Course Number: ARC 561R, ARC 696
Course Title: Advanced Architectural Design

Hot, Humid, and Absolute: A School in Sri Lanka

Instructor: David Heymann
Unique Numbers: 00858 / 01215
Meeting Times: M, W: 1:30-5:30; F: 1:30-3:30
Format: ONLINE Studio

Advanced Studios: Advanced Design Studios explore pressing issues in current cultural discourse through design. The issues have both timeless and current components, as the question of value and meaning – and the structure and interaction of the disciplines (itself one of the pressing issues) – continue their constant evolution. Consequently this Advanced Design Studio requires that you take a thesis-based approach to arguing for the value of your proposal. In the Advanced Design Studios competency in design is not the end, but the means. Your proposal cannot be excused on the circumstances of the brief, but must take part in a larger discourse of the histories and theories of architecture and landscape architecture, into which you must frame your proposals. You must make a convincing argument for the improved structure of the world that your proposed construction would enact in order for your work to succeed.

Underlying Studio Inquiry: The potential of the relationship between sustainable design strategies – in this case for a hot/humid climate (which, let’s face it, aren’t most of them becoming?) – and absolute architectural geometries, in the consideration of future institutional public space, in this case, that of an educational facility.
The probability that sustainable architecture will engage such geometries, which are inherently systematic rather than picturesque (i.e., arising from asymmetrical design techniques, including the various offshoots of collage that linger un-critically in the after-Modern) are suggested by two probabilities.

First, the necessity of reducing carbon footprint by extending the lifespan of a building suggests the relative unimportance – when compared with modernist design – of specific program as a form driver. Systematic geometries favor neutral orders that can be inhabited in multiple ways, into which program fits loosely.

Second, the necessity of testing building performance suggests that a building is more easily considered as a set of discrete parts, ideally replicated again and again; rather than, say – in a paradigm that has held for the last half-century – that the building is a built extension of its site, not remove-able as a constructed act (i.e., there is no logical boundary from which to begin measuring its impact).

Students who enroll in this studio must grapple with the potentials and difficulties of systematic, absolute geometries not only for these advantages, but also for the potential – seen, for example, in the Chand Baori step well – of generating a rich and consequent public space, a relationship as old as architecture.

At the same time, the major project for this studio – an educational facility for a specific urban site in Sri Lanka – asks the designer to relate the geometries of the proposed form to a historical and embedded history and trajectory of architecture in Sri Lanka — and more specifically that of the work of Geoffrey Bawa – one that is tied up in the complex and problematic history of colonialism and Modernism. This complicates the design undertaking; yet you are required to develop a clear stance not only on that history, but on how systematic architectures can address (and have addressed, as in the case of FAU-USP, above) these deeply cultural rather than technical dilemmas.

It has regularly been the case in our histories that architecture has been servile to what is. But it has also served by speculating on what should be. These speculations have often had profound consequence, or have at least stood as evidence of principle. The present moment affords a remarkable opportunity for you to imagine how the world should be.

**Design Vehicle:**

Three (one individual & two group) projects:

1. An initial study of absolute architectures;
2. Research into hot/humid environments and traditional architectural response; and
3. Design of an educational facility in Sri Lanka per the design competition:

https://uni.xyz/competitions/reclaiming-modernity/info/about

Please review this competition prior to the studio lottery (attached). Students must submit projects to the competition in order to receive a grade.

One Voice or Many:

This particular studio project favors group-of-two or -three authorship over collective apprehension, with the advantages and shortcomings that entails, both to you as a young designer, and to the designs you make. You must think about and be sensitive to the many communities affected by your proposal, but for this project you are very much the author, accountable for the world you propose. The nature of the criticism in this studio will be similar. I will be giving you my opinions in as unvarnished a form as possible, but I am also not experts on the communities in which you will be working (much less the way we will be working on them). The purpose of our criticism therefore is to help you sharpen your own particular world-views, and how your design proposes a better world as you see it. Again, there are advantages and disadvantages to this approach, but it is the chosen pedagogical model of this studio.

Review / Studio Culture:

Studio will meet during regular hours, and during that time I will be meeting with individuals and groups on a preset time schedule. However, during all of the studio time period you are expected to be loosely present, as in: if I want to call the whole group in because of something I am seeing in a project, you will need to be ready. And I want you to use this time to be loosely in touch with each other. We will probably use the program SLACK for this purpose, but we can change that as better things come along.

*THREE CRUCIAL ASPECTS OF LIFE WITH ME IN THIS STUDIO:

1. You must have the work you want me to discuss uploaded as a single pdf (multiple sheets) so I can review all of it before we meet. We will likely use BOX for this.
2. The SANAA rule applies in this studio: “if you do not have a model, [or drawings we can draw over] you do not have anything to talk about.” I will not talk to you about ideas that do not yet have a drawing or model associated, because, at your stage as a designer, the idea is in the thing itself.
3. Constant iteration is key to understanding how I want you to work. ALL bad student projects go bad because the idea gets set too soon, and the idea precedes the actual fact. Typically a rich architectural idea takes time to get all the variables at work clarified and into surprising and rich dialogue with each other. I FIRMLY believe that most of design is figuring out the actual question you are resolving. Your project is going to change, constantly, for most of the semester. “Creativity is a patient search.” I am going to ask you at regular intervals to take me through the ALL iterations you have explored, and what you are seeing/learning as the project changes. NOTE that hand drawing and trace overlays remain one effective way to iterate, and I will be asking you to be working both in various digital platforms as well as by hand.

We will have frequent pin-ups, and reviews with visitors. I am a firm believers in the value of a critical review culture. In that culture the basis of professionalism is honesty. Honest public assessment of your own work can be a difficult experience. Review dynamics have an element of instability, and criticism can often seem personal. This is sometimes justified on the basis that developing a tough skin prepares you for practice, though that’s hollow: two wrongs do not make a right. But please note that a review, even very critical, should be a dialogue that you, as the author of the work, should take some control over. It should not be a passive experience on your part, either conceptually or actually. This requires a level of dispassionate awareness and communication on your part. What are you trying to accomplish? Why is this meaningful? What do you feel you are succeeding in? What do you understand and not understand? Present well (put yourself in the reviewers’ position before you map out what you want to say), talk back, ask questions, argue your point.

If you feel criticism you have received is unwarranted and personal rather than professional, either from me or any visiting critic, do not hesitate to speak with me about it. Note that often reviews do not discuss what you think they should. I admire the particular discourse that happens in reviews (just as I admire the particular discourse that happens in desk crits). It will often seem tangential to your work; but one definition of architecture is that it is “the activity that architects do,” and one way that a LOT of architecture happens is by projection in conversation. Your attention to the tangential discussion is as critical as your attention to the direct discussion; the onus is on you to make clear when you do not understand the relationship of what is being said to your work.

That said, in this studio you may NOT publicly present at a review a project by describing the chronological development of the design. Please re-read that last sentence, and think about it for a moment.
You may design your presentation any other way. A default possibility is to 1. Generally describe the facts of what you are proposing; 2. Describe the reasons you feel the world you are proposing is good given the specifics of the general circumstances (trajectories in site, culture, economy, material culture, etc.); and 3. Referencing the history and theory of architecture, describe why you believe this is good architecture.

**Required Reading, books:**

*The Possibility of An Absolute Architecture*, Pier Vittorio Aureli (MIT)

*Modern Architecture and Climate Design Before Air Conditioning*, Daniel Barber

**Required Reading, articles:**

TBA

**Required Material:**

While partly this can be described as what is typically required for design studio (including items necessary for hand drawing and modeling), at the same time this studio will be run online. Formats for online studio are still evolving, and we will use this semester to experiment with different exercise and presentation formats, as well as different kinds of software. That said, the basic platforms of Adobe Cloud and Rhino will almost certainly be needed.

**Adobe:**

You will invariably use Adobe software in this course. As of this writing, it seems that the Campus Computer Store was able to get a very modest discount on Adobe Creative Cloud — I think $15.00 on the price of a $240 annual subscription. Rhino is $95.00 if purchased through the IT Tech Desk.

**FINANCIAL NEED:**

Note that this fall semester Mebane funds, normally reserved for travel, have been released to aid with student support. This includes material and software support. Contact Student Affairs in the School of Architecture.

**COURSE GRADING POLICY:**

Grading will be based on four areas of performance:

1. **Ambition:** The degree of ambition in the ideas and undertaking

2. **Grasp:** The understanding of the project at hand, combined with an appropriate process of inquiry

3. **Process/effort:** The consistent and rigorous development and abundant testing of ideas
4. Resolution: The demonstration of competence, completeness, and finesse through representation and designs that responds to a range of critical positions

Your work will be evaluated on its rigor and evolution over the semester.

Grading descriptions:

A: excellent work
Project 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. Project is more than complete on all levels.

B: good work
Project is thorough, well researched, diligently pursued, and successfully completed. Student pursues ideas and suggestions presented in class and puts in effort to resolve required issues. Project is complete on all levels and demonstrates potential for excellence.

C: acceptable work
Project meets the minimum requirements. Suggestions made in class are not pursued with dedication or rigor. Project is incomplete in one or more areas.

D: poor work
Project is incomplete. Basic skills including graphic skills, model-making skills, verbal clarity or logic of presentation are not level appropriate. Student does not demonstrate the required design skill and knowledge base.

F: unacceptable work
Project is unresolved. Minimum objectives are not met. Performance is not acceptable. Note that this grade will be assigned when you 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 Dean and Program Director’s offices and with an agreement as to a new completion date. Studio work must be completed before the second week of the next design semester in which you are enrolling, according to School of Architecture policy.
ALL GRADES ARE SUBJECT TO DEDUCTIONS FOR ABSENCES, LATE WORK AND LATE ARRIVALS.

ATTENDANCE: Attendance is mandatory. Participation in discussions and work in studio is expected. The minimum penalty for more than three unexcused absences is a full letter drop in your final grade for the course. Please contact me prior to class if you expect to be late or miss class. A student who misses classes or other required activities for the observance of a religious holy day should inform me as far in advance of the absence as possible, so that arrangements can be made to complete an assignment within a reasonable time after the absence. A student who fails to complete missed work within the time allowed will be subject to the normal academic penalties.

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. Please refer to The Role of Faculty in Confronting Scholastic Dishonesty brochure published by Student Judicial Services for information on confronting students who violate scholastic dishonesty policies. For further information, visit the SJS website at http://www.utexas.edu/depts/dos/sjs/ or call 471-2841.

DISABILITIES: At the beginning of the semester, students with disabilities who need special accommodations should notify me by presenting a letter prepared by the Services for Students with Disabilities Office. To ensure that the most appropriate accommodations can be provided; students should contact the SSD Office at 471-6259 or 471-4641 TTY.

CONTACT: heymann@utexas.edu, 512-232-4083

OFFICE HOURS: By appointment, via phone or Zoom

COVID-19 REMINDERS: This class does not have an on-campus component. But, remember:

Safety and Class Participation/Masks: We will all need to make some adjustments in order to benefit from in-person classroom interactions in a safe and healthy manner. Our best protections
against spreading COVID-19 on campus are masks (defined as cloth face coverings) and staying home if you are showing symptoms. Therefore, for the benefit of everyone, this is means that all students are required to follow these important rules.

**Every student must wear a cloth face-covering properly in class and in all campus buildings at all times.** Information regarding safety protocols with and without symptoms can be found here.

**Students are encouraged to participate in documented daily symptom screening.** This means that each class day in which on-campus activities occur, students must upload certification from the symptom tracking app and confirm that they completed their symptom screening for that day to Canvas. Students should not upload the results of that screening, just the certificate that they completed it. If the symptom tracking app recommends that the student isolate rather than coming to class, then students must not return to class until cleared by a medical professional.

If a student is not wearing a cloth face-covering properly in the classroom (or any UT building), that student must leave the classroom (and building). If the student refuses to wear a cloth face covering, class will be dismissed for the remainder of the period, and the student will be subject to disciplinary action as set forth in the university’s Institutional Rules/General Conduct 11-404(a)(3). Students who have a condition that precludes the wearing of a cloth face covering must follow the procedures for obtaining an accommodation working with Services for Students with Disabilities.

**COVID Caveats:** To help keep everyone at UT and in our community safe, it is critical that students report COVID-19 symptoms and testing, regardless of test results, to University Health Services, and faculty and staff report to the HealthPoint Occupational Health Program (OHP) as soon as possible. Please see this link to understand what needs to be reported. In addition, to help understand what to do if a fellow student in the class (or the instructor or TA) tests positive for COVID, see this University Health Services link.

**IMPORTANT COURSE INFO:**

**Sharing of Course Materials is Prohibited:** No materials used in this class, including, but not limited to, lecture hand-outs, videos, assessments (quizzes, exams, papers, projects, homework assignments), in-class materials, review sheets, and additional problem sets, may be shared online or with anyone outside of the class unless you have my explicit, written permission. Unauthorized sharing of materials promotes cheating. It is a violation of the University’s Student Honor Code and an act of academic dishonesty.
I am well aware of the sites used for sharing materials, and any materials found online that are associated with you, or any suspected unauthorized sharing of materials, will be reported to Student Conduct and Academic Integrity in the Office of the Dean of Students. These reports can result in sanctions, including failure in the course.

**FERPA and Class Recordings:**

**Class Recordings:** Class recordings are reserved only for students in this class for educational purposes and are protected under FERPA. The recordings should not be shared outside the class in any form. Violation of this restriction by a student could lead to Student Misconduct proceedings.
RECLAIMING MODERNITY

Celebrating Geoffrey Bawa

https://competitions.uni.xyz
Premise

Emphasising on the lack of ornamentation and the clarity in function, structural innovation and choice of materials, modernism emerged in the early years of the 20th century in response to the drastic developments in technologies and social circumstances.

Adapting this to the tropics, meant a greater focus on context and climate - local materials, technique, art and the warm humid climate.

Offering an alternative to international modernism, Tropical or regional modernism demonstrated that architecture could reflect context, tradition and time.
Backstory

In India, Sri Lanka, the Middle East, Africa, and the Caribbean, Brazil, and Mexico; Tropical Modernism rose as a response to colonial architecture as a negation of local tradition, and context, which was known for its formal symmetrical style with a disregard for local technique and craft.

Let’s have a closer look at Sri Lanka.

Humble, aesthetic and radical, Tropical Modernism in Sri Lanka manages to reflect the country’s traditional, cultural, and historical resources without rejecting new technological influences from the West, while engaging with broader cultural and political questions.

Considered to be one of Sri Lanka’s foremost architects, Geoffrey Bawa is credited to be one the founding fathers of Tropical Modernism.
Brief

Leaving an everlasting mark on Sri Lanka's built landscape, Geoffrey Bawa's designs establish an unique, recognizable style of design inspiring architects across the world; referencing local conditions while allowing for a modern lifestyle.

Gaining recent traction with the increase in environmental consciousness, Tropical Modernism today mediates between contextual, traditional, passive sustainability and modern construction technology, as well as the international and the vernacular.

**Design challenge**: Celebrating Geoffrey Bawa's birth-centenary, explore how his principles and framework can be scaled to accommodate modern typologies or urban layouts, in this context an institute of learning and design.
Objectives

The following objectives can be a point of beginning to conceive this design. Participants can assume their own contexts and users before initiating their design process.

**Adapt**
The vernacular to modern user needs and contexts

**Explore/Experiment**
With techniques, materiality and concepts

**Context**
Response to climate, materiality and technique

**Connect/ Balance**
The old and the new, the indoors and the outdoors, function and aesthetics

https://competitions.uni.xyz
Programmatic Outline

A programmatic outline intended to host about 250 students at immediate expanse, is recommended for this challenge. Participants are recommended to craft a schematic programme based on these given segments or they can propose something new altogether.
Context

Around this time last year, Sri Lanka's Capital City of Colombo reached a milestone on its land reclamation project spanning 269 hectares, almost doubling the size of Colombo as we knew it.

Currently in the midst of its second phase, it is envisioned to be a busy financial district, with glass skyscrapers, hospitals, hotels and even a theme park.

While artistic impressions show a cityscape comparable to Dubai or London's Canary Wharf, will the Capital City still be able to reflect its roots and the local context?

How can we incorporate local building traditions, aesthetic and craft into the built environments of today, championing local materials and handicrafts alongside modern technologies?
World in conflict - 18th and 19th Century
Situated at less than 2km from the City College of Architecture, the proposed site sits opposite a canal, in the neighbourhood of Rajagiriya (a suburb of Colombo), a part of Sri Lanka’s administrative capital of Sri Jayewardenepura.

**Site Plan**

FAR 2 | 5521 sq m | 6°54’30.1"N 79°53’13.8"E

Only regulations to be followed:
Height restrictions - 7m, Setbacks of 5m on the site front and 3m on the other three sides
**Guidelines**

You have to deliver an architectural outcome on the following site, based on the given outlines.

- Recommended number of sheets/presentation images/boards:
  
  5 (Five) of size [2362px x 3544px] or [400mm x 600mm in 150 dpi] in portrait digital format (JPEG only).

Minimum 3 (Three) & No maximum sheet limit. Each image should be less than 15MB. (Do not submit PNG format)

Minimum requisite submission are sheets/boards + Cover image containing:

- Site plan (Compulsory)
- Key conceptual sections x 1 (Minimum)
- 3D views x 4
- Cover image / Thumbnail of size 2000px x 1000px or larger in aspect ratio 2:1.
- Answering 6 FAQ’s #
- This is the link for new file sizes, [here](https://competitions.uni.xyz).

#The FAQ’s have to be answered as instructed in the FAQ document in the ‘additional resources folder’.

**Rules**

+ The competitions is open for **students and professionals** from all the disciplines of design.

+ The team limit for this competition is **4 members maximum per team.**

+ You can register more than one team but they have to be registered separately.

+ Ensure that the final sheets submitted **do not include your name or any other mark of identification**. Your submission is linked to your user account which stands as your identification.

+ This is a design **ideas challenge only**. There is no built commission/realization associated with the problem.

+ In case of publication in yearbook we will reach out separately for selected entries.

**Pro-Tips**

+ Use exploded views to discuss multi levelled conceptual models better.

+ Mention sheet number on corner of every sheet.

+ Plagiarism of any idea / form / design / image will be disqualified with a notice.

+ All the sheets or images will be viewed on a digital device. e.g. Laptop screen or projector. Uploaded sheets or images will not be physically printed for evaluation. The submission hence should be prepared for digital viewing only.

+ Submit JPEG images only. (PNG will not function)

**Deadlines**

Discover the competition schedule and deadlines on the competitions page or on this link - [Schedule](https://competitions.uni.xyz).

**Resources**

This competition contains additional resources that contains a set of files useful to complete the competition submission. This folder is made available on your profile dashboard automatically as soon as you register.

**This additional resources folder of this competition contains**: Submission Format files in PSD | AI | InDD, FAQs, High Res maps, and CAD file of the site plan.
Awards

Grants of up to a total of **20,000$** can be won on this challenge. Learn more about the full conditions on the competition page here.
The entries will be judged by an international jury of the competition on the following criterions:

**Presentation**
The fundamental to a good entry is a good presentation.

**Concept/Idea**
Quality of thought and intent in pre-design phase.

**Spaces/Programme**
How the spaces are calculated and ordered.

**Design Outcome**
The final architectural outcome of the solution.

**Judging Criteria**

The judging panel can also add other criterions based on their internal discussions - which will be in line with the problem statement. Participants are advised to fulfil above given criterions first in their design.
Unyt serves as a part of UNI in the realm of typological discoveries. It intends to break the fusion of traditional design barriers and methodologies by making it a platform for experimentation. It embarks on mobilizing ideas where creators can elementally question the buildings we create. It is a research initiative dedicated to providing opportunities for designers from all domains to explore ideas that go beyond the restrictions of usual architectural discourse.

Queries: support@uni.xyz
Discover other competitions: https://competitions.uni.xyz
Facebook: https://www.facebook.com/unidesigntogether/
Instagram: https://www.instagram.com/uni.xyz/
Discover FAQ’s about this competition on our help forum here: https://help.uni.xyz/
Balancing the past, present and the future

Available on:

Institutional Access™

https://competitions.uni.xyz