

GRADUATE DESIGN STUDIO AND SEMINAR

SEPTEMBER 2011 UWSA

Instructor: Philip Beesley

Credits: 1.5

The Future Environment MI Studio offers an enriched setting for developing your own M. Arch. thesis in outline form. The studio will focus on several questions: what boundaries might lie between living systems and inert buildings? What might a future architecture look like, and how might it behave? Amidst polarized scales of personal communication and global economies, what public space might be found? As turbulent natural forces assert themselves, we want to search for renewed human relationships with the environment that can grow, and flourish. Might architecture contribute to a renewed whole?

The purpose of the course is to develop a thesis outline with **depth, balance and resolution** using the medium of research and design. Discussions amidst the group as a whole will pursue common themes, but the responses are open-ended. Specific topics, balance of research and design, and specific media are up to you. The course can readily serve either design or text-oriented theses.

Features of this MI course include:

- Visit of Dr. Rachel Armstrong, synthetic biologist, science fiction writer and TED global fellow
- Hosting of Future Environment workshop charrette
- Production of Future Environment publication, assembling thesis outlines into a book
- Ongoing seminar meetings, exchanging readings and experimenting with individual, drawing and writing exercises.

The final product of the course is a **comprehensive thesis outline**. Basic thesis elements are developed during the course: the focus of a specialized **topic**, a research **context** that explores the literature and precedents surrounding your topic, and a **synthesis** that offers a position of your own. Context can include reviews of related literature, precedents and case studies, examinations of related site and programs, architectural design languages and craft-oriented practice such as construction and visual communication. This outline functions directly as the launch for your independent thesis development.

The course is structured in the form of a short series of assignments that invite you to develop increasing depth for your research and creation. Alongside personal development, a round-table seminar will be conducted weekly with the group, exchanging readings and undertaking short exercises of writing and drawing. This forum will support thesis 'craft' skills including rhetoric, use of references, verbal presentation and visual communication.

COMPLETION REQUIREMENTS

The course is completed by producing the following general elements for publication in a common format, and by presenting them for critical review. Organization and weighting of parts can vary.

- **Abstract:** condensed summary describing key aspects including topic identification, terms of reference and scope, draft argument
- **Introduction** to thesis offering key creative position, and outlining key issues, including historical and theoretical context
- **Review of literature:** discussion of existing scholarship and precedents "ambitious but not comprehensive"
- **Project:** a synthesis, with specific disciplines, media and emphasis to you're your individual approach.
- **Analysis:** discuss the implications of your project

ASSIGNMENTS

Four interim phases act as development vehicles for the final submission described above. These stages of development are intended to directly support development of the final outline. You are free to repeat and adapt material produced for earlier phases throughout the term.

The final submission is assigned a value of 60% of the total grade. Grade values totaling 40% of the final grade are assigned for the first three stages. These preceding evaluation values are kept low in order to encourage risk and to provide flexibility for varying concentration on different phases to suit your approach. eliminary and will be confirmed at the beginning of the term.

1. Visualization

Propose research questions, and render an image that captures key qualities

Start: Tuesday, Sept. 13, 2011

Produce: One-page text with questions, plus image in format of your choosing

Due: a) pin-up for 9:30 am Thursday, Sept. 15

b) upload on ACE due Friday, Sept. 16

Evaluation: 5% of final grade

2. Future World

Expand your research by projecting a future environment

Assigned: Tuesday, Sept 20

Due: 8 pm Monday, Oct. 10, online upload

Review: Tuesday, Oct. 11

- formal play of materials

- sequence fiction - lay in material

*discover impulse
questions- empirical*

Media: Edited video, 10 minutes nominal length

Interim development: Future world environment, workshop with Dr. Rachel Armstrong and visitors

Present: Video projection accompanied by verbal outline

Evaluation: 15% of final grade

3. Project

Design an intervention for a site and present related research literature

Assigned: Tuesday, Oct. 11

Due: 8 pm Monday, Nov. 7

Review: Tuesday, Oct 8

Produce: Preliminary site response, program response, and samples of architectural vocabulary, accompanied by renewed abstract

Media: your choice; integrate results within 8 1/2 x 11 document

Present: 20 minute illustrated presentation

Evaluation: 20% of final grade

4. Comprehensive thesis outline

final project

Integrate the material produced during the term and create a coherent thesis outline

Assigned: Tuesday, Nov. 8

Due: Monday, Dec. 12, via ACE

Produce: Integrated submission demonstrating scope and specialized approach to thesis topic, edited and formatted chapter for thesis publication cooperatively produced by the group

Present: Illustrated presentation, guest critic

Evaluation: 60% of final grade

1..4

abstract

{ - not to make argument
or set tone
- précis of content
identifying terms of reference
scope
media
- introduction → "quote from body"

A NOTE ON ABSTRACTS

Abstracts are used by researchers searching for reference material. While an abstract normally appears as a preface to a thesis, it can be written as a self-sufficient document separate from the work. Effective abstracts convey information that other researchers need in considering further access to the work. This can include description of a specialized topic, scope, major literature and disciplines involved, and principal arguments. While abstracts have a variable length, a first paragraph may sometimes be quoted alone and therefore primary ingredients of the thesis should appear there. Effective abstracts often use a compressed, distilled rhetoric. While some abstracts may include brief 'tone-setting' quotes, citations by other authors, and other detailed material, the abbreviated space available for an abstract often makes that material inappropriate. On the other hand, because an abstract can be considered a separate document, text from an abstract may, if you wish, be repeated within the thesis.

An abstract can be distinguished from an introduction to a thesis. Introductory essays do not have the length constraints of an abstract. Introductions often take an extended form, surveying the text ingredients of the body of the thesis and acting as a comprehensive review that summarizes review of literature and precedents, analysis, synthesis, and conclusions. Visual documents produced within the thesis may likewise be summarized and repeated within the introduction. It may be effective to consider different sections for an introductory essay, permitting treatments of topic material independent of orienting information that conveys organization and scope of the study