

USC School of Architecture
ARCH 501
Critical Topics in Architecture
Fall 2019
2 units

Mary Casper
Maria Esnaola
Erin Kasimow
Andy Ku
Hadrian Predock
Marcos Sanchez
coordinator: Eric Haas

DEGREE PROJECT R+D

INTRODUCTION

The ARCH 501 / 502 sequence gives students in their last year of undergraduate education the opportunity to develop focused interests, helping to crystalize one's thoughts about architecture. In previous semesters the studio experience has been concentrated by varying degree on specific topics, both practical and conceptual, and been mainly shaped by institutional, professional and faculty-directed goals and requirements.

This sequence, in contrast, encourages you to develop more individuated positions and approaches that will serve you long after graduation. As such, it is less the end of your time in the program at USC than the beginning of your independent career in architecture.

Starting with themes that each encompass a contemporary inquiry in and around the discipline of architecture, the fall semester is one focused on the research and development of ideas that will serve as the foundation for next spring's studio. Working through a structured sequence of activities, you will create a body of research and a critical, reflective and anticipatory final paper forming a base of information for your terminal design project.

SEMESTER STRUCTURE

The course is divided in two parts:

A seminar format, establishing themes and supporting discussion, critique, and rhetorical practice (6 weeks)

A sequence of activities geared toward the development of your degree project paper (9 weeks)

Consult the course schedule below for further information.

ASSIGNMENTS

1. Rhetorical Critiques: In the first part of the semester you will craft a critical response to each week's thematic readings. As critiques these are not summations of what you have read, but analyses of the underlying context, concepts and questions raised by each. Each critique will be 200-250 words, and is due by the beginning of class.

Critique 1, Thesis Identification: Identify and formulate in your own words the main motivation and position taken by the author of each of the week's readings. Support your analyses with examples or references from the texts.

Critique 2, Rhetorical Questions: Incorporating specific ideas raised by each author, write three paragraphs – ideally one per text - that each end with a rhetorical, provocative question. That is, a question that seeks to make a point through its very asking.

Critique 3, Oppositional Polemic: Using one of the week's readings as source material, write a strong, argumentative polemic in opposition to that reading. Your polemic must be well-reasoned and supported by specific points, and not merely suggest a contrary opinion for its own sake.

Critique 4: Projected Manifesto: Using one, or possibly all, of the week's readings as source material, construct a manifesto that, if followed, would change the face of architecture. You needn't personally believe in the position, but must be willing to take a stand in its support.

Critique 5: Outro / Trajectory: Having digested the thematic readings, write a brief statement identifying the main ideas, subjects and/or concepts that you believe are relevant to the development of your individual research interests in the subsequent weeks.

2. Readings Presentation: For each seminar discussion in the first part of the semester, 2-3 students will present the week's readings to the rest of the class to deepen the conversation. The presentation should include additional knowledge, images and graphics, and promote interaction both among the presenters and with the class. A focus of the assignment is to create stimulating, engaging discussions by revealing interesting aspects of the readings, making unexpected connections, and provoking thoughtful and robust conversation. The presentation should be at least 30 minutes total and use both visual and verbal techniques.

Each student presenting will submit, along with the weekly critique outlined above, an additional individual 500-word document explaining their take on the week's readings in greater detail. This can include more journalistic sections of writing but must also analyze and explain how one came to one's position on the source material.

3. Degree Project Paper: The bulk of the semester is geared towards the establishment and development of a research interest - related to the theme of the seminar - that will form the backdrop to your spring studio project. This process will involve several discrete steps, as outlined in the course schedule:

- preliminary abstract / topic / argument proposal
- developed abstract
- bibliography / references
- annotated outline / framework
- draft + final papers

The final paper will be between 2500-3000 words of body text, and include supporting graphics both original and referenced. It should communicate visually in a way that supports the paper's interests, while remaining a well-reasoned and well-written academic document. It must include original research on a narrowly-defined topic, and posit some argument (thesis) of whose value you are aiming to convince the reader. There are many ways to accomplish this goal within the established parameters, so creativity in approach, content and style is encouraged.

All notes, references, and bibliographies must conform to the Chicago Manual of Style guidelines for humanities documentation. *A Manual for Writers of Research Papers, Theses and Dissertations* by Kate L. Turabian is an excellent resource on both the writing process and formatting concerns. Additional guidelines for the paper will be distributed later in the semester.

READINGS

Readings have been prepared for this course and are required. Materials may be distributed or posted by faculty, or may require the purchase of books or other materials. Each faculty will distribute information on the specifics of their section's reading assignments.

You are responsible for completing all readings and discussing them in class. Theoretical, historical and referential contexts are critical factors in the production of intelligent ideas.

EVALUATION AND GRADING

Each phase of the semester's production will be evaluated and graded based on the following distribution:

rhetorical critiques 1-5	5 @ 5% =	25%
readings presentation		10%
abstract + prelim bibliography		10%
annotated outline + bibliography		10%
degree project paper		30%
paper presentation		05%
class participation		10%

All work must be submitted on time to receive full graded credit. If accepted by your instructor, work not submitted on time will be graded down one full letter grade each day it is late. This policy applies to all work for this course, including the Degree Project Paper.

Unsatisfactory performance warnings will be issued when work does not meet minimum requirements. University guidelines relative to plagiarism pertain without exception to this course.

As part of your process this semester, you will demonstrate your ability to integrate the following NAAB Student Performance Criteria. You must demonstrate at least a minimum level of competence in each of these areas.

You can read more about each criterion at <http://www.naab.org/accreditation/>.

A.1 Professional Communication Skills: Ability to write and speak effectively and use representational media appropriate for both within the profession and with the general public.

A.2 Design Thinking Skills: Ability to raise clear and precise questions, use abstract ideas to interpret information, consider diverse points of view, reach well-reasoned conclusions, and test alternative outcomes against relevant criteria and standards.

A.3 Investigative Skills: Ability to gather, assess, record, and comparatively evaluate relevant information and performance in order to support conclusions related to a specific project or assignment.

C.1 Research: Understanding of the theoretical and applied research methodologies and practices used during the design process.

C.2 Integrated Evaluations and Decision-Making Design Process: Ability to demonstrate the skills associated with making integrated decisions across multiple systems and variables in the completion of a design project. This demonstration includes problem identification, setting evaluative criteria, analyzing solutions, and predicting the effectiveness of implementation.

CALENDAR

WEEK	DATE	ACTIVITY	ASSIGNMENT DUE
1	F 08/30	course introduction + theme selection	read rhetorical references
2	F 09/06	readings 1 discussion	critique 1: thesis identification
3	F 09/13	readings 2 discussion <i>section meetings to be rescheduled due to studio field trip</i>	critique 2: rhetorical questions
4	F 09/20	readings 3 discussion	critique 3: oppositional polemic
5	F 09/27	readings 4 discussion	critique 4: projected manifesto
6	F 10/04	readings 5 discussion <i>studio midterms 10/4 + 10/7</i>	critique 5: outro / trajectory prelim abstract due W 10/09
7	F 10/11	review of prelim abstracts (individual)	abstract pinup due W 10/16
8	F 10/18	no class: Fall Recess	abstract + prelim bibliography due W 10/23
9	F 10/25	discussion of abstracts (group)	prelim outline due W 10/30
10	F 11/01	individual/group meetings	annotated outline + bibliography due W 11/06
11	F 11/08	individual/group meetings	rough draft due W 11/13
12	F 11/15	review of rough drafts (individual)	
13	F 11/22	no class: meeting by appointment only	final paper due T 11/26
14	F 11/29	no class: Thanksgiving	
15	F 12/06	paper presentations <i>last day of classes</i>	paper presentation

note: all assignments due on Fridays are due at **11:00am**
all other assignments are due at **11:59pm** on the date indicated

calendar subject to change

GENERAL INFORMATION

CLASS ATTENDANCE

Course meeting hours are Fridays from 11:00am to 12:50pm.

Attendance at all class sessions is required. Not being in class within the first 10 minutes is considered tardy, three of which constitute an absence. Failure to be present for the entire class session, unless approved by your instructor, may count as an absence.

A personal illness, family emergency, pre-approved academic reason, or religious observance may be excusable; notify your instructor of such situations as soon as possible and before the affected class session.

Unexcused absences from more than one class will result in the lowering of your final grade one full letter grade for each additional absence. False representation of your attendance is a violation of the University's ethics policy.

Acceptance of late work may only be considered for excused absences, at the discretion of your instructor.

ACADEMIC INTEGRITY

USC seeks to maintain an optimal learning environment. General principles of academic honesty include the concept of respect for the intellectual property of others, the expectation that individual work will be submitted unless otherwise allowed by an instructor, and the obligations both to protect one's own academic work from misuse by others as well as to avoid using another's work as one's own. All students are expected to understand and abide by these principles. SCampus, the Student Guidebook, contains the Student Conduct Code in Part B, while the recommended sanctions are located in Appendix A: <https://policy.usc.edu/scampus-part-b/>. Students will be referred to the Office of Student Judicial Affairs and Community Standards for further review, should there be any suspicion of academic dishonesty. The review process can be found at: <https://sjacs.usc.edu/>.

TURNITIN REVIEW

Plagiarism, the copying or paraphrasing of any work in whole or in part without citation, will not be tolerated. If plagiarism is committed by any student and is confirmed by the instructor, the student will receive an F grade for the assignment, and possibly the course. The severity of the violation will also determine whether the student is reported to the appropriate University offices for further sanctions. Students will be required to submit final Degree Project Papers to Turnitin review on the USC Blackboard system.

WRITING CENTER

For assistance with academic writing, students may wish to take advantage of the Writing Center maintained by USC. Evaluation of paper clarity, organization, syntax and grammar is available by appointment, free of charge. If you'd like to improve your writing and your ability to communicate your ideas, consider using this valuable resource. See their website at <http://dornsife.usc.edu/writingcenter/> for more information.

RELIGIOUS OBSERVANCES

The University recognizes the diversity of our community and the potential for conflicts involving academic activities and personal religious observation. The University provides a guide to such observances for reference and suggests that any concerns about lack of attendance or inability to participate fully in the course activity be fully aired at the start of the term. As a general principle students should be excused from class for these events if properly documented and if provisions can be made to accommodate the absence and make up the lost work. Constraints on participation that conflict with adequate participation in the course and cannot be resolved to the satisfaction of the faculty and the student need to be identified prior to the drop/add date for registration. After the drop/add date the University and the School of Architecture shall be the sole arbiter of what constitutes appropriate attendance and participation in a given course. Any student concerned about missing class for a recognized religious holiday should bring this matter up with your instructor in the first week of classes. A list of recognized religious holy days may be found at: <http://orl.usc.edu/life/calendar/>.

DISABILITY ACCOMMODATIONS

The University of Southern California is committed to full compliance with the Rehabilitation Act (Section 504) and the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). As part of the implementation of this law, the University will continue to

provide reasonable accommodation of academically qualified students with disabilities so those students can participate fully in the University's educational programs and activities. Although USC is not required by law to change the "fundamental nature of essential curricular components of its programs in order to accommodate the needs of disabled students," the University will provide reasonable academic accommodations. The specific responsibility of the University administration and all faculty serving in a teaching capacity is to ensure the University's compliance with this policy.

The general definition of a student with a disability is any person who has "a physical or mental impairment which substantially limits one or more of such person's major life activities," and any person who has "a history of, or is regarded as having, such an impairment." Reasonable academic and physical accommodations include but are not limited to: extended time on examinations; substitution of similar or related work for a non-fundamental program requirement; time extensions on papers and projects; special testing procedures; advance notice regarding book lists for visually impaired and some learning disabled students; use of academic aides in the classroom such as note takers and sign language interpreters; early advisement and assistance with registration; accessibility for students who use wheelchairs and those with mobility impairments; and need for special classroom furniture or special equipment in the classroom.

Obtaining Accommodations:

General: Any student requesting academic accommodations based on a disability is required to register with Disability Services and Programs (DSP) each semester. A letter of verification for approved accommodations can be obtained from DSP. Please be sure the letter is delivered to your studio instructor as early in the semester as possible. DSP is located in STU 301 and is open 8:30 a.m.–5:00 p.m., Monday through Friday. The phone number for DSP is (213) 740-0776.

Physical Accommodations: DSP will work with classroom scheduling, the course instructors and their departments, and the students to arrange for reasonable accommodations.

Academic Accommodations: Students seeking academic accommodations due to a physical or learning disability should make the request to the course instructor prior to or during the first week of class attendance, as well as registering with DSP as early in the semester as possible. Course instructors will require that a student present verification of documentation when academic accommodations are being requested.

SUSTAINABILITY INITIATIVE

The School of Architecture has adopted the 2010 Initiative for Sustainability, which includes the following language:

"The design should engage the environment in a way that dramatically reduces or eliminates the need for fossil fuel."

This intention impacts our design process in a number of ways, including:

- orientation of buildings and site development to minimize negative environmental force impacts and take advantage of positive ones
- building modestly: providing the minimum space necessary to handle required programmatic needs
- maximum practical use of daylighting; careful use of orientation and provision of control/shading mechanisms to handle associated heat loads
- maximum practical use of passive solar techniques for heating and cooling
- maximum practical use of natural ventilation techniques; selection of hybrid systems for ventilation, heating and cooling which permit this

No school can lay a claim to Sustainability sensitivity that does not institute and vigorously pursue a recycling program. This recycling program is in force at all times. We pledge to provide adequate, well-marked recycling containers for each section and to provide a posted, printed recycling protocol so you know what goes where.

ACCREDITATION STATEMENT

The USC School of Architecture's five-year Bachelor of Architecture program and the two-year Master of Architecture program are accredited professional architectural degree programs. All students can access and review the NAAB Conditions of Accreditation (including the Student Performance Criteria) on the NAAB Website, <http://www.naab.org/accreditation/>.