** INTERFACE **

**Course Overview and Topics**

**Public Interface**
While desirable, the competent resolution of the spatial, structural and mechanical aspects of a building is never a self-serving goal: Embedded in the very constitution of every building and its technical solutions is always – whether conscious or not – an attitude towards the environment it exists in, the people it serves, or the institution(s) it represents. While in theory a building can be seen as an autonomous object, subjected only to internal logics and logistics, it more often than not exists as a complex interface between scales and systems, between publics and users, and the conditions, histories, and constitutions of the city. This interface can be physical (the deceivingly simple question, for example, where a building 'begins'), visual, or even determined by mechanical systems (think Philippe Rahm's environments, or Diller & Scofidio's Blur Building). But it can always be precisely defined by the very means of architectural production: form, structure, space, material-, and mechanical systems.

This studio will focus on the link between the specifics of technical resolutions and their conceptual underpinnings. The question of the public building and which architectural elements constitute its 'publicness' will serve as guideline throughout the semester.

**Integration**
ARC 520 will focus on the development of an architectural project with regards to structure, systems, materiality, and building codes. The studio will explore the systemic side of architectural production in a constant feedback loop between design intent and material manifestation. If architecture is a material practice as much as it is a social practice, it can be assumed that material decisions directly inform human (inter)actions. On the other hand, any design intent will need to find adequate form through the tools of architectural production, including structure, material, and space.

'Integration' throughout the studio will thus be regarded as the careful calibration of intent, form, system, material, and technology in ways that express a coherent set of values and objectives, as well as optimally perform their technical tasks. This relationship is never unidirectional: while intent certainly influences form, we will mine materials, systems and technologies for inherent potentials and unanticipated possibilities. The technical development of a project is not to be understood as a phase of deterministic problem-solving, but an opportunity to extend the realm of discovery, inventiveness and intentionality.

Students will be expected to understand and comply with all applicable building code compliances, such as life safety and egress. Implications of construction techniques, building technologies and systems will be addressed and explored. Sustainability will be asserted as a criterion that informs decisions about both the architectural product and the processes by which it is formed.

The semester is divided into four assignments. The first three assignments (2-3 weeks each) will temporarily isolate topics, methods, or scales of production, while the last assignment (8 weeks) extends previous design and research towards a comprehensive resolution of an architectural project in the city.
**Assignment #1: Extraction (two weeks)**

*Students will work in teams of two.*

Public buildings use a variety of formal and organizational strategies (besides – by definition – their public program) to define the characteristics of their ‘public-ness’ in response to program and site. In this assignment students will work in teams to examine public buildings with regards to their specific operational and organizational strategies, formal and structural logic, and material attitude. Case studies will be scrutinized across scales, ranging from the city to the detail. At the same time, the case studies provide a vehicle to situate the problem of the ‘public-ness’ of architecture within the evolution of the discipline. The goal of this research is to generate a reference catalogue for the entire studio, which will introduce possibilities and limits of particular strategies, structures, and materials.

**learning outcomes:** Critical Thinking, Graphic Skills, Collaborative Skills

**media:** structural model, diagrams, drawings

**readings:** t.b.a.

**Precedents (preliminary list):**
- Utrecht University Library, Utrecht, The Netherlands, 2004, Wiel Arets
- Saynatsalo Town Hall, Saynatsalo, Finland, 1952, Alvar Aalto
- Wyly Theater, Dallas, USA, 2009, OMA/Rex
- Andalucia’s Museum of Memory, Granada, Spain, 2009, Alberto Campo Baeza
- Volta School, Miller Maranta,
- Phillips Exeter Academy Library, Louis Kahn
- Kunsthal Rotterdam, Rem Koolhaas / OMA
- Coruna Arts Center, Coruna, Spain, 2001, Acebo + Alonso
- Centre Pompidou, Paris, France, 1972 - 1976, Renzo Piano and Richard Rogers
- Sendai Mediatheque, Sendai, Japan, 2001, Toyo Ito
- Leutschenbach School, Zurich, Christian Kerez
- Kunsthaus Bregenz, Bregenz, Austria, 1997, Peter Zumthor
- Rolex Learning Center, Lausanne, Sanaa, 2010

**Assignment #2: Projection (two weeks)**

*Students will work in teams of two.*

Assignment 02 will transition from the extraction of an operational strategy from a case study to its implementation facing the constraints of a literal site volume (i.e. ‘wall’, ‘tower’, ‘cube’) and a minimal program. Working with selected strategies from the first assignment, student teams are encouraged to creatively explore extremes within a clearly defined structural and formal logic and the potential for this logic to inform program. (A rigorous pushing of systemic boundaries – even if eventually resulting in its ‘failure’ - is highly encouraged. Students’ inquiries should be guided by the question: “What if?”) The architectural objects created in this assignment will be interpreted both at a literal 1:1 scale as well as an architectural scale, working back and forth between conceptual universality and architectural specificity.

**learning outcomes:** Critical Thinking, Design Composition Skills, Graphic Skills, Collaborative Skills

**media:** study model, drawing, diagram

**readings:** t.b.a.
Assignment #3: Interface (Material / Surface / Affect) (2.5 weeks)
Students will work individually.

This assignment asks students to invert the customary logic of architectural production: starting from the generation of a high quality large format ‘blurry’ image to define an architectural ambition of what constitutes a ‘public’ object in the city, students will subsequently speculate on its material manifestation. The initial image will guide a phase of rigorous research into material (surface-) systems and assemblies and their technical understanding, resulting in an exemplary wall assembly drawing. Rather than the result of an automatic (if skillful) detailing process, the detail will be examined as a carrier of an architectural ambition and its desired affect. The ambitions and research laid out in this exercise may be used in preparation for the final project.

learning outcomes: Design Composition Skills, Design Integration Skills Graphic Skills
media: mixed media (digital rendering/ hand drawing), technical drawing
readings: t.b.a.

Assignment #4: Interface / Enclave (Main Project) (eight weeks)
Students will work individually.

The main project for this semester will be the design of a small public institution in the city. Program and site are the 2017 Lyceum-Fellowship Competition (http://lyceum-fellowship.org/2017-competition.html) for the design of small branch library on Audubon Terrace in New York, between 155th and 156th Streets on Broadway (Manhattan) of approximately 11.000sf. The site is a small infill site in a city block that itself is an urban enclave largely dominated by beaux-arts architecture, with a mix of current and former institutional buildings. Program includes typical library functions centered around a reading room with affiliated public spaces, as well as administrative functions. The relative simplicity of the given program will allow students to concentrate on the public institution as an addition to an existing urban enclave, and a new interface with the surrounding city.

learning outcomes: Code Analysis , Site Analysis and Design, Design Composition Skills, Graphic Skills, Understanding Sustainable Practices Design Integration Skills
media: drawings, diagrams, models
readings: t.b.a.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS:

Attendance:
Class begins promptly at 1:00PM. Attendance is mandatory and your participation is expected. At the instructor’s discretion, any student with more than three unexcused absences may have their final grade dropped by one full letter.

Religious holy days sometimes conflict with class and examination schedules. If you miss an examination, work assignment, or other project due to the observance of a religious holy day you will be given an opportunity to complete the work missed within a reasonable time after the absence. (Please see “Religious Observances” below for specifics.)

Please contact the instructor prior to class (m.haettasch@utexas.edu) if you expect to be late or miss class.
Lecture Series / Design Conversations:
Students are expected to attend the three events of this semester’s Jessen Lecture Series (see calendar for dates). A number of “Design Conversations” will be scheduled and announced in advance by the instructor to discuss lectures, readings, or topics pertinent to the assignments at hand. These conversation are not only an important part of the holistic education as an intellectually engaged architect, but participation will have an impact on students’ grades (see Basis of Evaluation).

Basis of Evaluation:
Grading for studio courses is awarded on the basis of the following:

1/4 grasp: The ideas and understanding of the project at hand, combined with an appropriate process of inquiry;

1/4 process: The consistent and rigorous development and testing of ideas; and

1/4 resolution: The demonstration of competence, completeness, and finesse through representation; and

1/4 engagement: The active participation in studio activities, leadership, collaboration group discussions, and reviews.

Your work will be evaluated on its rigor and evolution over the semester. At the instructor’s discretion, grades are subject to deductions for late work, and late arrivals. Any student with more than three unexcused absences will have their final grade dropped by one full letter.

Grade Descriptions:
A / A-: Excellent
Work surpasses expectations in terms of inventiveness, appropriateness, verbal and visual ability, conceptual rigor, craft, and personal development. Student pursues concepts and techniques above and beyond what is discussed in class. The work submitted exceeds stated expectations and is complete.

B+ / B / B-: Above Average
Work is thorough, well researched, diligently pursued, and successfully executed. Student pursues ideas and suggestions presented in class and puts in effort to resolve required projects. The work demonstrates potential for excellence and is complete.

C+ / C / C-: Average to Below Average
Work meets the minimum requirements. Suggestions made in class are not pursued with dedication or rigor. The work is nearly complete.

D+ / D / D-: Below Average
Work is not level appropriate. Student does not demonstrate the required knowledge base. The work is incomplete.

F: Failure
Minimum objectives are not met. Performance is not acceptable.

X: Excused Incomplete
Given only for legitimate reasons of illness or family emergency. Incomplete assignments are not a cause for assigning this grade. An incomplete is assigned after consultation with the Associate Deans’ offices. Incomplete coursework must be completed prior to the beginning of the following semester.

Independent Inquiry Flag
This course carries the Independent Inquiry flag at the University of Texas at Austin. Independent Inquiry courses are designed to engage you in the process of inquiry over the course of a semester, providing you with the opportunity for independent investigation of a question, problem, or project related to your
You should therefore expect a substantial portion of your grade to come from the independent investigation and presentation of your own work.

**Academic Integrity:**
Policy on Scholastic Dishonesty: Students who violate University rules on scholastic dishonesty are subject to disciplinary penalties, including the possibility of failure in the course and/or dismissal from the University. Since such dishonesty harms the individual, all students, and the integrity of the University, policies on scholastic dishonesty will be strictly enforced. Refer to the Student Judicial Services website for official University policies and procedures on scholastic dishonesty. Link to University honor code: http://registrar.utexas.edu/catalogs/gi09-10/ch01/index.html.

**Students with Disabilities:**
Students with disabilities who require special accommodations need to get a letter that documents the disability from the Services for Students with Disabilities area of the Office of the Dean of Students (471-6259 voice or 471-4641 TTY for users who are deaf or hard of hearing). This letter should be presented to the instructor in each course at the beginning of the semester and accommodations needed should be discussed at that time. Five business days before an exam the student should remind the instructor of any testing accommodations that will be needed.

**Religious Observances:**
A student shall be excused from attending classes or other required activities, including examinations, for the observance of a religious holy day, including travel for that purpose. A student whose absence is excused under this subsection may not be penalized for that absence and shall be allowed to take an examination or complete an assignment from which the student is excused within a reasonable time after the absence. University policy requires students to notify each of their instructors as far in advance of the absence as possible so that arrangements can be made.

**RESOURCES:**

**Ideas**
Systems

Materials
- Brookes, Alan, and Grech, Chris, The Building Envelope

Codes

Periodicals
- Detail
- El Croquis
- The Plan
- GA: Global Architect