Penn State University
Sede di Roma

ARCH 499D   -   Foreign Study – Architectural Design VI (4 credits)

SYLLABUS - SUMMER 2010

Instructors: **Jamie Cooper**, jgc12@psu.edu
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Meeting times: MTWTh 14:00 – 17:00

Meeting place: TBD

Course Description:

The semester abroad design work will focus on the difficult problem of creating new a contemporary design in the presence of a historic urban context. This is an inevitable problem in the city of Rome where one can hardly avoid confronting historic or monumental buildings. However, as every place is preceded by a history, natural, political or material, these issues are important outside of this context. The course aims to help students define critical strategies that will serve them beyond their semester abroad. The studio project will have exercises requiring students to spend time in the field in addition to the studio.

The Design Studio is the fundamental model for education within design disciplines in the University. This course will serve as a means to establish high expectations, an opportunity for a cross disciplinary approach, a disruption of conventional understandings, and an elevations of the role of the imagination.

In the Design Studio, the student will gain **knowledge** of the design disciplines, develop **skills** of design and communication, and foster a capacity for **judgment.** As a laboratory, the Design Studio provides the opportunity to apply and explore the knowledge, skills and judgment gained as projects develop through review and revision. There will be an emphasis on both product and process necessitating a high level of self-motivation and initiative. The Design Studio is an intensive course that often raises more questions than it answers. It demands energy, creativity, courage and introspection. Each student is encouraged to be open to a diverse range of ideas, values and solutions. The design process is "open ended" and is rarely a "linear" process, but rather an **"iterative" process** which requires the exploration of many ideas and approaches to solving a problem. Many ideas are "thrown out" in the effort to determine a viable approach to the project.

Students are to follow University Policies for Academic Integrity. Please refer also to the **Studio Culture Statement**: Link to Department of Architecture at http://www.arch.psu.edu/students/survival chap2.shtml.

Course Objective:

In this course, students will be immersed in studies in principles and elements of design and planning for human use and the relationship of space to the physical and social environment.

- To further develop the visual communications skills both in hand drawing and digital media;
- To refine an appreciation for architectural design concepts;
- To converse with the vocabulary necessary to communicate architectural design concepts effectively;
- To learn from exemplary architects and complex works to gain an understanding of style, order, form, planning and design excellence;
- To attain competence in solving more complex design problems;
- To refine the personal analytical framework of aesthetic values and good design

This course incorporates several pedagogical methods to engage the students in active learning of design involving: research, analysis, synthesis and creativity.

- Discussions and Presentations – to impart design philosophy, techniques and skills using notable architectural work as examples of good design;
- In-class assignments – to engage students in activities to reinforce design concepts discussed in class;
- Studio Critiques "Crits" – critical analysis and feedback on student design work;
- Sketchbook – to record observations and develop thoughts in a less formal manner on an individual basis;
- Projects – a larger scale team-based opportunity for testing and retesting design thesis through iteration to improve on the level of design competency.

The design process is also rarely a "solitary process" as virtually all real architectural **projects are produced by teams**, not by individuals. Although a portion of the course grade will be based on individual effort, the majority of the grade will be based on the performance of the team.

Effective collaborative team work is essential to success in this studio based course. Good communication and cooperation are expected. While each person may bring certain specific interests and skills to the team, equal contribution by each individual to the team effort is mandatory. Students should carefully select their team members based on complimentary skills and ability to coordinate and collaborate.

The course is organized as an **interactive studio**, requiring students' participation in readings, discussions, architectural analyses, review of student work, and other group activities. All students must be present throughout the entire critique. All assignments must be presented during the critique. Failure to be prepared for the critique constitutes failure to be prepared for an exam.

Progress on the project design is expected from crit to crit. Team members should meet prior to each crit to develop, review and coordinate team project work effort. Team members should not be seeing each other's work for the first time in front of the instructor.

The **ABET Accreditation Board** has established that an Architectural Engineering curriculum must meet common performance standards. This course specifically addresses the following outcomes:

Expected Outcome Description	Emphasis
An ability to design a system, component or process to meet desired needs	3
An ability to function on multi-disciplinary teams	3
An understanding of professional and ethical responsibility	1
An ability to communicate effectively	3
The broad education necessary to understand the impact of engineering solutions in a global and societal context	2
A knowledge of contemporary issues	1
An understanding of architectural design and history leading to architectural design that will permit communication, and interaction, with other design professionals in execution of building projects	3

0 = nothing specific specified; 1 = little emphasis; 2 = moderate emphasis; 3 = strong emphasis

Attendance / Participation / Grading:

Students enter design studio with varying levels of skill and experience. Studio work will, therefore, be evaluated for the most part on evidence of **growth** and **commitment.** Performance standards are high in the program and throughout the design and engineering professions. The necessity for **self-motivation** and **discipline** cannot be overstated. Skills improvement is gained through constant practice and dedication.

Assessment of studio work will occur in the form of project criticism and grades. Criticism may be informal, as in desk crits and pin-ups, or formal, as in jury reviews. Criticism is a positive means of reviewing the work, not the person who produced the work. At times of stress, this distinction is difficult for the student to maintain emotionally. Always think of criticism as a means for improvement.

When assigning grades, the instructor will consider the student's performance in the following areas:

- **THEORETICAL CONSTRUCT:** the intentions and ideas that inspire the work
- **DESIGN PROCESS:** the course of the work of the project including energy, effort and growth
- **PRODUCT:** the level of craftsmanship and mastery of the skills introduced in the class
- **PRESENTATION:** the effectiveness of visual and verbal communication
- **PREPARDNESS:** at desk crits, pin-ups and reviews

Grading

15% - Individual attendance/participation/desk crits:
Attendance at all classes is expected. Active participation in all class activities and individual contribution to team projects are required.

15% - Individual Sketch Notebook:
Individual documentation of observations, thoughts, collected materials and project ideas. See assignment description.

70% - Team Projects (including presentations / reviews):
The relative weight of each exercise will be commensurate to the amount of time allotted. The duration of each exercise will include review/feedback time (desk crits, pin-ups, juried and non-juried presentations). Detailed Exercise Briefs with project description and requirements will be issued at the beginning of each exercise.

PSU definitions will be applied in grading (Undergraduate Degree Programs Bulletin):

    A = excellent; indicates exceptional achievement
    B = good; indicates extensive achievement
    C = satisfactory; indicates acceptable achievement
    D = poor; indicates only minimal achievement
    F = failure; indicates inadequate achievement

While evaluations are a necessary means of assessing achievement, do not allow grades to define the motivation for any project.

Attendance / Participation

As a studio course is an interactive process, attendance at crits and presentations is essential to success. Attendance is required at each studio session for the entire studio period. Absences will be noted. More than one unexcused absence will lower the semester grade by five points. For every additional unexcused absence, the semester grade will be lowered by an additional five points.

Attendance at performances, exhibitions, and/or other events outside of studio may also be required, at times.

While "attendance" is required, attendance alone does not constitute participation. An effective studio learning environment requires participation by all and "active participation" in team work, team crits and presentations (both by presenting teams and student "audience") is expected and required. Failure to actively participate and productively contribute will negatively impact the individual grade.

Excused Absence

Due to the short semester and the intensity of the design project, attendance at every studio session is expected. Should you need to miss class due to illness or other serious issue, please try to notify one of the instructors in advance. If this is not possible, please follow-up with a phone call or e mail as soon as possible. With instructor approval it is permissible to leave studio to obtain supplies, conduct field investigations, use the library / computer facilities, etc. as long as it does not conflict with your team's scheduled crit time.

Late Projects

Late projects are automatically graded down by five points per class beyond the due date. Extensions will be granted only in truly exceptional situations (i.e. death in the family, serious illness, etc.).

Textbooks / References / Materials:

There are no required textbooks for this course.

Note: Additional assigned readings may periodically be given throughout the semester in the form of photocopied handouts, articles on e-reserve or reserved materials in the library.

Students will be required to supply all necessary design and presentation materials.