

MIT DEPARTMENT OF ARCHITECTURE

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4.221 **ARCHITECTURE STUDIES COLLOQUIUM (YOUR FORUM!)**

The *SMArchS Colloquium* is a requirement for all first-year students in the *SMArchS* program:

Architectural Design
Architecture & Urbanism
Building Technology
Design & Computation
History, Theory & Criticism
Aga Khan Program for Islamic Architecture

The course aims to:

- create familiarity + connection between the various *SMArchS* discipline groups and current institute-wide initiatives that are being pursued by them
- to provide introduction and orientation to *MIT* and the wider academic context in Boston, Cambridge and the region to find your feet quickly given its remarkable diversity
- to witness and hopefully engage the interdisciplinary thinking, research and innovation that is characteristic of *MIT*'s culture
- to provide a forum for debate and discussion in which the *SMArchS* community can explore, develop and share ideas that are formative for their future work at *MIT*, especially their central thesis.

Outline & Schedule

The course is very simple – essentially a series of **student-led discussions**. The first 3 weeks will focus on presentations from 1st year *SMArchS* students, introducing your background, interests and agendas to your peers (15-20 mins each).

We will later invite (and “persuade”) 2nd year *SMArchS* and PhD students to present their formative thesis topics and/or research conducted throughout their time at *MIT*.

We will invite a range of Architecture (and related) faculty to join each week to informally offer their personal/disciplinary perspective, giving you all chance to interact directly with them.

These student and faculty initiatives will help introduce you to fellow classmates, emphasize disciplinary research topics emerging across *MIT*, and begin to show their differences and overlaps, as well as some of the broader initiatives animating *MIT*'s culture.

Attendance

Attendance for the full duration of each class is mandatory. This class is an exceptional learning environment that requires your presence as well as your input. You are allowed one excused absence for the semester. 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 dean in Student Support Services.

STUDENT “ASSIGNMENTS”

Personal Portrait (all do this)

30%

During the first weeks of class you will be expected to give a **15 minute** introductory presentation, with **5 mins** for questions/discussion. These should be structured presentations to introduce your classmates to who you are, what your background is, and what you are currently interested in (and why)?

Everyone should create a simple presentation that frames your past work (and life): this can be your former thesis, select projects from your portfolio or something that you've done recently that you think captures your intellect and personality best. You should also describe your interests and goals for *MIT* and anything else that you think is important to highlight your unique perspective.

Class Discussion + Feedback (all do this)

30%

For the remainder of the class focused on 2nd year *SMArchS* student presentations, alumni and faculty, your first “assignment” is to simply attend every class, listen to the presentations and give insightful comments/questions to create an engaging dialogue with your classmates.

2nd Year, Alumni, Faculty Intros + Prompts

40%

3 of you will be selected each week to be responsible for briefly introducing the speakers (whether *SMArchS* 2nd Yr, alumni or faculty: you can decide between you how to prepare for all the class speakers, but in the case of 2nd Yrs, you need to meet them and discuss their work!), but prepare to begin the verbal questions, and summarizing in writing comments/constructive feedback within 3 days (so they benefit from the session).

We will invite *SMArchS* Alumni to describe their trajectory post-MIT into PhD/Faculty positions, architectural practice, start-up/entrepreneurship, etc. And we will invite faculty to informally frame their work and offer thoughts on anything and everything that we can squeeze out of them!

We ask that your introductions of alumni and faculty are in a mischievous and agile manner, such that your introduction shows *interest*, *respect* but also *informed curiosity* – ideally to prompt spontaneity from the speaker!

Evaluation Criteria and Grading

The breakdown for evaluation of the work is as follows: (30%) for student presentations, (40%) for the assignment and (30%) for activeclass participation. The two main components of the class are:

1. Verbal and visual presentation: How clearly are students presenting visually/verbally and creating a dialogue with the rest of the class and
2. Participation in Discussions: How actively and how constructively are students involved in class discussions? Students should to attend all scheduled classes and participate fully in the discussions. The goal is to stimulate an intelligent exchange around the speakers' work via clearly articulated reflections and questions related to the theme.

Tentative Schedule

(a list will be posted as speakers are confirmed)

Week 1 (Sept 9)

Introductions – Syllabus, Instructor & Students

Week 2 (Sept 16)

20+min Intro Presentations (6) – **SMArchS 1st Year**

Week 3 (Sept 23)

20+10min Intro Presentations (6) – **SMArchS 1st Year**

Week 4 (Sept 30)

20+10min Intro Presentations (6) – **SMArchS 1st Year**

Week 5 (Oct 7)

MG Framing Thesis Types

Week 6 (Oct 14)

2nd Year/Alumni/Faculty Intro

Week 7 (Oct 21)

2nd Year/Alumni/Faculty Intro

Week 8 (Oct 28)

2nd Year/Alumni/Faculty Intro

Week 9 (Nov 4)

2nd Year/Alumni/Faculty Intro

Week 10 (Nov 11)

Veterans Day (**no class**)

Week 11 (Nov 18)

2nd Year/Alumni/Faculty Intro

Week 12 (Nov 26)

Thanksgiving (**no class**)

Week 13 (Dec 2)

2nd Year/Alumni/Faculty Intro

Week 14 (Dec 9)

2nd Year/Alumni/Faculty Intro

AI Policy

Since the goal is to attain critical insight into the motivations of a wide range of speakers by in-person exchange, using AI would seem to diminish rather than enhance the educational benefit of engaging-with, introducing, framing questions, etc. If you see benefit in using AI, then please be pro-active in appealing to TA/Prof your reasoning, and if we agree that there may be educational benefit to you and to the group, it will be allowable with permission.