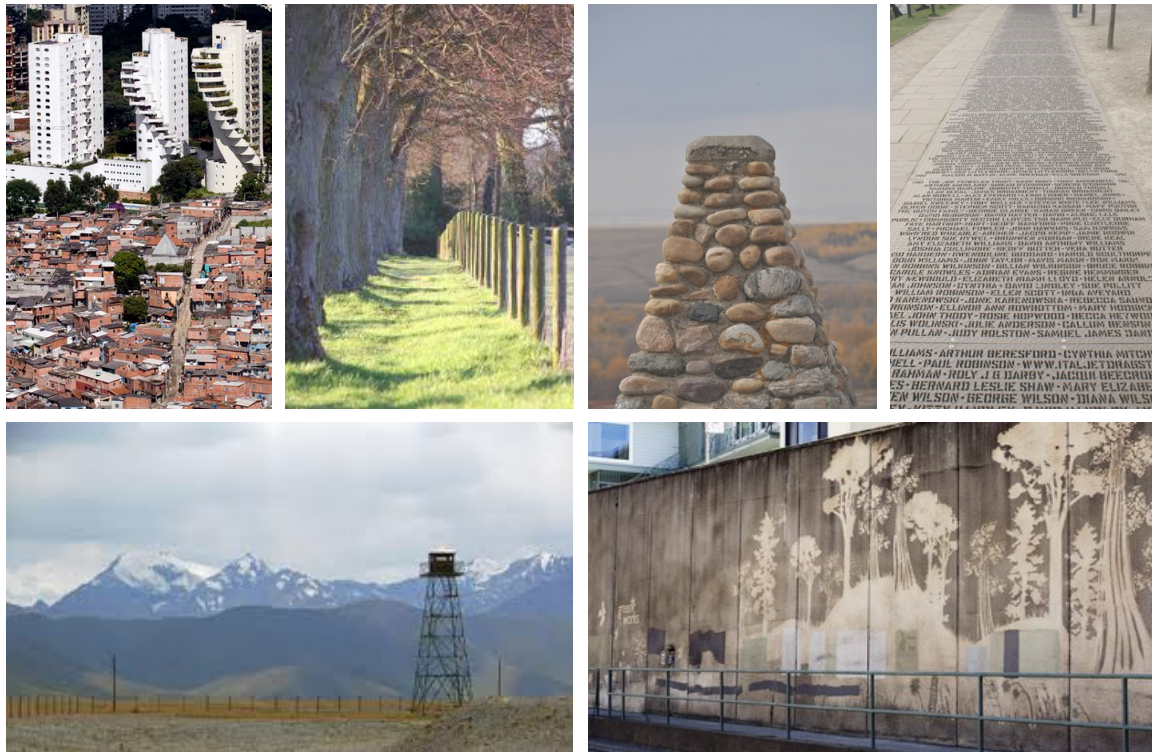School of Architecture   University of Waterloo at Cambridge

ARCH 693 - 002   TRD1 Design Studio - Fall 2018

Instructor   John McMinn

Liminal States; Architecture, Place and Identity at the Interstices.

COURSE DESCRIPTION
The TRD 1 Design Studio will explore issues of architecture, place, and identity, at the interstitial conditions across the urban and extra-urban landscape. Border and boundary situations whether at the scale of a building, a neighborhood, or a nation, embody heightened conditions of architecture where identity and character find expression and where manifestations of difference are contested. Recently the intersection of human flows in migration with radical often xenophobic populism, further adds to the contested questions of border and boundary as a key issue of our world today.

With globalization, economic instability, critical environmental challenges and resource depletion, bringing into question the role and position of architecture in society, critical evaluation of the way the built environment is conceived, produced and used is in order. Interstitial conditions of architecture, frequently associated with situations of liminality, offer an expanded opportunity for this critical questioning. Students will study these conditions of border and boundary at various scales, researching specific locations of their choosing and expand the lens through related texts, precedent and examination of cultural and geographical circumstance of the unique places they have identified.

Kenneth Frampton's conception of *Critical Regionalism* contextualizes the diversity of material-cultural practice, linked to regional particularity, simultaneously addressing local conditions and the contemporary

transnational culture of architecture. Frampton argues for an architecture resistant to an overwhelming global culture that threatens local place-identity. Teddy Cruz's conception a north south global divide provides a political and economic critique to situate the discussion of Critical Regionalism within the contested field of economic disparity and situational responsive practice, while Eyal Weizman's examination of interstitial conditions across boundaries in zones of conflict amplifies the intensity of architecture's role in the contested field of power imbalance.

The research of the studio involves a cross-disciplinary approach, finding opportunity for intervention in these circumstances of instability, tapping into networks of cultural discourse, flows of resources and conditions of global exchange, while responding to unique characteristics of local circumstances. The work engages a broad and provocative range of issues, relating to contested territorial and cultural boundaries, to the impact of resource extraction, industrial and agricultural production, to the enhancement of educational and community infrastructures that may mitigate disparities of edge and boundary conditions. In all cases the work remains open-ended, opportunistic and affirmative, demonstrating the potential for design to respond to and engage with a wide range of circumstances which challenge our assumptions of how architecture and its related disciplines act as an agent for progress in a world of increasing change and tumult.

The nature of thesis offers a moment to stake a claim on a territory of inquiry, testing ideas and working methodologies. The research calls into question the role of architecture and how much or how little one should intervene in a given situation. The thesis offers the opportunity to scrutinize the agency of design within these broader economic, social and cultural challenges. Who are the stakeholders or actors in these situations and for whom does architecture advocate? In these liminal states and conditions of imbalance, one can imagine an expanded scope for architecture, one that can accommodate the contingencies of its environment in which things are in flux and opportunities for are open for creative invention.

Drawing on the experience of related readings and specific site explorations, participants in the studio will develop contextually resonant thesis propositions. The course focuses on the development of an individual architectural thesis in outline form.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

In conjunction with research undertaken in the studio, students will produce a contextually responsive thesis proposition, developed through a series of short exercises, each incorporating a visual or material and a text based component.

1. Engage critical evaluation of the role of architecture in response to conditions of environmental crisis, economic uncertainty and globalization.
2. Explore diverse cultural patterns and their associated social/spatial conditions, particularly at the interstitial situations arising between divergent cultural groups.
3. Examine methods and techniques of the way architecture is conceived and designed, relative to evolving techniques of communication, delineation fabrication and assembly.
4. Explore opportunities arising from judicious deployment of natural and manufactured resources, providing holistic and enriching environments for occupants in the long term.
5. Develop and document comprehensive architectural proposals which respond to the complex and fluctuating conditions of cultural interface in urban and extra-urban environments.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

The course involves a series of exercises leading to the production of a Comprehensive Thesis Outline. The exercises are conceived as progressive and cumulative, involving both drawn and/or fabricated works and texts, defining discreet aspects of the proposed thesis. The series of exercises (P1-5) together as a group constitute half of the course grade, while the thesis outline (P6) comprises the other half of the course grade.

P1 *Scenario*
Locate, describe and document the current situation of a place in which border or boundary situation(s) can be clearly identified between divergent and perhaps competing conditions
P2 *Visioning*
Based on P1 research, develop a vision to address, work with, or mitigate the situation identified, including strategies for the built environment.
P3 *Precedents*
Identify relevant precedent information, whether in regard to built form, programming or policy, or similar situations which inform the approach of the P2 proposal.
P4 *Site*
Identify, research and document a proposed site or a set of site conditions, associated with the place and situation identified in P1.
P5 *Project*

Define and develop preliminary documentation related to program, site and building design, demonstrating material characteristics, tectonics and vocabulary of the proposal.

P6   *Comprehensive Thesis Outline*
Utilizing the work in exercises 1 through 5 develop a comprehensive thesis outline including the following elements:

- *Thesis abstract* - provide a condensed summary of key themes and topics of the thesis research and design proposition, maximum 300 words
- *Table of contents* - outline individual section and chapter headings with brief synopsis of content
- *Introduction* – outline major topic areas covered by the thesis including theoretical and historical context
- *Review of Literature* - annotated reading and precedent list, covering existing scholarship and preceding approaches to the thesis topics
- *Conceptual outline* - cover the themes and topics explored in the thesis, and media employed
- *Description of research and design methods* - outline the nature and intention of the research, leading to a design proposition and methods employed therein
- *Schedule of research and production of the thesis* - include required travel and acquisition of research materials
- *Budget* – outline detailed breakdown of all costs related to the completion of the thesis
- *Summary/conclusions* – analysis of limits of work and implications of research
- *Appendices* - annotated assembly of supporting material relating to the thesis

P6.1 Preparation of a four-page spread for class publication. We will establish a template for layout of the class publication mid-way during the P6 project and each member of the class will be responsible for production of their own four page spread, to be compiled into a class publication, to be completed immediately following the final reviews.

EVALUATION

Project	Abstract	Grade value
P!. Scenario	150 words	7%
P2. Visioning	150 words	7%
P3. Precedents	200 words	8%
P4. Site	200 words	8%
P5. Project	250 words	20%
P6. Thesis Outline	300 words	50%

Assessment is based on a comparative review of each project and is gauged by: the ambition, clarity and appropriateness of the concept; architectural quality and technical resolution; integrity in the development of the project from initial to final phase; effectiveness and the completeness of the documentation, and on the precision and clarity of its communication in the author's absence.

REVIEWS
Reviews are not evaluations but rather the opportunity for a public discussion of your work. Evaluation will take place in separate sessions by the studio coordinator, wherein all critical aspects of each project will be considered. It is important for each student to participate not only in the review of their own work, but in the reviews of the work of fellow students. Participation in class reviews and seminars is mandatory.

HAND-IN AND DIGITAL SUBMISSIONS
Students must complete all projects to an acceptable level and obtain a passing average in order to receive credit for this course. You are required to have hard copy print-out for all pin-ups and formal reviews. Last minute printing problems, lost or corrupt files will not be accepted as a justification for late project submissions. All work in this course must be presented in hard copy format regardless of one's

preferred working methodology.

You are required to hand in a CD at the end of the term, documenting ALL your studio work for the term. The CD should be clearly organized into project folders identifying Project 1 through 6, with subfolders indicating study models, preliminary sketches/diagrams, final drawings and final models. Completion of this requirement will be assessed as part of the participation grade.

LATE WORK

All assignments are due in class at the specified time and date. Arch 692 project deadlines can be extended only in cases of illness or incapacity, or documented special circumstances. Requests for such extensions must be made before the project deadline to the studio coordinator, using the Request Form/Extension form available from the front office, and be accompanied by a medical certificate when appropriate.

Work submitted after the hand in date and time without a confirmed extension will be subject to a penalty of 5% per day thereafter, and after five business days a mark of zero will be recorded.

SCHEDULE AND STUDIO ATTENDANCE

Studio runs Tuesday and Thursday:

9:30am-12:30pm, 1:30pm – 5:30pm

The studio sessions will include lectures, individual desk-critiques, pin-ups and formal reviews. Class attendance and participation play a key part in the course and will be noted and evaluated by the instructor. Detailed descriptions will introduce each project and lectures and other presentations will be given at various times throughout the term.

CLASS MEETINGS

Be prepared to meet every studio day at 9:30 am. Seminars and class meetings will be normally be held throughout the term at the beginning of studio days. Specific dates will be established as the term evolves, responding to class progress. Check your email late evening on the day before or early morning on studio days for updates on meeting times and locations.

COMMUNICATION WITH STUDIO COORDINATOR

During the course of the term, the studio coordinator may need to send communications to ARCH 693 students. It is required that each student confirm their current active email address with the Graduate Student Service Coordinator during the first week of class. Any official correspondence that must be addressed to the studio coordinator jcmcminn@uwaterloo.ca

RECOMMENDED READINGS

Recommended readings will be distributed at various stages throughout the term and as applicable will be held on reserve in the *Musagetes Library* for use by the class, or will be provided in pdf form. All students are encouraged to actively use the *Musagetes Library* collection and recommended readings.

ACADEMIC INTEGRITY AND AVOIDANCE OF ACADEMIC OFFENSES:

To create and promote a culture of academic integrity, the behavior of all members of the University of Waterloo is based on honesty, trust, fairness, mutual respect and responsibility.

Students are expected to know what constitutes academic integrity, to avoid committing academic offenses, and to take responsibility for their actions. For information on categories of offenses and types of penalties, students should refer to Policy #71, Student Academic Discipline, http://www.adm.uwaterloo.ca/infosec/Policies/policy71.htm .

Students who believe that they have been wrongfully or unjustly penalized have the right to grieve; refer to

Policy #70, Student Grievance,
http://www.adm.uwaterloo.ca/infosec/Policies/policy70.htm

APPEALS FOR REASSESSMENT:
If you are unhappy with the grade you are given in any course,
1. Attempt an informal resolution by speaking to or corresponding with
    the Professor.
2. If you are not satisfied, complete a request for reassessment form
    (www.registrar.uwaterloo.ca/forms/FormalInquiry.pdf) and submits it to the Associate Dean Graduate
    Studies . You may meet with the Associate Dean before the form is submitted, or call (for a phone
    appointment book through Emily Stafford).
3. Once the Associate Dean has the form and explanation he forwards the matter to the School of
    Architecture Director for action and consideration. The Director selects a reasonable technique to
    determine the validity of the request. If a studio grade reassessment is selected, a committee of up to 3
    studio faculty who were not involved in creating the original grade may be asked to review the project,
    the project outline and comparable projects from the term.
4. The Associate Dean receives a decision/recommendation and communicates that to the student.

WHAT IS PLAGIARISM?
This information is taken from UW Policy 71 - Student Academic Discipline Policy under the list of
Academic Offences (section II):
"Plagiarism, which is the act of presenting the ideas, words or other intellectual property of another as
one's own. The use of other people's work must be properly acknowledged and referenced […] The
properly acknowledged use of sources is an accepted and important part of scholarship. Use of such
material without complete and unambiguous acknowledgement, however, is an offence under this policy. "

NOTE FOR STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES
The Office for Persons with Disabilities (OPD), located in Needles Hall, Room 1132, collaborates with all
academic departments to arrange appropriate accommodations for students with disabilities without
compromising the academic integrity of the curriculum. If you require academic accommodations to
lessen the impact of your disability, please register with the OPD at the beginning of each academic term.
Once registered with OPD, please meet with the professor, in confidence, during office hours to discuss
your needs.