Publicness:
The Judicial Complex
Studio Description

Comprehensive Studio
ARC 561C will focus on the development of an architectural project with regards to site relationships, structure, systems, materiality, and building codes, meeting the NAAB accreditation requirements for comprehensive studio. The agenda of ‘comprehensiveness,’ however, will be understood in a more fundamental way: rather than a phase of project development, in which a set of skills is applied to an initial idea, we will be exploring the systemic side of architectural production in a constant feedback loop between 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 social 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. This relationship is never unidirectional: while intent certainly influences form, we will mine materials, systems and technologies for inherent potentials and unanticipated possibilities.

Course Objectives
The studio seeks to address the deployment of building systems, materials and processes in ways that express a coherent set of values and objectives achieved through architecture and its effects, as well as optimally perform their technical tasks. 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. It is the pedagogical objective of this studio to lead the student through a design process in which architectural ideas, spatial planning, and building technologies are integrated. Students will be expected to understand and comply with all applicable building code compliances, such as life safety and egress. The 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.

Course Work
Students will work in groups of two on one design project over the semester. The exercises given throughout the semester will be at the service of this project, and may temporarily isolate particular aspects such as program, site, building codes, typology, structure, systems.

1. Ludwig Mies van der Rohe: Column Detail, German Pavilion, International Exposition, Barcelona 1929
Learning Outcomes
Students will focus on developing abilities in the following learning outcomes, with emphasis on architecture as a tectonic expression: structural systems, construction methods and materiality, assembly, and spatial and formal compositions.

Design + Composition
Students develop the ability to prepare a comprehensive program for the project while assessing both client and user needs. The program analysis, along with critical thinking skills developed in previous studios should inform the spatial and formal compositions of the project. The design should respond to analysis and reviews of site, relevant laws and standards.

Sustainability
Ability to design projects that optimize, conserve, or reuse natural and built resources, provide healthful environments for occupants and users, and reduce the environmental impacts of building construction. Respond to site characteristics such as soil, vegetation, and topography.

Systems
The design should address environmental systems, structural systems, building envelope, building materials and assemblies.
- Environmental Systems – solar orientation, active and passive heating and cooling, daylighting and artificial illumination, indoor air quality
- Structural Systems – understanding of forces on a building, appropriate selection and application of structural system.
- Building Envelope – appropriate application of building envelope systems and associated assemblies relative to thermal transfer, moisture, performance, and aesthetics.
- Service Systems – understanding of basic principles of plumbing, electrical and vertical transportation systems
- Building Materials and Assemblies – appropriate selection of construction materials, products, components and assemblies.

Life Safety
Ability to apply basic life safety principles to design, including egress requirements.
Studio Project

Publicness

If public space allows for informal gatherings, opinions to be formed, exchanged and expressed, its architectural counterpart is the public building. As embodiment of the ‘res publica’ - matters of public interest - public buildings represent local, regional, or federal institutions - cultural, educational, governmental, or judicial - usually paid for by the collective they serve. In democratic societies, these institutions are meant to serve all social groups that make up society, while in turn, individuals have certain obligations towards the greater collective good.

In recent years, the idea of the public institution itself has faced a dual challenge: On the one hand we have witnessed an unprecedented wave of shrinking or privatizations of sectors that used to be considered ‘res publica’ (education, cultural institutions, correctional facilities, or infrastructures, to name a few...) as a result of both financial constraints and a lack of belief in their effectiveness. On the other hand ‘the public’ (i.e. the social groups that make up society) has grown increasingly diverse in their backgrounds, values, and needs, making it difficult for institutions to cater to, and for their buildings to adequately represent this diversity.

Today, the public institution has all too often either retreated into the invisibility of dusty suburban strip-mall-functionalism, or - in a well-meant attempt to counter this - exploded into an eclectic conundrum of formal glories of past centuries. The belief in contemporary architecture as a tool to not only functionally organize public institutions, but to also adequately represent and spatially ground them in their context(s), seems to have been lost since the perceived failures of the last large-scale public projects in the United States in the 1960’s. This semester, we will attempt to redefine what an institutional building should - or could - be today: A continued belief in architecture’s main tools, spatial organization, coupled with a re-thinking of the programmatic exigencies of a contemporary institutional architecture will be the driving factors behind the design for a new civic building.

1. Public Space: Playground in Amsterdam (Aldo van Eyck)
2. Public Building: Le Corbusier, High Court, Chandigarh
The Judicial Complex

Like no other public building, the courthouse embodies a social contract (the shared value of justice), but also stands for the latent agency of architecture to restrict the individual’s freedom to move in space. As one of the three branches of governance, the judicial branch forms an integral part of our democratic system. The architectural organization and formal expression of the courthouse in the city will be at the heart of this studio. This semester’s project, a new Travis County Courthouse aims to speculate on the architecture of a new courthouse in downtown Austin.

With Travis County’s current Heman Marion Sweatt courthouse, built in 1931, stretched way beyond capacity, and an anticipated need to increase the number of courts from currently 19 to 35 by 2035, proposals for a new courthouse have been on the boards since 2010. Turning its back on the existing complex around Wooldrige square, a current proposal envisions a 12 story tower on a site on Guadalupe/17th St.

Instead of a ‘tabula rasa’ approach, we will propose to redevelop the area around the existing Heman Marion Sweatt Travis County Courthouse and Wooldridge square towards a coherent civic and judicial complex. In the tradition of the great civic complexes of the postwar period and the “New Monumentality,” the project demands both a position towards the expression of the civic building in the city today as much as towards its ever more complex inner workings, combining traditional programs such as courtrooms and administrative functions with new demands specific to the complexities of contemporary family courts.

Site:

Students will be asked to study the existing judicial complex, and integrate their proposals into a master plan for the extension of the judicial district around Wooldridge square, roughly comprising the area between the governor’s mansion (between Lavaca and Colorado St.) in the east, Nueces St. in the west, and bounded by W. 11th Street in the north and W. 8th St. in the south. As a civic building in the city, the analysis and understanding of existing site conditions will be as important as the development of a strong and coherent architectural vision for a civic complex around Wooldridge square. As an urban link between the capitol and the square, the project is located at both a spatial as much as a conceptual intersection between the executive (Governor’s mansion) and the judicial branch.

1. Public Building - Public Space:
Oscar Niemeyer, Congress, Brasilia

2. Public Building - Public Space:
Morphosis, San Francisco Federal Building

3. Norman Foster: Palace of Justice, Bordeaux
Program

The program will be for a total of approx. 70,000 sf, centered around six courtrooms and supporting facilities such as jury facilities, judges’ chambers, attorney’s suite, county clerk’s suite, as well as a small court library, and other support functions specific to the nature of the courtrooms.

Primary program goals

- Ability to prepare a comprehensive program for an architectural project
- Assessing client and user needs, preparing an inventory of space and equipment requirements
- Incorporate structural systems, building envelope systems, building services and building materials and assemblies

Site context:

The new Travis county courthouse is to be integrated into a vision for the civic complex around Wooldridge Square
Studio Logistics

Studio Structure
The studio will focus on the development of one project throughout the semester. Individual assignments will temporarily isolate specific topics or areas of inquiry pertaining to research, conceptual development, site analysis, and technical development. Student teams will remain consistent throughout the studio.

Phase #1: Research and Analysis “Pre-Conditions 1: Program-Form” (2 weeks)

Step 1: Extraction
In this assignment students will work in teams to examine precedents relevant to the studio program with regards to their specific operational and organizational strategies, formal and structural logic, and material attitude. Specific attention will be given to the role of structure and materiality in relation to occupancy, hierarchy, and space. 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 civic building 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.

Step 2: Projection
In subsequent step, students will transition from the extraction of a formal, structural, or material strategy from a case study to its implementation facing the constraints of a literal site volume and a minimal program. Working with selected strategies from the precedent analysis, 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.

Phase #2: Research and Analysis “Pre-Conditions 2: Site” (1 week)

The studio will visit the project site(s) and surrounding context. Students will gather relevant drawings, maps, and photographs of the site and site area, then analyze and graphically describe the potentials and specific opportunities that the site presents. This assignment will establish the external formal and social design criteria of the problem as it pertains to the question of the courthouse in the city. ‘Pre-Conditions 2’ will be divided into a collective research (Step 1) and an individual analysis component (Step 2):

Phase #3: Conceptual Design “Implementation” (3.5 weeks)

After two exercises to determine the conceptual framework with regards to program scope (Pre-Conditions 01) and site (Pre-Conditions 02) ‘Implementation’ will be the first step towards the final studio project. Students will move from an initial idea towards a spatially and programmatically developed proposal with credible circulation, and ideas for structural and material systems. We will produce first iterations of plans and spatial models, while maintaining and strengthening conceptual and diagrammatic clarity. The focus in this phase is to explore the potentials of the given program in relation to an architectural ambition. Site conditions as well as structural and material systems will be considered additional tools for the implementation of this ambition.
Phase #4: “Development” (8 weeks - including assignment “Conditions”)

In this phase we will move forward towards increasing technical and tectonic definition of the project. Wall sections, detailing, and decisions about materiality, surface and considerations of building systems will be considered as more than mere technical challenges: Each technical decision will be evaluated based on its ‘bias’ towards supporting the logic on rigor of the overall design concept. A brief research interlude (“Conditions”) will allow students to investigate relevant precedents and gather knowledge about wall assemblies and detailing.

Studio Culture
The School of Architecture believes in the value of the design studio model. Studio learning encourages dialogue, collaboration, risk-taking, innovation, and learning-by-doing. The studio offers an environment where students can come together to ask questions and make proposals, which are developed and discussed among classmates, faculty, visiting professionals, and the public-at-large. Studio learning offers intensive one-on-one instruction from faculty members, and provides the opportunity for each student to develop his/her critical thinking skills and spatial and material sensibilities. The design studio offers a synthetic form of education, where project-based learning becomes the foundation for developing an understanding of and commitment to the school’s core values — broadmindedness, interconnectivity, professionalism, exploration and activism — all in service of architecture’s fundamental mission: to improve the quality of the built and natural environments.

https://soa.utexas.edu/programs/architecture/architecture-studio-culture

Design Conversations: Lecture Series
The School of Architecture offers a wide range of opportunities for students to extend the design conversations taken place in studios (Lecture Series, Goldsmith Talks, Exhibitions, etc). Students are encouraged to participate and be engaged. Specifically, all B.Arch and BSAS students in studio are expected to attend all the Jessen Lectures (three per semester by lead practitioners from around the world). The lectures and the group discussions in studio that follow are important for the holistic education of intellectually engaged students and participation will have an impact on students’ grades (see below).

Evaluation Criteria
While each project contains certain quantifiable elements for evaluation, a significant portion of each grade is derived from broader and more subjective criteria. Student work will be evaluated according to its rigor and evolution over the semester. Grades are subject to deductions for late arrivals, absences, and late or incomplete work at the discretion of the instructor. Grading for an assignment is broken into four components, each of which is given roughly equal weight:

Pursuit:
the consistent and rigorous development and testing of ideas.
- The ability to formulate a query or thesis and pursue a self-determined concomitant method of inquiry
- The ability to identify and implement various processual mechanisms (software, sketch drawing and models, etc.) in the development of the design
- Initiative as demonstrated in work ethic – Does the student do what is asked; go beyond what is asked; direct their own efforts; eager to produce the next iteration of the design?
Grasp:
the ideas and understanding of the project at hand and integration of knowledge introduced in companion courses.

- A strong and clearly stated design objective
- Spatial acuity as demonstrated in plan – including reasonable disposition of programmatic elements and sectional development
- Synthetic and critical thinking; the ability to holistically organize a project as demonstrated through creative engagement with issues of materiality, structures and construction, structural and environmental system integration, building materials and assembly, sustainable practices, etc. in support of the design objective
- Structural competence and material sensitivity as demonstrated in wall thickness, floor plates, and assembly

Resolution:
of the design objective; the demonstration of competence, completeness, and finesse in the final design presentation.

- Quality of presentation; clarity of communication; appropriateness of media strategy and level of skill displayed through the work presented at all stages of the design process; technical documentation

Engagement:
the active participation in studio activities, leadership, collaboration, group discussions and reviews.

A student must earn a letter grade of C or better in order for the course to count towards a degree in the School of Architecture and to progress in to the next studio. A letter grade of C- will not satisfy degree requirements.

Grade Descriptions

A/A- : excellent
Project surpasses expectations in terms of inventiveness, appropriateness, visual language, conceptual rigor, craft, and personal development. Student pursues concepts and techniques above and beyond what is discussed in class. Project is complete on all levels.

B+/B/B- : above average
Project is thorough, well presented, diligently pursued, and successfully completed. Student pursues ideas and suggestions presented in class and puts in effort to resolve required projects. Project is complete on all levels and demonstrates potential for excellence.

C+/C : average
Project meets the minimum requirements. Suggestions made in class are not pursued with dedication or rigor. Project is incomplete in one or more areas.
**C-/D+/D/D- : poor**
Project is incomplete. Basic grasp of skill is lacking, visual clarity or logic of presentation are not level-appropriate. Student does not demonstrate the required competence and knowledge base.

**F : fail**
Project is unresolved. Minimum objectives are not met. Performance is not acceptable. Note that this grade will be assigned when students have excessive unexcused absences.

**X : excused incomplete**
Can be given only for legitimate reasons of illness or family emergency. Simply not completing work on time is not an adequate cause for assigning this evaluation. It may only be used after consultation with the Associate Deans’ offices and with an agreement as to a new completion date. Work must be completed before the second week of the next semester in which you are enrolling, according to School of Architecture policy.

**Methodology**
The primary subjects of the studio are the design potentials of techniques of building and siting. While students will be expected to produce exquisitely crafted documents of their design proposals at the site, building, and detail scales, specific software tools will not be dictated.

General material and format considerations will be suggested by the instructor throughout the course, however, investigation and experimentation is strongly encouraged at all stages of production and design. In addition to digital production methods, portions of the studio process will include hand sketches and drawings as well as physical models; students should equip their studio workspace appropriately.

**Collaboration**
Projects are developed in collaboration with a partner, and your performance will be evaluated collectively. You should be mindful of the give and take that is associated with a collaborative design process. If the relationship between you and your partner becomes strained in any way it is imperative that you bring such issues to the attention of your instructors. In addition to the specific relation you will have with you partner, a general spirit of collaboration amongst all members of the studio will be expected.

**Attendance**
Punctual and regular attendance is mandatory. Participation is expected. With three (3) unexcused absences, the student’s final grade for the course will be lowered by a full letter grade. The final grade will be lowered by a full letter grade for each unexcused absence thereafter. Aside from religious observances, absences are only excused with written documentation of a medical issue or family emergency. The student is responsible for completing work missed due to excused absences and initiating communication with the instructor to determine due dates.

If a student is late (5 minutes after the start of class) three (3) times, it will be counted as one (1) unexcused absence. Students
should notify the instructor prior to class if lateness or absence is known in advance. Students must notify instructors directly regarding lateness or absences; Asking a classmate to inform the instructor is not acceptable.

**Religious Observances**
A student shall be excused from attending classes of other required activities, including examinations, for the observance of a religious holy day, including travel for the 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.

By UT Austin policy, you must notify the instructor of the pending absence at least fourteen days prior to the date of a religious holy day. If you must miss a class, an examination, an 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.

**Academic Integrity**
Students who violate University policy on academic integrity 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 academic integrity will be strictly enforced.
Refer to the Student Conduct and Academic Integrity website for official University policies and procedures on academic integrity: http://deanofstudents.utexas.edu/conduct/academicintegrity.php.
University Code of Conduct: http://catalog.utexas.edu/general-information/the-university/#universitycodeofconduct

**Mental Health and Support Services**
Taking care of your general well-being is an important step in being a successful student. If stress, test anxiety, racing thoughts, feeling unmotivated, or anything else is getting in your way, there are options available for help:

- In-house CARE counselor (see below)
- For immediate support
  - Visit/call the Counseling and Mental Health Center (CMHC):
    - M-F 8am-5pm | SSB, 5th floor | 512-471-3515 | cmhc.utexas.edu
  - CMHC Crisis Line:
    - 24/7 | 512-471-2255 | cmhc.utexas.edu/24hourcounseling.html
- Free services at CMHC:
  - Brief assessments and referral services: cmhc.utexas.edu/gettingstarted.html
  - Mental health & wellness articles: cmhc.utexas.edu/commonconcerns.html
  - MindBody Lab: cmhc.utexas.edu/mindbodylab.html
  - Classes, workshops, and groups: cmhc.utexas.edu/groups.html
Care Program
Counselors in Academic Residence (CARE) Program places licensed mental health professionals within the colleges or schools they serve in order to provide better access to mental health support for students who are struggling emotionally and/or academically.

Abby Simpson (LCSW) is the assigned CARE counselor for the School of Architecture. Faculty and staff may refer students to the CARE counselor or students may directly reach out to her. Please leave a message if she is unavailable by phone.

Abby Simpson, LCSW | BTL 114B | 512-471-3115 (M-F 8am-5pm)
https://cmhc.utexas.edu/CARE_simpson.html

Students with Disabilities
Students with disabilities who require special accommodations must obtain 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.
http://diversity.utexas.edu/disability/

Security, safety and the studio
The studio is an exceptional learning environment. Since it is a place for all, it necessitates the careful attention to the needs of everyone. All spraying of fixative, spray paint, or any other substance should be done in the shop. Security is a necessary component for a studio that is accessible to you and your colleagues 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. Do not leave your studio without your studio key and do not leave your studio unlocked. Hold yourself and your studiomates accountable for the security of your shared space.

The studio is an opportunity to apply sustainability principles, being mindful to recycle and reuse to reduce material consumption at UTSOA. Recyclable materials should be placed in blue bins or any other containers with white bags. The Material Exchange, a give-and-take system for students to donate materials and take what they need for studio and fabrication coursework, is available throughout the semester to all UT students in the UTSOA Technology Lab. All unwanted, reusable materials should be brought to the Material Exchange station in the Technology Lab at the end of the semester.

BCAL
Concerns regarding the safety or behavior of fellow students, Teaching Assistants (TA), or Professors can be reported to the Behavior Concerns Advice Line (BCAL): 512-232-5050. Calls can be made anonymously. If something doesn’t feel right, it probably isn’t. Trust your instincts and share your concerns.

Emergency Evacuation
In the case of emergency evacuation:
- Occupants of buildings on The University of Texas at Austin campus are required to evacuate buildings when a fire alarm is activated. Alarm activation or announcement requires exiting and assembling outside.
Students should familiarize themselves with all exit doors of each classroom and building they may occupy. Remember that the nearest exit door may not be the one used when entering the building.

Students requiring assistance in evacuation shall inform their instructor in writing during the first week of class. In the event of an evacuation, follow the instruction of faculty or class instructors.

Reentry into a building is prohibited unless given instructions by the following: Austin Fire Department, The University of Texas at Austin Police Department, or Fire Prevention Services offices.

Information regarding emergency evacuation routes and emergency procedures can be found at: www.utexas.edu/emergency.
Resources

Ideas

Systems
  ---. *Refabricating Architecture: How Manufacturing Methodologies Are...*

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

Codes

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

**Week 01**
- **Wed 1/23**
  - Lottery / Studio Intro / Handout “Pre-Conditions 1”
- **Fri 1/25**
  - all section Comprehensive Studio meeting

**Week 02**
- **Mon 1/28**
  - Precedent Documentation due
  - lecture: Claire Agre
- **Wed 1/30**
  - Reading discussion: The Institutional Building (t.b.a.)
- **Fri 2/1**
  - Studio Pinup “Pre-Conditions 1,” Step 1

**Week 03**
- **Mon 2/4**
- **Wed 2/6**
  - Review “Pre-Conditions 1” Step 1 & 2
  - Handout “Pre-Conditions 2”
- **Fri 2/8**
  - Site Visit

**Week 04**
- **Mon 2/11**
  - Site Documentation due
  - Reading discussion: The Civic Complex (t.b.a.)
  - Jessen lecture: Deborah Berke
- **Wed 2/13**
- **Fri 2/15**
  - Studio Pinup “Pre-Conditions 2”
  - Handout “Implementation”

**Week 05**
- **Mon 2/18**
- **Wed 2/20**
  - lecture: Stih and Schnock
- **Fri 2/22**

**Week 06**
- **Mon 2/25**
  - Concept Review (ext.)
  - lecture: Joan Busquets
- **Wed 2/27**
- **Fri 3/1**
  - Studio Pinup: Review Response

**Week 07**
- **Mon 3/4**
  - Egress Seminar / Egress diagrams due
  - Jessen lecture: Michael Murphy
- **Wed 3/6**
  - Structures Seminar
- **Fri 3/8**

**Week 08**
- **Mon 3/11**
  - Mid-Term Review (ext.)
  - lecture: ksestudio
- **Wed 3/13**
  - review recap, Handout: “Conditions”
- **Fri 3/15**
  - desk crits: “Conditions”, Step 1 & 2

**Week 09**
- **Mon 3/18**
- **Wed 3/20**
- **Fri 3/22**

### Pre-Conditions 1
- **Program-Form**
  - Precedent Analysis: Extraction
- **Program Speculation:** Projection

### Pre-Conditions 2
- **Site**
  - Site Documentation
  - Site Analysis
  - Site Model

### Implementation
- **Program-System-Site**
  - Concept Diagrams/
  - Site + Program
  - Strategy/
  - Study Models 1/16”
  - Plans 1/16”
  - Plans / Sections /
  - Models 1/16”/ 1/8”
  - digital Model
  - Egress diagrams /
  - Structure diagrams

### Conditions
- **Affect / Material / Assembly**
  - Atmospheric
  - Rendering, Wall Assembly
  - Research
Week 10
Mon 3/25  Studio Pinup: Conditions, Step 1 & 2
       lecture: William O’Brien
Wed 3/27
Fri 3/29

Week 11
Mon 4/1  Studio Pinup: Conditions, Step 1, 2 & 3
       lecture: Elena Manferdini
Wed 4/3
Fri 4/5  Structures / MEP review (ext.)

Week 12
Mon 4/8
Wed 4/10  Development Review (ext.)
         Studio Pinup: Review Response
Fri 4/12

Week 13
Mon 4/15  Details desk crits
Wed 4/17  Details desk crits
Fri 4/19

Week 14
Mon 4/22  t.b.d.: Cross-review with Construct. V
Wed 4/24
Fri 4/26

Week 15
Mon 4/29  lecture: Ana Maria Leon
Wed 5/1  final model due
Fri 5/3

Week 16
Mon 5/6  Final Review Week
Wed 5/8  Final Review Week
Fri 5/10  Last Day of Classes

Final Review: Date t.b.a.

note:
This schedule is subject to change, and adjustments may be made during the semester. Please be available during class time throughout the semester. Requirements for reviews and Pinups will be announced.