Two Hundred Words

This is an advanced seminar course exploring a range of current architectural investigations, as manifest in specific built work and texts. It begins with a set of contemporary buildings and texts, and aims at generating a critical dialogue within the class.

The course intends to develop analytical and critical skills via discussion and concise writing venues: short trenchant responses to the specific buildings and texts. The class will examine one building each week. Students will come to class prepared with a response of 200 words and 1 critical image. Writing is expected to be a response to the material put forth, not explanations of any given building or text. These responses are intended to generate conversation in class, and participation in this critical dialogue is expected. A final presentation will take place on the last class of the semester with an exhibition of posters generated by each member of the class. In this final exercise, each student will provide a text of 1000 words and a pertinent image that expands on each individual’s interest. Intended as a provocation rather than a response, it is expected that this final exercise will require more effort than the previous weeks’ writings.

The objective of this course is not only to expose students to a relevant body of writing and built work, but to also develop skills in relating critical investigations to their physical embodiment. The intention of the course is to afford the framework by which students might begin to position their own architectural ambitions.

Particular attention will be paid to the realm of material manifestation as a critical juncture in the formulation of architecture. In the concern for the materials of building and the manners of construction the architect commits speculation to action: attempts to convert intention into palpable reality. It is here that architecture is most fully and deliberately engaged with the world and here that architecture initiates the world's response in turn. It seems clear, however, from even casual observation that while this subject matter may be vital it is oftentimes treated as a marginal concern. This course begins with the assumption that this denial of Architecture's material potential seriously undermines architecture's value in society and raises fundamental questions about the legitimacy of our profession more generally. Students will explore these concerns through their responses and class dialogue.
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Contact information

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Course Grading

Establishing grades for projects of a creative nature is a more complex matter than grading in other academic areas. While each project contains certain quantifiable elements by which it may be evaluated, a significant portion of each grade is derived from a broader, more subjective set of issues. Grades will be based on class attendance, participation and assigned projects. The criteria for establishing a grade is as follows, and plus/minus grades will be assigned:

A Outstanding work
Assignments are complete at all levels and surpass the expectations for Advanced Seminar work. Participation in critical dialogue in class is consistent, pertinent and engages the larger discussions.

B Good work
Assignments complete at all levels and student is a regular participant in class dialogue / conversation.

C Average work
Not all assignments are complete and/or well done. Not a significant part of the class discussion.

D Not very good work
Not all assignments are complete and/or well done and some of the requested components of the assignments are missing. Class participation is inadequate

F Unacceptable work
Note that this grade will be assigned when a student has missed an extended amount of class-time (more than three classes) without notifying the instructor or the School of Architecture.

**X** Excused incomplete
Can be given only for legitimate reasons of illness or family emergency. Simply not completing the work on time is not an adequate cause for assigning this symbol. It may only be used after consultation with the instructor or the Associate Dean, and with an agreement as to a new completion date. Studio work has to be completed before the second week of the next design semester in which a student wishes to enroll, according to school policy.

**Attendance**
Punctual and regular attendance is essential. Students with three unexcused absences during the term, or two *consecutive* unexcused absences, may not receive a passing grade.

**Religious Holidays**
By UT Austin policy, student must notify faculty of pending absences at least fourteen days prior to the date of observance of a religious holy day. If you must miss a class, an examination, a work assignment, or a project in order to observe a religious holy day, you will be given an opportunity to complete the missed work within a reasonable time after the absence.

**Disabilities**
Please notify your instructor of any adaptation you may require to accommodate a specific physical need. Students with disabilities may request appropriate academic accommodations from the Division of Diversity and Community Engagement Services for Students with Disabilities, 471-6259. Specialized services are also found at [http://deanofstudents.utexas.edu/ssd/](http://deanofstudents.utexas.edu/ssd/).

**Ethics**
Please note that the UT Honor Code and Student Discipline and Conduct policies can be found at [http://catalog.utexas.edu/general-information/the-university/](http://catalog.utexas.edu/general-information/the-university/) and [http://catalog.utexas.edu/general-information/appendices/appendix-c/student-discipline-and-conduct/](http://catalog.utexas.edu/general-information/appendices/appendix-c/student-discipline-and-conduct/)

**Recommendations**
I am happy to write recommendations for students with at least two weeks’ notice and who have received a grade of ‘A’.