2021 + Dark Skies, 2025 (tbc)

Collective Review: Final model

Thu Oct 02 (In-Person)

Rooftalks: Studio Sotnas, Misassemble Pavilion, 2023 (tbc)

Collective Review: Final drawings and images

Wk 06

Tue Oct 07 (In-Person)

Intermediate Review

Thu Oct 09 - 12 (In-Person)

Local study trip window

Wk 07

Tue Oct 14 Student holiday (no class)

Thu Oct 16 (Hybrid)

Collective Review: Site proposal

Wk 08

Tue Oct 21 (Hybrid) Desk Crits

Thu Oct 23 (Hybrid) Desk Crits

Wk 09

Tue Oct 28 (Hybrid) Desk Crits

Thu Oct 30 (Hybrid) Desk Crits

Wk 10

Tue Nov 04 (Hybrid) Pin-up group A

Thu Nov 06 (Hybrid) Pin-up group B

Wk 11

Tue Nov 11 (In-Person) Desk Crits

Thu Nov 13 (In-Person) Desk Crits

Wk 12

Tue Nov 18 (In-Person) Desk Crits

Thu Nov 20 (In-Person) Desk Crits

Wk 13

Tue Nov 25 (In-Person) Pre-final Review

Thu Nov 27 Thanksgiving holiday (no class)

Wk 14

Tue Dec 02 (In-Person) Desk Crits

Thu Dec 04 (In-Person) Desk Crits

Wk 15

Tue Dec 09 (In-Person)

Final Review

Studio Culture

I.

We are interested in architecture as public thing. Not only in a strict sense (that of projects originating from public commissions), but for the inherently plural nature of every design act. Architecture is the effort of a multitude: it implies a collective goal, a shared knowledge and a collaborative work.

II.

We understand architecture as a formal problem and design as a technique of the real: a creative negotiation between desires and possibilities, between object and context, form and content.

III.

We must learn how to look at things, at every scale, from every angle, being aware that between observation and production - between research and proposal - there is an inescapable but not consequential relationship. The idea that a good survey automatically translates into a good project is an illusion. While the research process benefits from being open and inclusive, the architectural project is selective and affirmative, with no room for ambiguity.

IV.

We see academic education as nothing more than a stage: a moment of learning to think and work as an architect within a much longer and broader process. A process aimed at consolidating both a technique and an attitude towards the work. We believe that this second aspect is by far the most important thing for a student today: the formation of a reasoned and coherent judgment about architecture as a whole, which serves as a premise and basis for one's own work and at the same time as a critical element in its making.

V.

The intellectual environment of our studio is strongly influenced by experiences connected to critical, curatorial and editorial practices. We are skeptical about the exaltation of individual creativity and the myth of novelty. We try to explore different modes of co-authoring. The common ground for a possible collaboration is the shared body of knowledge represented by all architecture that has been built or just designed through time. We operate through selection, manipulation, and appropriation.

VI.

We employ multiple forms of production as critical tools. We carefully consider each medium (text, drawing, model, image...) for its own specific potential. We place the highest importance in making as the basis of any possible discussion. Our activity requires precision, intellectual engagement, and a certain degree of organization.

VII.

We encourage the *real living contact with the things themselves*. Something crucial happens when we no longer visit architectures as tourists, but rather with the desire to understand their technical rationale, to learn how they were built, when we judge them as if we had built them ourselves, when we look at them from the perspective of our work.

VIII.

Please don't be fooled by the assertive tone of the statements above. We have always dreamed of having a comprehensive, solid and convincing position on architecture. And consequently a method for teaching it: a reassuring one, valid once and for all. The truth is that we're full of doubts. Doubts that reoccur with particular violence whenever we are required to write down our pedagogical intentions. Sharing these concerns, making our students aware of them, is the most honest way we can contribute to their growth.

IX.

If what you give is what you receive, we expect all our doubts to bounce back from the students with renewed power. We would consider this a success.

Essential bibliography:

Giorgio Agamben. What is an Apparatus? Stanford University Press, 2009.

Aldo Rossi. The Architecture of the City. MIT Press, 1982.

San Rocco #6, Collaborations. Spring 2013.

San Rocco #8, What's Wrong with the Primitive Hut?. 2008.

Pier Vittorio Aureli. Architecture and Abstraction. The MIT Press, 2023.

Andrea Deplazes. Constructing Architecture: Materials, Processes, Structures: a Handbook. Birkhauser, 2005.

Irénée Scalbert. A Real Living Contact with the Things Themselves. Park Books, 2018.

