

Selected Works—

*ACSA New Faculty
Teaching Award,
January 2025.
Sam Schuermann.*

I am thrilled to share this work as part of the ACSA New Faculty Teaching Award. On the following pages, you will find a small collection of syllabi, assignment sheets, student work, and collaborative research. I am incredibly thankful to my students for engaging so earnestly with my course content and collaborating on such fulfilling, exciting research projects.

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ARCH 211: Scenarios

is a project based studio course designed with an iterative approach to design thinking and making—providing students with fundamental principles of both two dimensional and three dimensional form. The studio utilizes the technique of *misprision* as a way to move from one assignment to the next (5 in total), with projects playing a continuous game of architectural telephone.

S. Schuermann, Coordinator Fall 2022, Fall 2023, Fall 2024.
 Typical enrollment of 150 students across 8-9 sections.
 Work from this studio has been published at the National Conference on the Beginning Design Student and in STOA journal.

Overview—

ARCH 211 is a project-based studio course designed with an iterative approach to design thinking and making. The course introduces the concept of design *scenarios*, positioning constraints and context as design drivers. The studio will provide students with fundamental principles of both two dimensional and three dimensional form, compositional language, and the interrelations of history, culture, and context to design production through a series of design exercises and analysis.

The design studio is constructed as a series of interconnected projects that develop particular inquiries and skills into fundamental issues of architectural design and discourse. These issues range from the performance and perception of form and material, to technical, to development of expertise in representational conventions, to design methods. The course, developed as a sequence of interrelated projects, allows for the development, experimentation, and intimate understanding of the translation of two-dimensional properties into three-dimensional spatial conditions: from shape to form, drawing to model, from representation to material, diagram to program, analysis to context. Knowledge acquired through projects will necessarily be reinvested into subsequent projects to allow for a keen understanding of

design method, or process, being integral to the success of architecture projects.

Scenarios
 Scenarios take the universality of operative choices and apply them to a specific set of conditions and inert actors. Scenarios require an understanding of a localized and framed context and testing creative solutions and interventions. Scenarios offer students site-less design problems and processes of design thinking before introducing the critical complexities of site and place. This course will explore various scenarios—or design problems—exploring, analyzing, and exploiting various constraints.

A Note on Syntax
 We will maintain a focus on syntax through the studio. Syntax, at its simplest, is the study of how words come together to form phrases and sentences. Syntax is interested in structure, order, and the correlation between form and meaning. In this course, we will become architectural linguists—exploring how discrete design forms and ideas relate, ascribe meaning, inform, and shape our built world.

NAAB PC-2 Design
 Arch 211 fulfills the NAAB PC-2 Design requirement by instilling the role of the design process in shaping the built environment, conveying methods of design process which integrate multiple factors in different settings, and understanding these effects at multiple scales, from buildings to cities. Throughout the course, students will be tasked with observing, analyzing, and synthesizing design techniques. Students will also deploy these techniques to inform their own design processes.

Meeting Times
 M/W/F, 1:30-5:15 pm. Generally, meet in studio M/W and in Englemann 105 on F. Location will vary, see schedule for specifics.

Instructors
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Expectations—

Use studio time well.
 When there are no group discussions scheduled, students are expected to use the full class time to develop their design work. Efficient work habits in studio will reduce the demands of this course outside of scheduled class time. Refrain from unrelated activities, especially those that are distracting or disruptive. Your daily progress will be figured into your final grade. See Studio Culture section for more information.

Understand the assignment.
 Each scenario will be introduced in full group lecture with additional explanations, clarifications, and instructions provided directly from your instructor. Exercises sheets will be available on Canvas. It is critical that you understand from the beginning of each exercise what is being asked, so ask as many questions as needed to assure this understanding. Participation in design lab means not only being present but also having on hand your assignment statements, all of the tools, equipment, and materials needed to work on the assignment.

***note: Understanding what the assignment is asking of you and knowing what specific steps to take to fulfill the assignment are different.**
 While the assignment sheets will provide methodology, it is up to the student to execute that methodology to their specific project. There will be times when you are confused and will need to think independently—that's good!

Execute work with appropriate craft.
 Each construction requires its own level of craft, while all work should be legible, not all drawings and models are for presentation purposes. Be precise, not precious, and learn to use time and material most efficiently.

Document work regularly.
 Get in the habit of scanning drawings and photographing models each studio session. This will help you understand and evaluate your work and make final project documentation much easier.

Participate in all formats of critiques.
 Be present and engaged at each review, no matter the level of formality. Take notes for your colleagues, ask questions, give insight to studio processes, you should learn as much from others' reviews as from your own. Take part in group discussions, desk critiques, and formal reviews. Participation will effect your grade.

Be curious, industrious, and critical.
 We welcome and appreciate all thoughtful questions and criticism. Alternative solutions are exciting, but keep in mind unconventional and innovative methods demand more effort to prove their validity within the curriculum.



Hans Hemmert, Level 1997.

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Objectives—

Working the Scenario
 - Understand the framing of a design problem and how to work within, manage, exploit, and subvert constraints.
 - Understand design methodologies as crafted scenarios themselves and how to apply appropriate methods to particular, distinct design problems.
 - Develop proficiency to inventory, comprehend, synthesize, and transform complex design problems effectively and provide thoughtful solutions.

Technical Skills
 - Develop 2d drawing skills (physical and digital) in both orthographic and perspective representation.
 - Develop 3d physical modeling skills in multiple mediums with a heavy emphasis on quality and craft.
 - Develop 3d digital modeling + management skills.
 - Effectively use composite representational techniques.
 - Create effective workflows.

Semantics
 - Explore, interrogate, understand, and employ design vocabulary outlined in exercises.
 - Use thoughtful and precise language when discussing projects.


Methodology
 - Work iteratively to test design ideas in many ways across multiple scales: sketches, diagrams, drawings, models, photos, etc.
 - Establish a back-and-forth design dialogue between making and analysis.

- Test new ways of working, seeing, doing, and making. Embrace and propose new ideas. Experiment!

Synthesis and Analysis
 - Use the studio format to synthesize the practical, aesthetic, cultural, and theoretical concerns of a project.
 - Understand architecture as an act of curating and mediating relationships between contexts, spaces, bodies, and objects.

Communication and Presentation
 - Effectively communicate in various studio formats (desk crits, pin-ups, formal reviews)
 - Build an understanding of the relationship between design ideas and their most effective forms of exploration and communication.
 - Develop the ability to create coherent graphic and verbal presentations of design work, effectively communicating ideas and work to various audiences.

Labor
 - Establish, foster, and promote healthy habits in your work-life balance.
 - Understand that hours worked does not directly equate to project quality.
 - Understand that work is work. What you produce does not define you and does not determine your worth.
 - Take pride in your work and support your peers.
 - Ask for help, offer help.



Students setting up for Scenario 3 review, Fall 2023.

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Scenario 1— Walking in the city.

Arch 310
University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee
School of Architecture and Urban Planning
Fall 2023

Overview—

We will walk, observe, and document roughly a 150 block swath of Milwaukee as a collective.

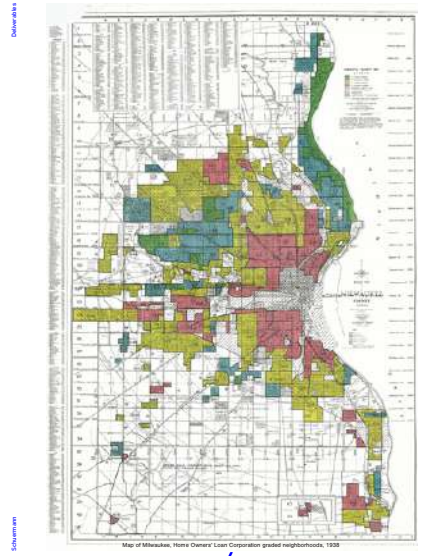
Project Description
Scenario 1 will introduce the studio to the concepts of context, site, and observation of place. Together, we will walk and document 150 blocks of Milwaukee. While walking, you will document the physical realities of the site along with experiential observations. If injury or ability prevents you from being able to walk, you may drive, bike, or ride the bus. Please communicate with your instructor. Use photographs, notes, sketches, and voice memos to record your observations. Students should begin to establish mindfulness of the discomfort experienced by many people moving through our contemporary world, depending on their race, gender expression, religion, sexuality, or experiences. Students should also be mindful of Milwaukee's systemic racism—including, but not limited to—historic city redlining. Students' observations and experiences will be translated to a variety of 2d and 3d documentation including diagrams, drafted elevations, experiential models, and photographic elevations.

- Objectives**
- Develop precision drawing skills within a loose, abstract framework via diagramming.
 - Develop documentation skills in a variety of mediums.
 - Exploration and effective use of photoshop and rhino.
 - Draw to scale.
 - Translate experience and affect into drawing.
 - Get out into the world. Establish a back and forth dialogue between observing and documenting.

-Walk with your peers. Discuss findings together. How did you feel walking? How did your neighbor feel?

Expectations
Reference images, resources, and authors are provided with this assignment sheet. Additionally, tutorials will be presented in class and are available online. You are expected to take advantage of these tutorials and seek out additional ones that will help as you learn these new software's. It is recommended to try to "work-in-the-style" of an author whose style/technique seems applicable to your walking and documentation goals. Creativity and experimentation is highly encouraged, but it must result in precise, bold, and careful drawings.
Come prepared to walk on 9/9. Bring good walking shoes, water, snacks, umbrella, camera (phone), sketchbook, pen/pencil, hat/sunscreen. Do not take photos of folks in public without permission.

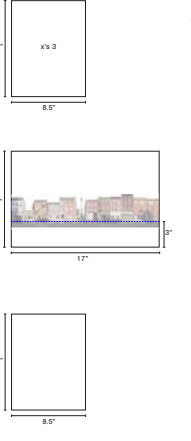
- Required Readings, Videos**
- Rebecca Solnit, *Wanderlust : a History of Walking*, Chapters 1 and 11. New York: Penguin Books, 2001.
 - Brooke Jarvis, *The Fight for the Right to Trespass*, New York Times Magazine, July 26, 2023. <https://www.nytimes.com/2023/07/26/magazine/right-to-roam-england.html>
 - Leah Foltman, *How Redlining Continues To Shape Racial Segregation in Milwaukee*, Feb 28 2019. <https://www.wiscorad.net/how-redlining-continues-shape-racial-segregation-milwaukee>
 - *Housing Segregation and Redlining in America: A Short History*, NPR. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Q5FB4yfoI_M
 - Not required, but encouraged: *Redlining and Racial Covenants*: Jim Crow of the North, PBS. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XW0DhDQVQE>



Deliverables—

Due Monday, September 16th @ 1:30 pm. Canvas upload
September 17th @ noon.

- (1) Experimental, Abstract Diagrams (15 pts)**
- Scale: any or not to scale
 - Format: 8.5x11" (portrait) per drawing.
 - Minimum 1/2" margin.
 - Black and white, ink on bristol. Use lineweight and type hierarchy and clean craft.
- (2) Composite Photographic Elevation (10 pts)**
- Scale: 1/4" = 1'-0"
 - You may choose either side of the assigned block to make your photo elevation, you do not need to do both.
 - Format: 11x17" page(s) (landscape). Use indesign template - typical for all digitally drawn deliverables.
 - Because each assigned block varies in length, some students will need to print multiple 11x17" landscape pages. Do not "fit to size" when printing in order to fit on a single sheet. You may also print on the roll plotters instead of 11x17s if you wish.
 - Align the base of your building elevations to 3" above the bottom of the paper to allow for consistency and alignment across the studios.



Methodology—

As with any design methodology, you must remain nimble. You will likely move between these steps multiple times. The process is rarely linear.

Read + Watch
Prior to the group walk on Monday, thoroughly investigate the required references to prepare.

Travel Log
During and after the walk, you will complete a travel log that documents your journey, along with observations, photos, and ideas. These will form the basis of a series of abstract hand drawings. Your travel log will include notes, sketches, photographs, voice memos, etc. Please be respectful when photographing residential areas. If folks are outside or visible through windows, refrain from photographing. You can always supplement your documentation with information from google maps and other online resources.

Experiential Drawings
Drawing, in its many forms, is a fundamental skill in architecture. Sometimes we draw by hand, sometimes on the computer, sometimes descriptively, sometimes abstractly. We will begin with LOOSE drawing: abstract, conceptual, bold, and expressive drawing, using just lines, and minimal fill (optional).
You will begin by creating 3 separate abstract drawings, each one somehow documenting, responding to, and representing a QUALITY of your walk. Qualities you may choose to highlight include: path, boundary, color, volume, shape, pace, cadence, program, material, plane, orientation, level, pattern, texture, mood, physical sensation, etc. These drawings are not meant to be literal depictions of your walks. Nor are they symbols for the walks. You will use notational technique (lineweight, linetype, density, layering) to

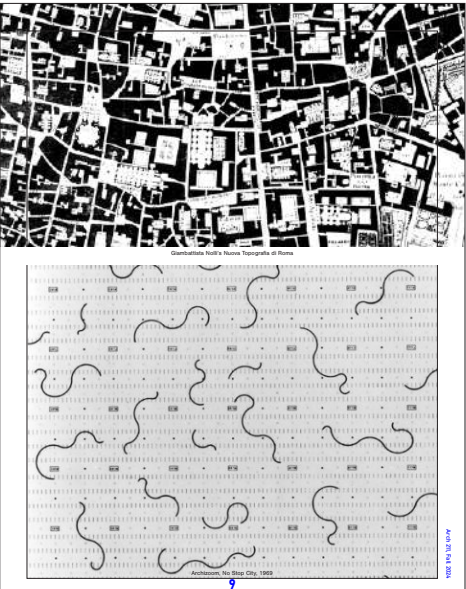
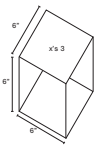
communicate. Avoid the use of large arrows or any other literal symbols. HAVE FUN, BE PRECISE, EXPERIMENT.
Digitally Produced Documentation
The Noll Plan, and photographic Block Elevation will be completed digitally using photos from the walk and supplemented (as needed) with online imagery. The digital process to create these deliverables will be discussed in class on Friday, September 4th. You must have rhino and adobe creative suite downloaded and ready to go on your computer by that Friday.

Experiential Models
After the walk, and while completing the experiential drawings, consider how they might be translated into 3d. Create 3 abstract models that correspond to your 3 experiential drawings. Avoid simply extruding your 2d drawing into 3d. How can the model expand on your observations? What can the 3rd dimension offer? Think about how the drawing and model can work together to provide a richer analysis.



Cont—

- (3) Experimental, Abstract Models (20 pts)**
- Scale: any or not to scale
 - Physical model, 6"x6"x6". White.
 - Students may use: bristol, casting materials (white or very light grey), foam (painted white), cardboard (painted white), wood (painted white). If you would like to use a material not listed, please speak to your section instructor. We welcome inventive material uses that serve the goals of the project. Students are encouraged to experiment with different materials. These models are ways to explore model making techniques while focusing on quality craft.
 - Models should relate clearly to your abstract drawings.



Above: Select pages from the first assignment sheet. Each assignment sheet in the course has clear learning objectives, methodology, and deliverables to add constraints and limit student "stuckness."

Scenario 2— Using (and Mis- using) Precedent.

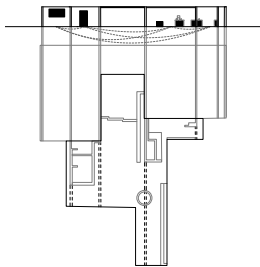
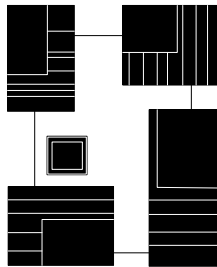
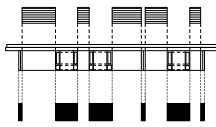
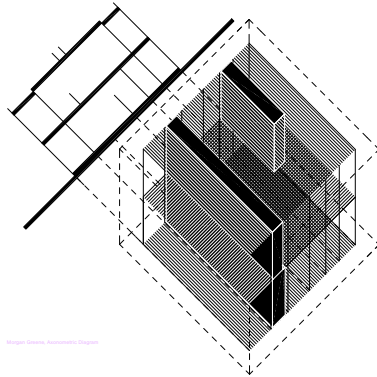
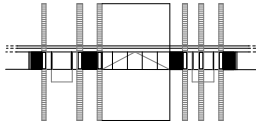
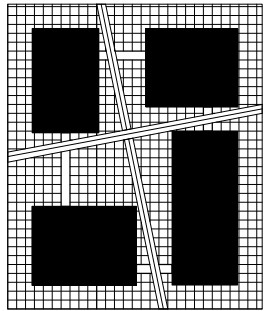
Arch 211
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School of Architecture and Urban Planning
Fall 2024

University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee

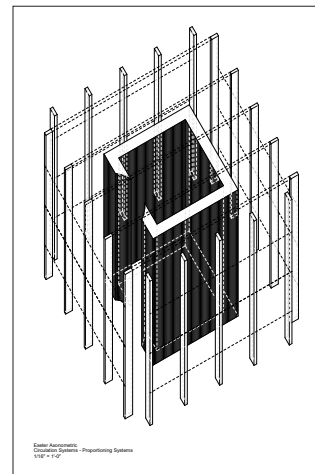
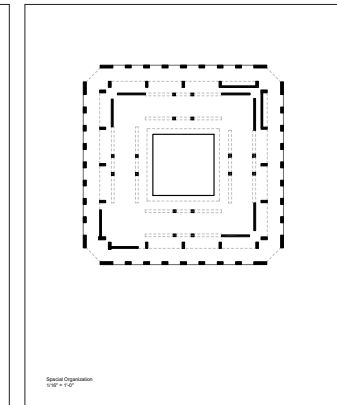
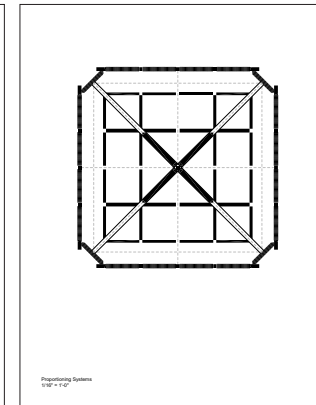
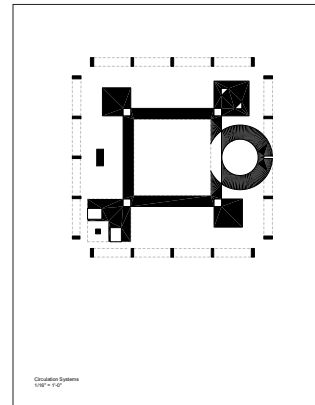
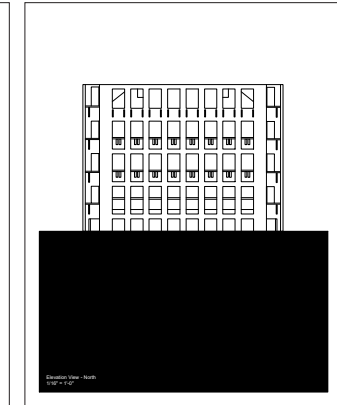
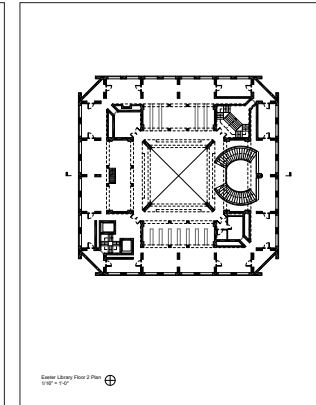
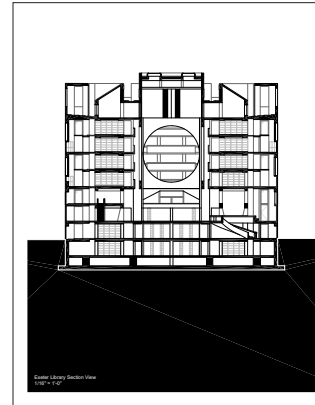
2024 Fall 2024

In the second assignment, students engage in a canonical precedent study to learn the technics of architectural drawing. Through a series of 2d and axonometric diagrams, the students slowly divorce their output from the precedent, essentially engaging in a form-finding exercise for the next assignment.

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This page: work by Kiera Petery and Morgan Greene.
Opposite page: Work by Austin Smith.
Completed as part of the 6 credit hour studio



Scenario 3— Objects and Armatures.

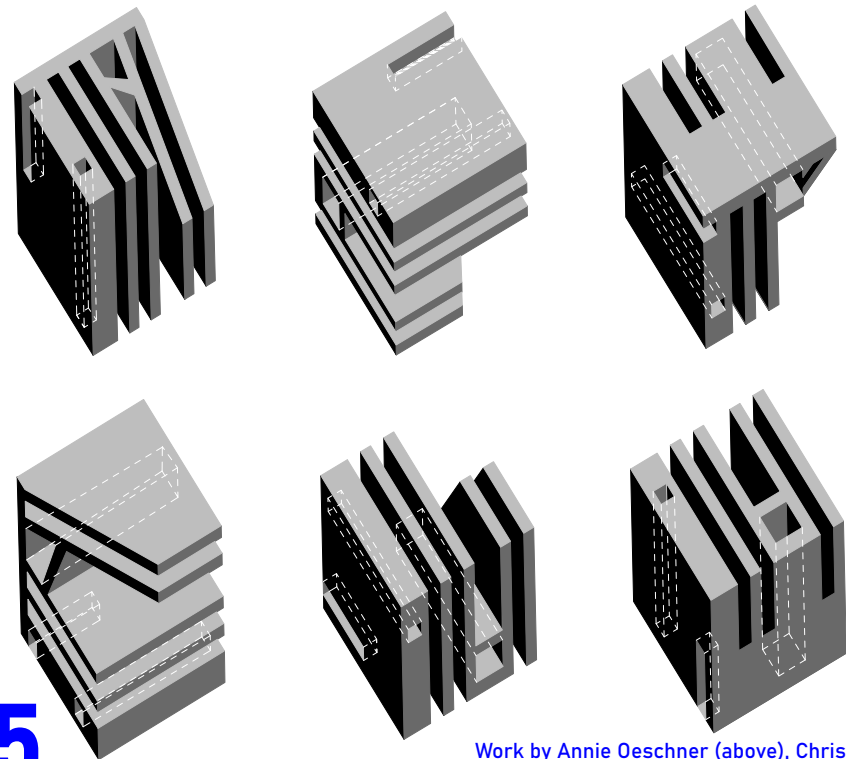
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Fall 2024

University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee

2024 Fall

In the third assignment, students assess their previous work, mining the graphics of their precedent study diagrams as a technique to produce form. They then design and cast an object based on their previous drawings. The object is supported by a designed armature and is accompanied by 6 axons, presented as a collection.

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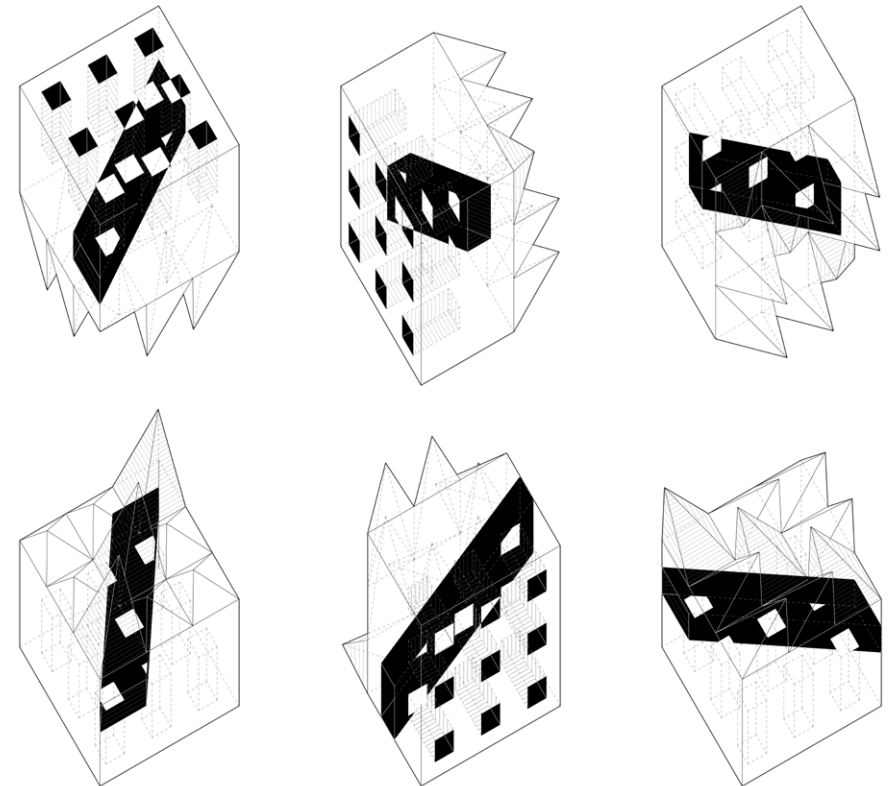


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Work by Annie Oeschner (above), Chris Dobbie (right), and Dominic Cuomo (above right). Completed for credit.



© Student work, 2022 (Dominic Cuomo)

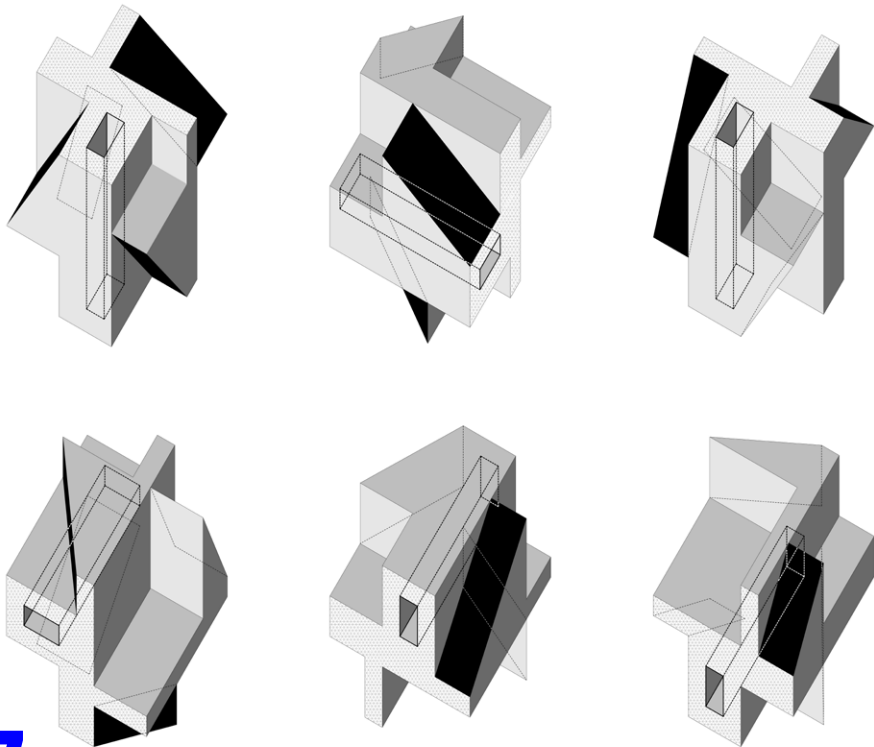


7



“Dismantling silos, de-romanticizing individual authorship, and engaging in often complex and fraught communication with their peers are invaluable skills students will bring to a profession in dire need of a re-thinking of collective effort and solidarity. If students can see shared resources as a collective tool rather than a site of competition, the discipline can create a paradigm shift in the way architecture is practiced and utilized. Students have the agency to change the world around them when the curriculum reflects architecture as a collective, messy endeavor grounded in care.”

From “Collective Serialism,” discussing Scenario 3, presented at the National Conference on the Beginning Design Student, 2024.



7



9

ARCH 650/850: Home Ec, Models of Experimental Domesticities

is an elective studio course that disassembles, investigates, analyzes, challenges, and proposes new ways to live via the lens of home economics. This studio explicitly connects domestic labor with materiality and aesthetics, including but not limited to: textile manipulation, quilting, furniture, mill-work, and food production. How do architectures support, encourage, and subvert domestic labor? How is gender spatialized in domestic typologies?

S. Schuermann, Instructor, Spring 2023 and Spring 2024. Work from the studio is discussed in a paper currently under peer review for the ACSA 113th meeting.

Arch 650: Home Ec— Models of Experimental Domesticities

Spring 2024 T/Th/F 1:30—5:15
Professor Sam Schuermann

Alexa Andrae, Grant Bane, Alec Bartz, Ryan Borchardt, Alexia Bunge, Emma Bunge, Sean Camber, John Engelmoehr, Tanner Hansen, Evan Johnson, Zung Ling, Cesar Luevano, Adam McCann, Hunter Phillips, Maryam Sayeed, Paulina Urioste

1



8

Course Overview—

Home Ec is a 6 credit hour studio course that disassembles, investigates, analyzes, challenges, and proposes new ways to live via the lens of home economics.

In *Home Ec*, students will re-imagine the household and propose new models of housing sited in the Milwaukee area. The projects will be experimental, radical, and fantastic.

This course rejects stereotypical gender roles and will be quite subversive in its approach, but it does take home economics, and in turn, domestic labor very seriously. Home ec courses began in the late 1800's as a way to professionalize domestic labor, giving women opportunities outside of the home while simultaneously uplifting the value of women's work in society. While it would become patriarchal, repressant, and even regarded as anti-feminist during the mid-late 1900s, it's origins are noble and worth closer examination.

"To thumb through the home ec literature is to find our current questions debated decades or longer ago. In 1899 home economists argued for school gardens, STEM education for girls, takeout food, and affordable day care. Home economics is, can, and should be an interdisciplinary, ecological field that explores the connections between our homes and the world."

This studio will explicitly connect domestic labor with materiality and aesthetics, including but not limited to: textile manipulation, quilting, furniture, millwork, and food production. How do architectures support, encourage, and subvert domestic labor? How is gender spatialized in domestic typologies? Have these relationships been thoughtfully interrogated or does the majority of designed domestic space continue the modern paradigm? Much of the architectural canon rejects domesticity in favor of housing (and its representation often fails to embrace the kitchen, nostalgia, and strictly aesthetic, veiling their arguments in discussions of efficiency, function, and hyper-rationalization—ghosts of modernism). By inverting this relationship and focusing on the interior, the studio will look to the seven tenets of home economics (cooking, child development, education and community awareness, home management and design, sewing and textiles, budgeting and economics*) to re-imagine the household and contemporary living.

Major texts that ground the studio are Silvia Federici's *Revolution and Capital*, *Housework, Reproduction, and Feminist Struggle*, Hide Hayami, and Gulum Bayraktar's *Negotiating Domesticity: Spatial Productions of Gender in Modern Architecture*, and Georges Teyssot's *A Topology of Everyday Constellations*. While the course will pull from many references, the listed texts provide foundational language to ground our work.

"And we don't have to prove that we can 'break the blue collar barrier.' A lot of us have broken that barrier a long time ago and have discovered that the overall did not give us any more power than the apron—quite often even less, because now we had to wear both and had even less time and energy to struggle against them. The things we have to prove are our capacity to expose what we are already doing as work, what capital is doing to us, and our power to struggle against it."

Home Ec asks students to interrogate architecture's role in perpetuating gendered space, re-think community and family structure, question the modernist rejection of "ornament," and challenge the erasure of the domestic laborer's body in the design of housing, among other complex architectural relationships. The studio will be a laboratory for discovery and invention.

This studio will leverage the aesthetics and materiality of traditional domesticity to imagine new, experimental, radical ways of living. We will spatialize the aesthetics of domestic labor.

4

5

Structure—

Home Ec is a project based studio course consisting of (2) short, foundational assignments followed by (1) major design project. There will also be shorter exercises dispersed throughout the semester including reading responses, quick graphics, charrettes, etc. The first (2) assignments along with the short, sporadic exercises are designed to introduce major topics in the studio and get all students roughly "up-to-speed" on expected level of craft, research, and critical design thinking. The major design project will take lessons and experiments from the first portions of the studio and make them operational via an "architectural" project.

The studio will rely heavily on representation as a design tool. We will design through representation, avoiding the trap of design followed by representation as a documentation tool. By designing through representation, we will work efficiently and will be constantly building towards our final review deliverables. Very brief descriptions of the three major assignments are below, further information will be provided via assignment sheets.

Assignment 1: An Architectural Case Study (via buildings)
In pairs, students will analyze a domestic architectural project via drawings and a beautifully crafted physical model. This exercise will introduce the studio to architectural analysis and establish expectations around graphic standards, drawing presentation, and physical model construction. 100 pts*

Assignment 2: An Architectural Case Study (via labor)
Students will study, analyze, document, interrogate, and speculate on a particular domestic labor task. Deliverables will include drawings, models, and writing. This assignment will provide a robust research foundation for the following project, introduce body-architecture-labor relationships, and spatialize the actions, materials, and technologies of domesticity. 100 pts*

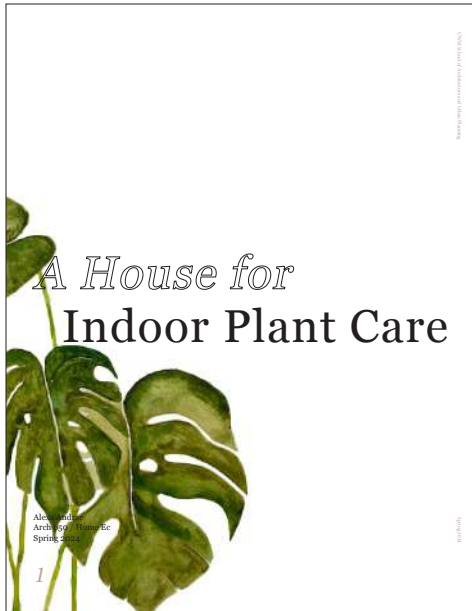
Assignment 3: A House for blank
Students will design a house on a typical lot size situated in the theoretical Milwaukee area. Students will choose a "client" and a design for their previously researched labor task. Students will take analysis and implementation of this task to the extreme, becoming experts in their area of inquiry. This assignment will be broken down into smaller tasks/projects and a methodology will be provided in the brief. 600 pts*

Particular requirements and deliverables will be listed on the assignment sheets.

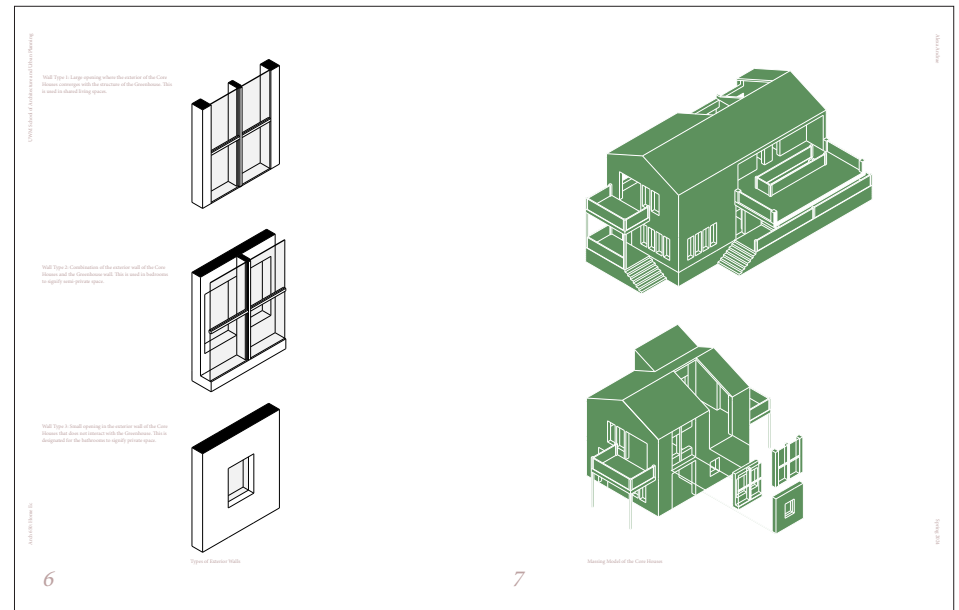
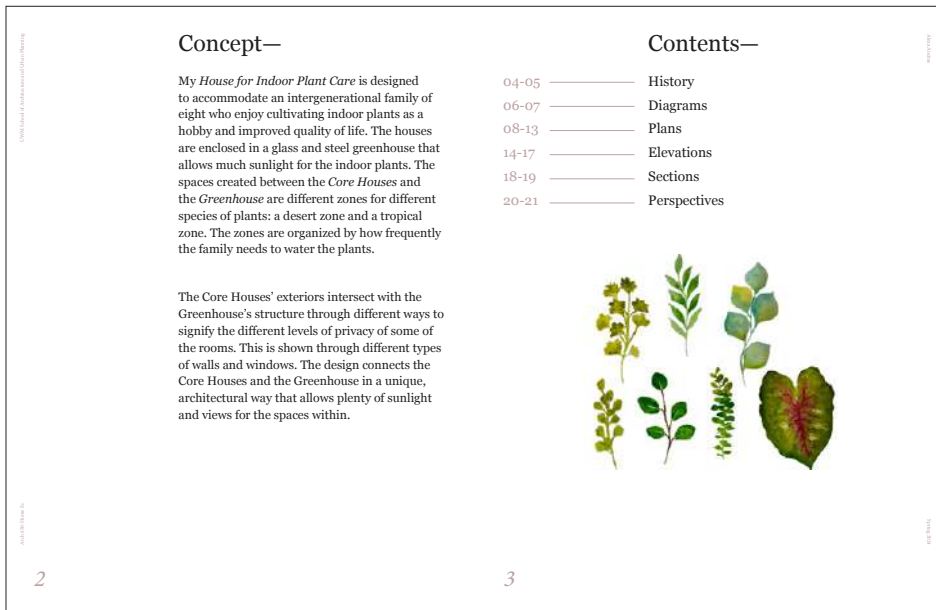
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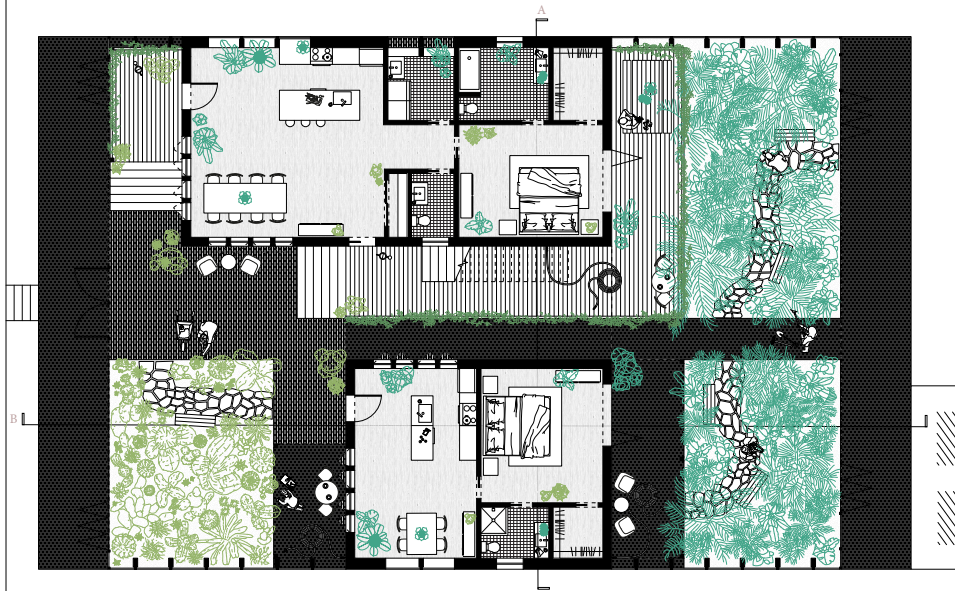
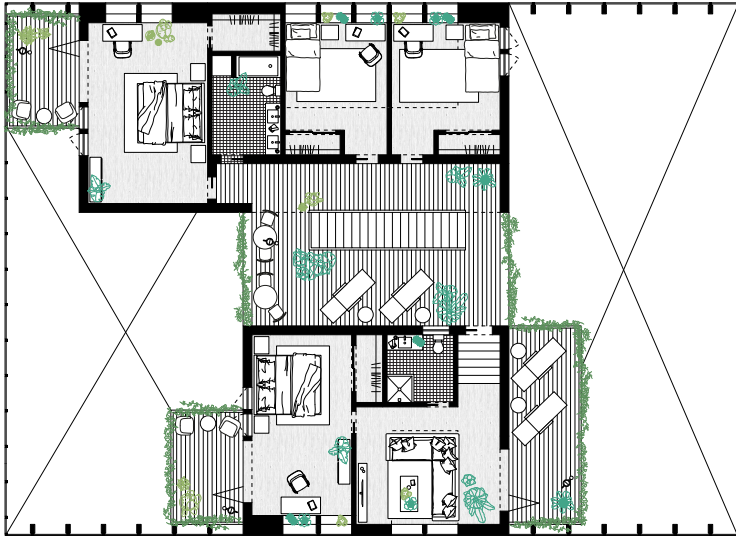
Above: Select pages from the ARCH 650/850 Syllabus (total 23 pages)



For the major assignment, students selected a labor task and designed a house for said task. They had to accommodate an 8+ person group of an “unconventional” family structure, work together with their neighbors (students were assigned single family lots next to one another), and produce compelling narratives. Prior to their design work, the students wrote a research paper on their chosen chore, investigating its history.



Above: Pages from Alexa Andrae's final booklet. The students were required to make a booklet, one large isometric drawing, and one large model for their final deliverables.





Comments from students via anonymous course evaluations:

"Sam is an amazing instructor who encourages students to do their best work by giving feedback that produces constructive results. The class was easy to understand the goals of each assignment and the class as a whole. This was a very engaging class"

"Great professor, and a great experience. Being an uncomfortable model maker, the extensive time provided towards model tests, development, and final production allowed me to become more comfortable with my model making and allowed for the first physical model I feel is worthy of including in my portfolio... As a professor, you pushed every student to put their best foot forward and offered a fair workload and understood the time that would need to be dedicated towards other courses... Also, the feedback provided in class was rich and allowed me to consider deeper architectural concepts that I could interpret and apply in the way(s) I saw fit."

A House for Nahuatl Cooking Methods

Cesar Luevano
Arch 650 / Home Ec
Spring 2024

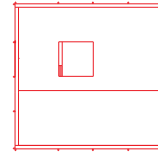
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Thesis—

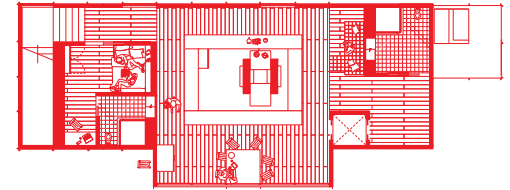
The framework of design has been driven and shaped to cater to the white male audience as they were sure gatekeep the practice. This created a hostile environment which does not cater to the average home maker leading to inefficient design. Through decades of deconstruction the home ec. movement has attempted to rectify this issue by placing housework at the forefront of design.

By making the Nahuatl cooking methods the driving force of a design we can begin to conceive solutions to issues the average Mexican Indigenous would face daily. The use of varying horizontal and vertical planes as a catalyst of interaction will embrace the common tasks carried out daily. Implementing cooking surfaces as meeting places can reconfigure how supplementary program interacts with the "kitchen"

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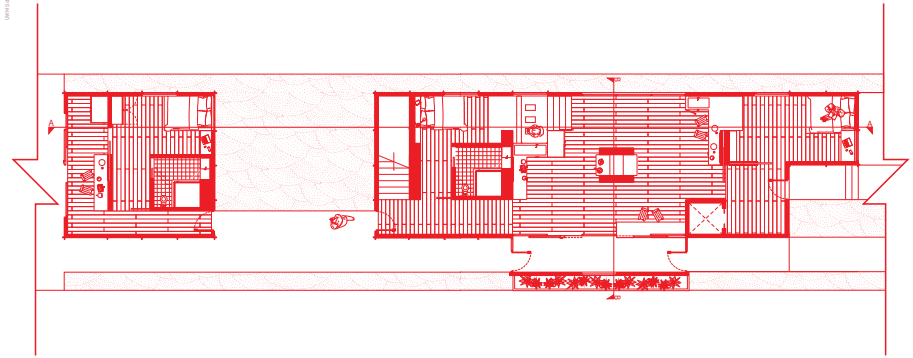


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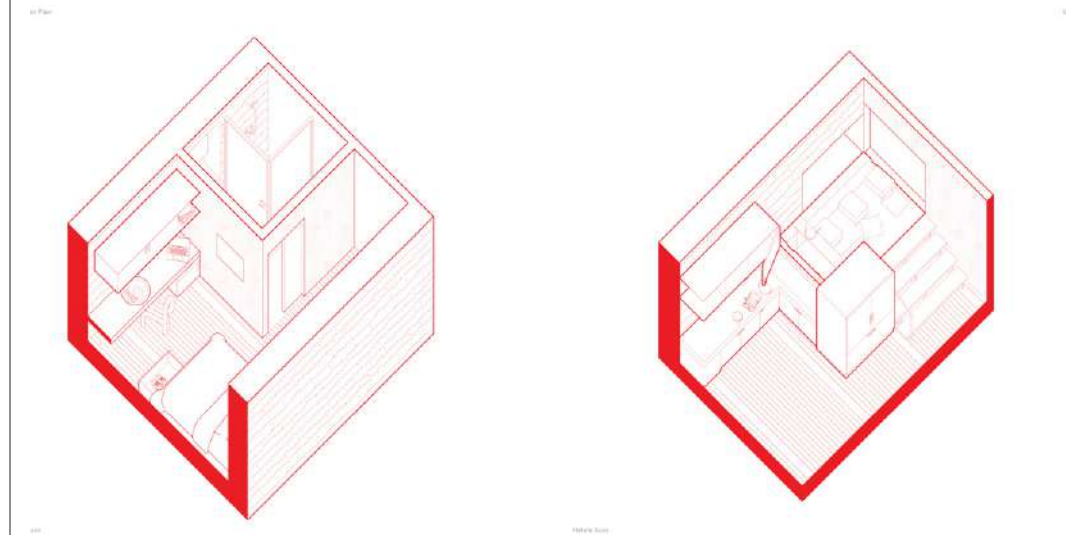
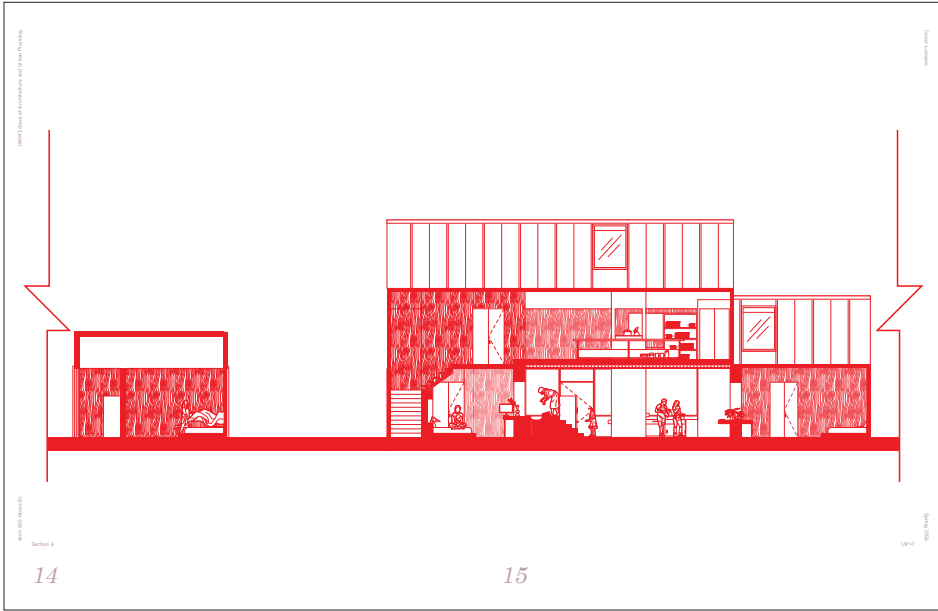


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This page and next: Work by Cesar Luevano. Produced for the 6 credit hour studio. This project was 1 of 5 recipients of the SUPERjury honor award at UWM.



SUPERjury

is a yearly school-wide event that provides a cross section of work across all studio levels, gives students the opportunity to present their work to a panel of distinguished jurors, and provides faculty with a clearer ability to assess and adjust their curriculum. The event collects work from all students in every studio and displays this work via a gallery exhibit. The event also has a day long series of presentations, where the most compelling work from the school is selected to present to the jurors and a few are offered honors/prizes.

S. Schuermann has coordinated the event and chaired the SUPERjury committee during academic years 2022-23 and 2023-24. AIAS supports the event via a UWM grant and assist with gallery install. (right: SUPERjury '24 graphics by S. Schuermann, below: Image from SUPERjury '23)



Review Schedule
Friday, May 10, 2024

9:30 AM—
Undergraduate Core

10:45 AM—
Graduate Core

12:30 PM—
Material Histories &
Futures

1:30 PM—
Collaborations &
Constituencies

2:40 PM—
Experiments in,
Reflections on Housing

3:40 PM—
Speculative Futures,
Urban Networks

5:00 PM—
Spring Party,
Awards Ceremony,
Architecture Honors
Commencement.

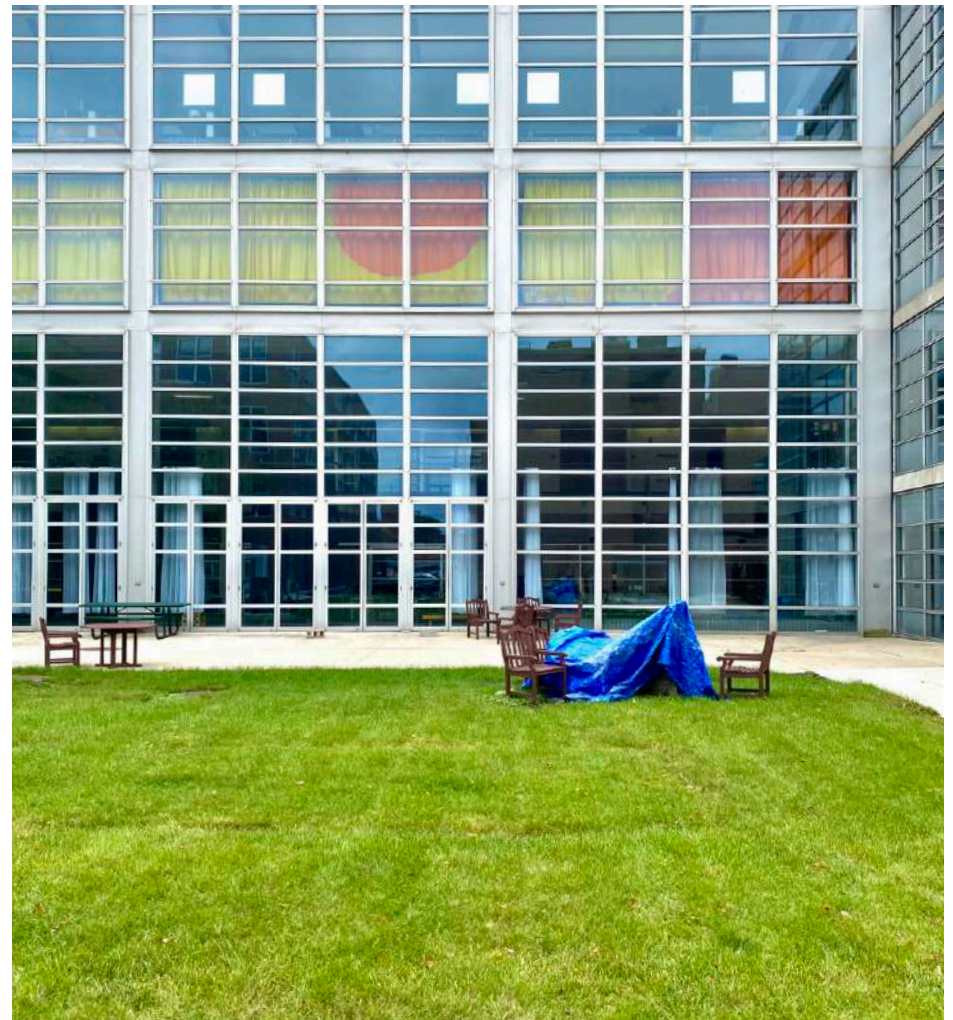
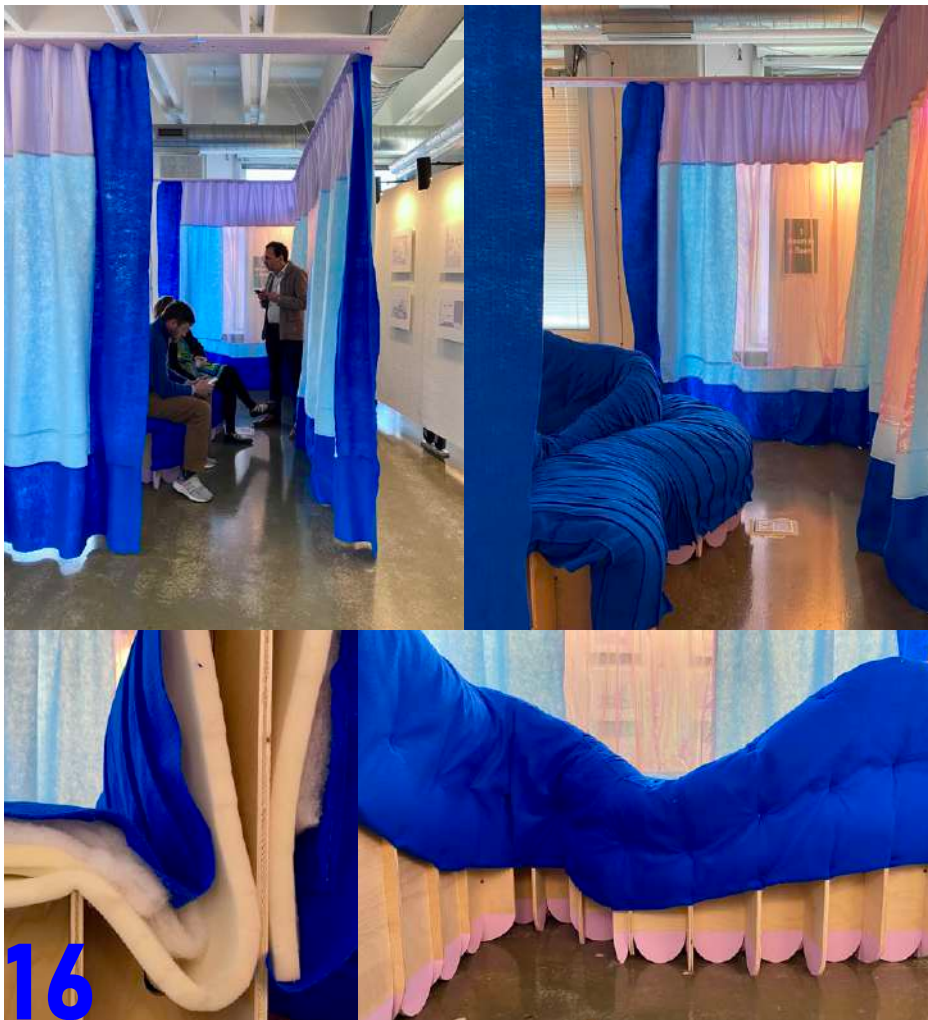
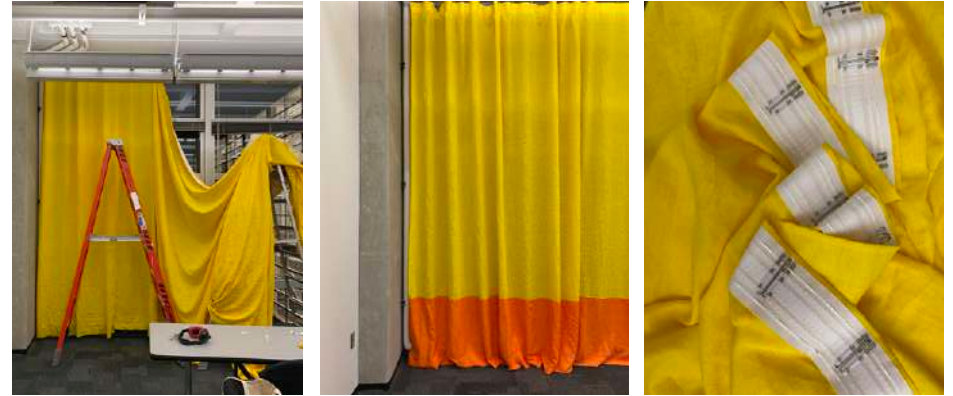
**We are honored to be joined by distinguished guest critics: Dora Epstein Jones (UT Austin School of Architecture, Professor of Practice), Janette Kim (California College of the Arts, Associate Professor of Architecture), and Stephen Slaughter (Pratt Institute School of Architecture, Chairperson of Undergraduate Architecture).*



Students presenting their work to Jurors Janette Kim and Dora Epstein Jones (left) and Mariana Ibañez and Reto Geiser (right)

In-building Installations

A number of furniture scale installations have been installed with the help of students in the School of Architecture and Urban Planning at SARUP. Two examples shared here are “A Room in A Room” (2023) and “The Curtain” (2024) Student work on these projects was compensated with hourly wage funded by SURF grants. Research Assistants: Adam Uy and Andrew Tillman.



UnJunkspace: Studio Curriculum Refresh

Following a paper presented at NCBDS (co-authored by myself, Lindsey Krug, Kyle Reynolds, and Alex Timmer), Lindsey Krug and I did a deep dive into the existing studio curriculum at UWM. We tore things apart to then try to put them back together. After identifying common values for the undergraduate studio sequence which we dubbed “The Commons,” we identified key learning outcomes for each studio in the core undergraduate sequence. We then put together an outline of each core studio complete with a thematic, annotated bibliography, suggestions for site and program, specific representation techniques, and larger, value-oriented goals. This became a nearly 100 page road map that was presented to the rest of the Department of Architecture faculty in Summer 2023 and was officially adopted during the Fall of 2024.

An invaluable component of this curriculum research and planning was working directly with students. Lindsey and I applied for a variety of SURF grants (Support for Undergraduate Research Fellows) to pay students an hourly wage to assist with this work over the course of 2 semesters/8 months. Collaborating with students over this period of time was an incredible experience for both parties and allowed the students to feel more agency over their education.

UnJunkspace booklet produced by Samantha Schuermann and Lindsey Krug. Research Assistants: Ethan Erenz, Sarah Paquette, Anastasia Hardenburger, Evan Johnson, Lexie Snyder, and Sam Verdin.

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un-JUNKSPACE

sarup b.arch curriculum refresh

Lindsey Krug
Samantha Schuermann

Ethan Erenz
Ana Hardenburger
Evan Johnson
Sarah Paquette
Lexie Snyder
Samantha Verdin

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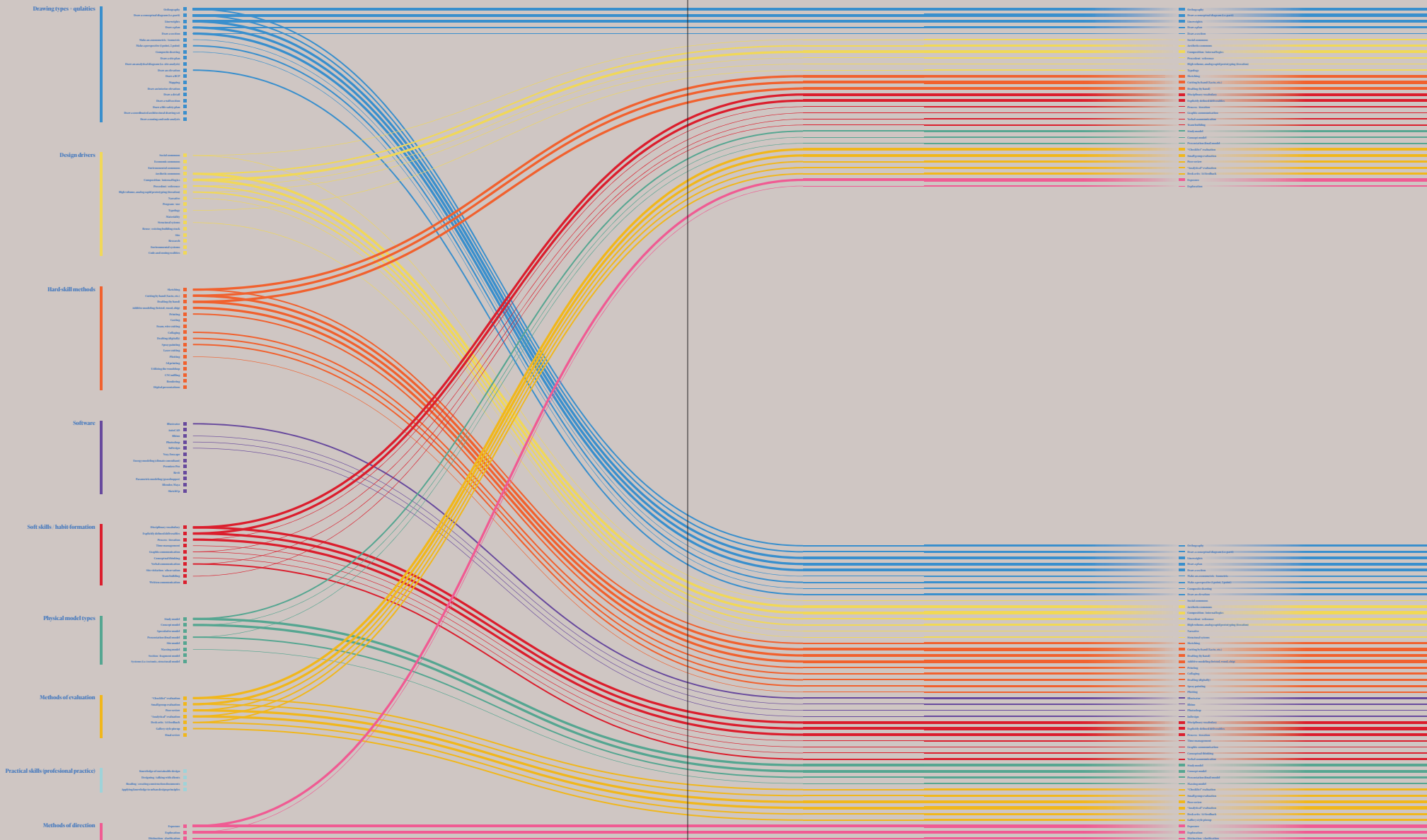
| COMMONING THE SARUP CURRICULUM | |
|---|---|
| <p>How should a 21st-century school of architecture forge futures for its beginning design students in the face of urgent and evolving social, economic, and environmental conditions? How can a 21st-century school of architecture accommodate a growing student body, a new BArch degree program, a university merger with the School of Art, shifting state politics and funding allocations, regional climate migration, and its status as the only school of architecture state-wide while clarifying its pedagogical agenda and institutional mission?</p> <p>The process of exploding architectural discourse at SARUP brought illegibility into focus. The beginning design sequence at SARUP is characterized by amorphousness, incoherence, and instability - qualities that have only emerged in recent years as faculty-to-student ratios have skewed unfavorably and pandemic-era learning has gutted sociality in our physical spaces. Reminiscent of the seminal essay “Junkspace” written by Irem Koohas 20 years ago, another kind of junkspace has emerged as the construction site for the working group: curricular junkspace.</p> <p>The working group had five clear goals in this process: 1) assess the current curricular conditions of the school, honing in on the first four semesters, 2) find places where the current curriculum is lacking, 3) locate both historical and contemporary critical discourse on pedagogy and intersectionality, 4) tease out clear pedagogical ambitions, and finally, 5) synthesize into a clear curricular direction for the school.</p> <p>Through this process, three types of outcomes have emerged. The group has outlined a set of principles and ethics to govern the pedagogy, a collection of deployment tactics to articulate the goals of each semester, and a plan for next steps, implementation, and evaluation.</p> <p>The following principles and ethics are the four core “Commons” within which we hope to situate the SARUP community and a SARUP education. Using PLAN, MAKE, BUILD as a common starting point for the SARUP community, each of these three tenets is redefined, and a fourth is added. PLAN grows and adjusts to include contemporary social issues, requiring thoughtfulness around bodies in space, implicating race, gender, class, and other socio-economic concerns. MAKE grows to include means of production, implicating issues of labor and economics. BUILD grows to include issues of site, the natural environment, and sustainable methods of design and construction. Reflecting a missing piece, a fourth tenet and ethic has been added: Aesthetics. Aesthetics is a historical, theoretical, and philosophical framework, a system of evaluation implicating visual and material culture.</p> | <p>The four Commons are further explicated as follows:</p> <p>The Social Commons (formerly PLAN): The Social Commons is a space where people bring their identities, priorities, and attitudes with an expectation to participate equally and be met with generosity. This Commons can only be enacted when people of all identities and origins can contribute to the construction of this place. SARUP is committed to confronting legacies of exclusion in the profession, the academy, and the built world.</p> <p>The Economic Commons (formerly MAKE): The Economic Commons is a space where different forms of production and exchange occur. This Commons can only be enacted through a shared understanding of the tools, skills, and assets available to architects. The Economic Commons facilitates awareness of contemporary means of production and requires them to be respected and valued as they are deployed. SARUP is committed to uplifting all forms of labor and production, equipping students to critically participate in the local economy, and questioning architecture as a capital commodity.</p> <p>The Environmental Commons (formerly BUILD): The Environmental Commons encompasses the greater networks of land, climate, natural resources, and human and non-human communities that constitute the Anthropocene. The Environmental Commons can only be enacted through an acknowledgment of and engagement with histories of land stewardship, economies of extraction, and understanding of Milwaukee’s and Wisconsin’s physical and social ground. SARUP is committed to teaching site and context as ecosystem and network. SARUP will continue its commitment to building with and alongside communities while embracing alternative forms of construction to include critical conservation and adaptive re-use.</p> <p>The Aesthetic Commons: The Aesthetic Commons offers a disciplinary space where we may consider the potential and role of architecture and adjacent fields to address the social, the economic, and the environmental, and to understand how these lenses re-frame disciplinary topics. The Aesthetic Commons is where disciplinary language is defined, and re-defined. SARUP acknowledges the value of architectural tools, procedures, and methods for evaluation from historical, theoretical, philosophical, and visual perspectives and is committed to nurturing and developing our disciplinary culture within contemporary discourse.</p> <p>[excerpts from NCBDS Spring 2023 presentation + paper]</p> |

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This page and next: An example map of skills from the curriculum booklet, First Year. Research Assistants Ethan Erenz and Sam Bensemann, paid an hourly wage via a SURF grant.

FA scaffolds
SP operations



Thank

You!

*ACSA New Faculty
Teaching Award,
January 2025.
Sam Schuermann.*

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Design drivers

- Social commons
- Economic commons
- Environmental commons
- Aesthetic commons
- Composition / internal logics
- Precedent / reference
- High volume, analog rapid prototyping (iteration)
- Narrative
- Program / use
- Typology
- Materiality
- Structural systems
- Reuse / existing building stock
- Site
- Research
- Environmental systems
- Code and zoning realities

Hard-skill methods

- Sketching
- Cutting by hand (Cacto, etc.)
- Drafting (by hand)
- Additive modeling (bristol, wood, chip)
- Printing
- Casting
- Foam, wire cutting
- Collaging
- Drafting (digitally)
- Spray painting
- Laser cutting
- Plotting
- 3d printing
- Utilizing the woodshop
- CNC milling
- Rendering
- Digital presentations

Software

- Illustrator
- AutoCAD
- Rhino
- Photoshop
- InDesign
- Vray, Enscape
- Energy modeling (climate consultant)
- Premiere Pro
- Revit
- Parametric modeling (grasshopper)
- Blender, Maya
- SketchUp

Soft skills / habit-formation

- Disciplinary vocabulary
- Explicitly defined deliverables
- Process / iteration
- Time management
- Graphic communication
- Conceptual thinking
- Verbal communication
- Site visitation / observation
- Team building
- Written communication

Physical model types

- Study model
- Concept model
- Speculative model
- Presentation (final) model
- Site model
- Massing model
- Section / fragment model
- Systems (i.e. tectonic, structural) model