

ARCH 693 - Thesis Research and Design II, Winter 2016



Moshe Safdie examining a model of Habitat a design derived from his architecture thesis at McGill University

Instructors:

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Studio hours: Tuesdays, 9.30am-12:30pm; 1:30-5.30pm, Thursdays 9:30-12:30.

Office hours and location: Thursdays 1:30-5:30 (by appointment)

THESIS RESEARCH AND DESIGN II - OBJECTIVES AND STRUCTURE

The only substantial freedom is to follow right to the end, to the place where it vanishes, the line along which power grows for a certain form-of-life. This raises our capacity to then be affected by other forms-of-life.

Tiquun – Introduction to Civil War

There are two key requirements for any thesis:

1. A thesis needs to plug into a real and urgent question about the world we live in.
2. It needs to critically engage the practice of architecture

The goal of the winter term TR&D II studio is to push your individual research and design work forward, building directly on the substantial work you have completed in your fall TR&D I studio.

The TR&D II studio will meet twice a week on Tuesdays from 9:30 am to 5:30 pm (with an hour for lunch) and on Thursdays from 9:30-12:30pm. Studio is scheduled for the whole day on Thursdays with the expectation that you will work in studio at that time and so that the instructor can schedule other meetings if necessary over the term.

Structure:

The term consists of an initial Term work proposal and 3 significant exercises E1-E3, which should help you to develop your thesis.

E0 – Term Work Proposal: In the first week of the term you will make a projected work plan that suggests when you plan to finish your thesis and what you plan to accomplish in each of the future terms you plan to work on your thesis.

Based on this long-range plan, you will develop a plan for the term that outlines the significant body of work you want to accomplish and how you intend to break it up. This will be reviewed in your first desk review in the second week alongside your preliminary research to focus your question.

The work proposal should consist of the following:

1. A proposed table of contents for the thesis document
2. A description of the primary work you plan to accomplish over this term.
2. A week-by-week sequence of objectives, that organizes the term to create a clear timeline for the production of this primary element of the thesis work. This weekly schedule should include the methodology of research / production of the thesis, explaining what you will be making each week. Consider as part of this schedule the work involved in translating your research for the three reviews.
3. A bibliography of proposed readings

E1 – A Precise Thesis Question:

1. How does your thesis plug into a real and urgent question about the world we live in?
2. How does your thesis critically engage the practice of architecture?

This first sequence of work will enable more detailed research that hones the core question(s) of the thesis so far, in order to better contextualize it (them) in a meaningful conversation within the world and within the discipline of architecture.

This could be done in writing by reading and analyzing theoretical and historical texts. It could also be done through drawings, for example, by work such as continuing your analysis of the existing site at appropriate scales, and/or by comparing your thesis question(s) to the questions raised in relevant design precedents. The proportion of writing to drawing will be up to you and should be determined by the ultimate orientation of your thesis toward research or design.

Pin-up 1 – E1 - At this pin-up you will present your clearly honed thesis question to your TR&D advisor and your section colleagues in 15 minutes, leaving 20 minutes for discussion. This can be done digitally using either PowerPoint or PDF presentations.

E2 – An Experimental Methodology: This sequence asks you to test your thesis question through a set of small investigations that will help you to decide on the primary methodology for your thesis research.

Midterm Review E1+E2: Sequences 1 and 2 will be presented at the mid-term review. Each of you will make a 15-minute presentation of your ideas to a minimum three-person review panel, including your TD&R II instructor and if possible your individual thesis supervisor.

E3 - Thesis Experiment: In the second half of the term you will pursue your thesis experiment after the feedback from the midterm review. If your thesis is a design thesis you will continue working on developing the design, so that at the end of the term you have a developed draft project. If your thesis involves a physical or digital architecture experiment, then you will be running the experiments and documenting their results. If you are pursuing a research thesis, you will be doing focused reading, archival research, and/or site visits that allow you to acquire a deep understanding of the specific topic you are studying, and in which you are developing new knowledge. As you do this work you will be using writing itself as a tool to develop your thoughts.

End of Term Review E3: At the final review on March 22nd you will be asked to present your thesis in progress to a review panel of 4 critics including your thesis supervisor and your TR&D II instructor. This feedback will help you to hone the thesis and organize it clearly into a final term submission. Design theses should be presented in conventional format of drawings pinned to the wall.

Architecture as Research – An All School Colloquium and Exhibition: On April 7th and 8th TR&D II will host a two-day colloquium on your research. The two days will be run in two parallel sessions over two days (E-classroom and Main Lecture Hall). Each room on each day will host five sessions, two in the morning and two in the afternoon. Each session will consist of three 15-minute student presentations, followed by 45 minutes of discussion. Each session will be focused on key disciplinary problems. Each of you will present your thesis question and the evidence you have assembled to respond to the question so far.

The exhibition will focus on displaying the work to date as a “cabinet of curiosities”, as an archive of evidence of the experiments undertaken.

Daily Schedule:

Desk Reviews: Every Tuesday the studio will meet for desk reviews. These will be carried out in three ways over the term:

1. As 1:1 roughly 30 minute meetings with your studio instructor
2. As 1.5 hour, three student meetings with your instructor based on a common thematic
3. As 1.5 hour, three student meetings with your instructor based on the planned duration of your thesis (3,4,5... terms)

Seminars: Every Thursday morning your studio will hold a 3-hour seminar. Each seminar will focus on the presentation and sharing of readings and thesis work.

Term Schedule:

| Week | Month | Day | |
|------|---------|-----|---|
| 1 | January | 5 | Move-In. Introduction/Discussion of the Term Desk Reviews 1:3 Thematic |
| | | 7 | Seminar |
| 2 | | 12 | Desk Reviews, 1:1 - Discussion of E0 Work proposal |
| | | 14 | Seminar Pat Hanson Lecture |
| 3 | | 19 | Pin-up – E1 Focusing the question |

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|----|----------|------|---|
| | | 21 | Seminar Omer Arbel Lecture |
| 4 | | 26 | Desk Reviews 1:3 Thematic |
| | | 28 | Seminar |
| 5 | February | 2 | Desk Reviews 1:1 |
| | | 4 | Seminar Martin Bressani Lecture |
| 6 | | 9 | Mid Term (Seminar-Style) Review E1 + E2 Testing the hypothesis |
| | | 11 | Seminar |
| - | | 16 | Reading Week |
| | | 18 | Reading Week |
| 7 | | 23 | Desk Reviews 1:1 |
| | | 25 | Seminar Dan D'Oca - Interboro Lecture |
| 8 | March | 1 | Desk Reviews 1:3 Thematic |
| | | 3 | Seminar |
| 9 | | 8 | Desk Reviews 1:3 Number of Terms |
| | | 10 | Seminar Guan Lee Lecture |
| 10 | | 15 | Desk Reviews 1:1 |
| | | 17 | Seminar |
| 11 | | 22 | End Term Review - E3 |
| | | 24 | Seminar |
| 12 | | 29 | Desk Reviews 1:3 Thematic |
| | | 31 | Seminar |
| 13 | April | 7, 8 | TR&D II - Thesis colloquium |

GENERAL INFORMATION

Please read the syllabus and the information below carefully. Your thesis research is a unique opportunity to conduct your own research and to position yourself within the discipline. As such Thesis Research + Design II requests not only requirements defined by the school policy but tries to prepare students for their professional life. Commitment to your work, collaboration among the group, self-motivation, participation and attendance in time will be critical.

If you run into problems during the semester or if you are concerned about your progress, please contact your instructor at any time via email or request a meeting during the class. This class is meant to provide all support you need to develop your thesis and research. The deadlines are imposed here in order to track your own progress in your thesis work. Successful time management will be an important skill for your success.

Your thesis is a document that you will take with you for many years. It is likely the longest sustained individual research project you have undertaken so far in your architecture career and it may be the longest that you undertake in the future. You will be using it to get jobs, grant funding, future educational opportunities, and / or publications after graduation, so consider it as a key link between the long process of education you have undertaken and the career that stands ahead of you and make the most productive possible use of this rare opportunity for creative work.

Class Meetings

Lectures and class meetings will be held throughout the term at the beginning of studio days and at the end. Be prepared to meet every studio day promptly at 9:30 a.m. Please be punctual. 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.

Reviews

Reviews are not evaluations but rather the opportunity for a more public discussion of your work. It is important for each student to participate, not only in the review of their own work, but also in the reviews of the work of fellow students. Participation in class reviews and discussions is required.

Hand-in and Digital Submissions

For all in class reviews work with your instructor to determine whether to present your work as a digital projection or a pinned up set of drawings. The final book will be submitted BOTH as a hard copy and in digital form on the final CD. You are required to hand in a CD at the end of the term, documenting ALL key studio work from the term. The CD should be clearly organized into research folders identifying the various phases of research/projects.

Maintain the Studio

Cooperate in maintaining the studio space. If you play audio material, use headphones.

Attend Lectures and Work In Studio

Work in studio on studio days. Be in full attendance in studio from 9:30-12:30pm and 1:30-5:30pm on studio days. If you are planning to visit the library or conduct off site research, please talk to your instructor.

Complete all parts of the work; submit your work on time

All assigned parts of the work must be completed. Punctual completion is required.

Accommodation for illness; not for travel

If you need to apply for accommodation of lateness or absence due for illness, make a formal application by using 'Verification of Illness' [VIF] forms or counseling letters, filed with the

Architecture Office. Student travel plans are not considered grounds for granting alternative reviews and submission times.

Academic Integrity

In order to maintain a culture of academic integrity, members of the University of Waterloo community are expected to promote honesty, trust, fairness, respect and responsibility. A student is expected to know what constitutes academic integrity to avoid committing an academic offence, and to take responsibility for his/her actions. A student who is unsure whether an action constitutes an offence, or who needs help in learning how to avoid offences [e.g., plagiarism, cheating] or about "rules" for group work/collaboration should seek guidance from the course instructor, academic advisor, or the undergraduate Associate Director. For information on categories of offences and types of penalties, students should refer to Policy 71, Student Discipline'. For typical penalties check Guidelines for the Assessment of Penalties. Note: "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."

References:

www.uwaterloo.ca/academicintegrity/

www.adm.uwaterloo.ca/infosec/Policies/policy71.htm.

www.adm.uwaterloo.ca/infosec/guidelines/penaltyguidelines.htm.

Students with Disabilities

The Office for Persons with Disabilities [OPD], located in Needles Hall, Room 1132, collaborates with 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.

Communication with Faculty

During the course of the term, we may need to send communication to you. You should confirm your current active email address with the Graduate Student Service Coordinator and studio instructor during the first week of class.