

Instructor: Norman ([cnorman@mit.edu](mailto:cnorman@mit.edu))

# *4.s12 Brick x Brick: Drawing a Particular Survey*

## Course Syllabus



Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture, Jean Blackwell Hutson Research and Reference Division, The New York Public Library. "At work in the school's brick-yard" New York Public Library Digital Collections. 1904.

## Overview

If the architectural drawing moves something unknown to something known (from vision to building), the reverse could be said of the architectural survey. The potential of the architectural survey lies in its mobilizing of something known into unforeseeable future uses (from building to visions). This course centers on recasting the architectural survey from conveyor of building facts to instrument for building stories.

Operating somewhere between the limits of absolute truth and virtual truth, our research will aim to uncover new ways of engaging architecture's relationship to vision, documentation, and the art of renewal (or preservation) against the backdrop of racial, economic, and material conditions in the turn-of-the century South. More specifically, the site of the course will be Tuskegee University and the legacy of Robert R. Taylor, the first accredited Black architect, MIT graduate, and designer and builder of a significant portion of the campus's brick buildings. Students will consider Taylor's work both in the present context and its inception under Booker T. Washington's leadership.

In addition to rigorously surveying a building through traditional and non-traditional survey methods and media, students will engage Taylor's legacy through on-site field work paired with archival research. Observations will be filtered through distinct ways of looking to describe an existing building not as it is but as it is seen by the student. The results, a set of unconventional as-built drawings, will question and advance visuality as architecture's essential resource.

For this course, travel is required and will take place prior to the start of the spring semester (Sunday 1/26-Friday 1/31). The travel week will involve a mix of tours, teaching, discussions, and on-site surveying. Following our travels, class days are formatted around lectures, readings, discussions, tutorials, desk and pin-up critiques.

#### Format

This course is structured like a studio (class days are formatted around lectures, readings, discussions, tutorials, desk and pin-up critiques). Unlike a studio, students will not be designing a building. Rather, students will be designing the drawings of a building – a building that already exists in the world. Where a typical studio intervenes in a site, this course intervenes in the record of a site. With that, we proceed from building sites to building *sights*. The course is formatted around three interrelated parts: Part 1 – Measured Survey, Part 2 – Mediated Survey, and Part 3 – Public Survey.

Part 1 prioritizes direct observation, measurement, and drawing. A site visit to Tuskegee University prompts firsthand documentation of the material, tectonic, and social qualities of its campus buildings and will infuse specific techniques for the production of an initial 'as-found' set of drawings. Like an archeologist, Part 1 will underscore the individual's ability to experiment with new ways of seeing to reveal the existing building's physical character, among other qualities.

Where Part 1 is occupied with precision and measurable data manifest through measured drawings, Part 2 explores the survey as a framework both for documenting existing conditions and also developing techniques for speculative architectural images.

Part 3 considers audience. Some of our earliest architectural surveys have endured for centuries and live in the public domain, making architecture accessible to anyone. Viollet-le-Duc's ten-volume descriptive dictionary of French architecture can be found in Google Books, for instance. We adopt the premise that a survey must, at a minimum, persist – for audiences past, present, or future. Formatted as a book and guided by specific prompts, students will author a particular survey for a self-selected audience.

In addition to Survey assignments, students are responsible for selecting case study & research clusters, and preparing a presentation to the class. Working in pairs is encouraged. Pairs are expected to work collaboratively to present short (15-minute) digital presentations to prompt questions, discussion, and debate. Presentation material may include annotated text, images, drawings, and diagrams found in the resources folder or sourced elsewhere. Please provide image credits and citations appropriately.

## Learning Objectives & Evaluation Criteria

### Learning Objectives

The course consists of three interrelated parts exploring various modes of description through drawing, image-making, and research. Students should be able to engage with an increasing level of design research and move fluidly between different modes and scales of operation. Conventions of design representation and communication through drawing, image-making, image collection, and presenting will be explored. Students will need to demonstrate basic application of design skills, understanding of conventions, and an ability to sustain an increasing level of research over the course's term.

### Completion Requirements

Completion of each of the exercises, rigor in process and clarity in representation, as well as the overall progress of the semester (including attendance) will be fundamental to completing the course.

### Evaluation Criteria and Grading:

The following criteria will be used for the evaluation of student's work, both in terms of helping their progress and in final grading:

- Concept: How clearly is the student articulating the conceptual intentions?
- Translation of Concept: How well is the student using their concept to develop the work?
- Representation Appropriateness: How well is the student's choice of representation advancing their intentions?
- Representation Quality: To what degree does student's representations convey what they ought to?
- Oral Presentation Skills: How clearly are students presenting their ideas orally, whether in class or to a jury?
- Participation: How actively and how constructively are students involved in class discussions, both formally and informally?
- Attendance – see next page.

**A: Excellent** — The work 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** — The work 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. The work is complete on all levels and demonstrates potential for excellence.

**C: Average** — The work 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** — The work is incomplete. Basic skills including graphic skills, model-making skills, verbal clarity or logic of presentation are not level-appropriate. Student does not demonstrate the required design skill and knowledge base.

**F: Failure** — The work is unresolved. Minimum objectives are not met. Performance is not acceptable. This grade will be assigned when you have excessive unexcused absences.

## Policies & Support

### Attendance Policy

Attendance for the full duration of each class is mandatory. An excused absence is defined as one that was discussed with and approved by the professor at least 24 hours prior to the date of absence, or a family or medical emergency that is confirmed by your physician or a member in the Student Support Services. Unexcused absences will reduce the course grade by half a letter grade, at minimum. Late arrival or early departure from class, without prior approval, will count as a partial absence.

### Student Support Services (GradSupport)

If you find that something is getting in the way of your ability to attend class, complete work, or take an exam, you should contact the Office of Graduate Education (OGE). GradSupport provides consultation, coaching, and advocacy to graduate students on matters related to academic and life challenges. You can contact GradSupport by email at [gradsupport@mit.edu](mailto:gradsupport@mit.edu) or via phone at (617) 253-4860.

### Disability Accommodation and Access Services

MIT is committed to the principle of equal access and an inclusionary environment. Students who need any form of accommodation are encouraged to speak with the instructor as early as possible. Students who need disability accommodations are encouraged to speak with Disability and Access Services ([studentlife.mit.edu/das](http://studentlife.mit.edu/das)), prior to or early in the semester so that accommodation requests can be evaluated and addressed in a timely fashion.

If you have a disability and are not planning to use accommodations, it is still recommended that you meet with DAS staff to familiarize yourself with their services and resources. Contact Disability and Access Services with any questions at 617-253-1674 or via email [das-student@mit.edu](mailto:das-student@mit.edu).

### Course Communications

Course information, assignments briefs, and submission deadlines will be distributed via Canvas. Coursework submissions will also occur via Canvas. The Canvas course homepage can be found here:

<https://canvas.mit.edu/courses/26132/wiki>

Updates to the course schedule and content will be issued via Canvas announcements and/or to your MIT email address (Canvas announcements should be set to email your MIT address). Students are responsible for checking email regularly throughout the course. Students are also encouraged to email the instructor with any questions, concerns, or requests that may arise during the course.

**Schedule**

Note: schedule is subject to change.

**PART 1—MEASURED SURVEY**

00	—	—	TRAVEL WEEK (SEPARATE ITINERARY)
01	2/5	TH	SYLLABUS & OVERVIEW <u>ASSIGNED: ASSIGNMENT 2—CASE STUDIES &amp; RESEARCH CLUSTERS</u> <u>PIN-UP (DIGITAL): BACKGROUND SET (FIRST DRAFT)</u>
02	2/12	TH	STUDENT CASE STUDY AND RESEARCH PRESENTATIONS <u>PIN-UP: BACKGROUND SET (SECOND DRAFT FOR REDLINING)</u>
03	2/19	TH	FIELD TRIP: MIT MUSEUM—ROBERT R. TAYLOR THESIS DRAWINGS <u>DUE: FINAL BACKGROUND SET FOR HABS SUBMISSION</u> <u>PIN-UP: FOREGROUND SET</u>

**PART 2—MEDIATED SURVEY**

04	2/26	TH	WORKING SESSION – WRAP UP ASSIGNMENTS 1 & 2
05	3/5	TH	LECTURE: THE CONSTRUCTED IMAGE <u>ASSIGNED: ASSIGNMENT 3 – MEDIATED SURVEY</u>
06	3/12	TH	GUEST PRESENTATION: JACOB PAYNE <u>DESK CRIT: MEDIATED SURVEY</u>
07	3/19	TH	GUEST LECTURE: GEOLOGICAL SURVEY (MÉLANIE LOUTERBACH) <u>DESK CRIT: MEDIATED SURVEY</u>
08	—	—	SPRING BREAK (NO CLASS)

**PART 3—PUBLIC SURVEY**

09	4/2	TH	GUEST LECTURE: AS— (MARA DIAVLOVA) <u>ASSIGNED: ASSIGNMENT 4—PUBLIC SURVEY</u> <u>PIN-UP: MEDIATED SURVEY</u>
10	4/9	TH	GUEST LECTURE: AS BUILT VS AD DRAWN (JENNA SCHNITZLER) <u>DESK CRIT: PUBLIC SURVEY—PROPOSALS (SCOPE &amp; STORYBOARD)</u>
11	4/16	TH	<u>DESK CRIT: PUBLIC SURVEY—PROGRESS (BOOK FORMAT)</u>
12	4/23	TH	<u>PIN-UP 1/2: PUBLIC SURVEY—DRAFT</u>
13	4/30	TH	<u>PIN-UP 2/2: PUBLIC SURVEY—DRAFT</u>
14	5/7	TH	<u>BOOK BINDING PARTY</u>

## Suggested Readings

Dirk. "As Found: The Metamorphosis of the Everyday. On the Work of Nigel Henderson, Eduardo Paolozzi, and Alison and Peter Smithson (1953-1956)." *OASE*, no. 59, Jan. 2002, pp. 52–67.

Eastman, George, and Et Al. *New Topographics : Robert Adams, Lewis Baltz, Bernd and Hilla Becher, Joe Deal, Frank Gohlke, Nicholas Nixon, John Schott, Stephen Shore, Henry Wessel, Jr.* Steidl, 2009.

Flores, Ricardo. *Flores & Prats : : Sala Beckett: International Drama Centre*. Mexico, Arquine, 2020.

Georges Perec, and John Sturrock. *Species of Space and Other Pieces*. Penguin, 2008.

Gibbs, James. *Rules for Drawing the Several Parts of Architecture: In a More Exact and Easy Manner than Has Been Heretofore Practised, by Which All Fractions, Individuing the Principal Members and Their Parts, Are Avoided.* by James Gibbs. The Third Edition. Printed for W. Innys and J. Richardson, J. and P. Knapton, C. Hitch and L. Hawes, R. Manby and H.S. Cox, 1753.

Ladd, Jeffrey. *A Field Measure Survey of American Architecture*. Mack, 2021.

Lewis, Philippa. *Stories from Architecture: Behind the Lines at Drawing Matter*. The MIT Press, 2021.

Momoyo Kaijima, et al. *Architectural Ethnography*. Tokyo, Japan, Toto Publishing, 2018.

Viollet-le-Duc, Eugène Emmanuel. *Dictionnaire Raisonné de l'architecture française du XIe au XVe siècle*. 10 vols. Paris: B. Bance and A. Morel, 1854-1868.

Weiss, Ellen, and Robert Robinson Taylor. *Robert R. Taylor and Tuskegee : An African American Architect Designs for Booker T. Washington*. Newsouth Books, 2012.

Wells, Matthew, and Sarah Handelman. *Survey*. Park Books; Wincanton, 2021.

Yoshiharu Tsukamoto, et al. *Behaviorology*. Rizzoli, 2010.