ARCHITECTURE AND COMMUNITY

ARCH 4001 // LOUISIANA STATE UNIVERSITY

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Office hours by appointment

Lab: MWF, 12:30 – 4:20 PM, 30 Atkinson Hall

ARCH 4001, Architectural Design VII (6) Prereq.: ARCH 4001 or ARCH 4101. 12 hrs. studio. Service-learning course. An Honors course ARCH 4101 is available. Credit will not be given for this course and ARCH 4101. Emphasis on the advancement of sustainable communities through analysis, building design, and the study of socially responsible approaches to development and building practice.

INTRODUCTION // ARCHITECTURE AND COMMUNITY

While function, economy and beauty have endured as sentries of contemporary architecture, architects often overlook the importance of the existing fabric of the cities and communities in which they work.

"The best way to make real architecture is by letting a building evolve out of the culture and place ... without pretense ... a glimpse into what is essential to the future of American architecture, its honesty."¹


Architects have a responsibility to carefully consider the places they work. Good architecture should be driven by a fervent relationship with its place – its culture, history and people – followed by a belief in the ability of humans to better their communities without a blockbuster budget or unbridled new development. This studio will push architecture students to act as socially responsible professionals through the development of relevant, sustainable projects in their own communities. This means that we must not only consider buildings’ impact on the environment, but also on the communities in which they exist.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES //

1. Community - scale, systems - based thinking and analysis
   - Understand the role of architecture in the larger context of communities, society and the environment
   - Develop tools and methods for understanding and evaluating ecological and social complexity of built and natural environments
   - Understand, apply and critique basic principles of planning, sustainability, public design and community engagement.
   - Gain a better understanding of place through direct engagement of the culture of a specific community

2. Self - directed, group research and investigation
   - Investigate specific research questions related to planning, sustainability and public design
   - Interpret and draw appropriate conclusions from findings to determine implications for a design proposal

3. Thinking and communicating graphically
   - Effectively document and communicate research findings and design proposals to the class and the community through mapping, diagramming, written, oral and multimedia presentations and conventional 2D and 3D architectural representation

4. Understand and apply a critical approach to analysis and problem-solving
   - Investigate and understand ways that communities are developed, occupied and operated historically and today, specifically in Mid City
   - Identify the proper scale, mode and site of an appropriate architectural intervention for a community
   - Analyze and interpret the implications of an urban context on the programming, planning and design of an architectural project within a specific community
   - Write a basic architectural program based on analysis and engagement of a specific community

5. Ability to participate in group work and community settings
   - Use group discussion to decipher, analyze, and formulate questions, ideas and solutions
   - Identify personal skills that will maximize the group’s ability to complete assignments
   - Understand and engage a professional : client relationship by working with real community partners as resources of local expertise
**THE STUDIO // ACADEMIA AND COMMUNITY**

This studio aims to affect the viability of the Baton Rouge community through thoughtful design, public engagement and collaboration. We will work closely with the Mid City Redevelopment Alliance (MCRA) and the East Baton Rouge Redevelopment Authority (EBRRA) as partners in identifying neighborhoods, clients and design projects. This is a service-learning course, which “... integrates meaningful community service with instruction and reflection to enrich the learning experience, teach civic responsibility, encourage lifelong civic engagement, and strengthen communities for the common good.” A quality service-learning experience demonstrates excellence in community service and excellence in education. It should address critical community needs and build student leadership skills, but also reinforce excellence in design. Students will spend a significant part of the semester directly engaging community members and organizations to identify issues and assess community needs related to a specific directive such as health care or education as the basis of an appropriate architectural project. Students will develop design parameters and an architectural program based on analysis of a specific site and the community’s needs. From program development to material selection, the project will focus on long-term environmental, economic and social sustainability. This requires careful consideration of the community’s capability to sustain the viability of a given project. It will require significant community participation and collaboration as well as a critical understanding of place. In this context, students will deal directly with the social, political, legal, and economic contexts that shape the design and development of buildings and architectural settings.

**THE SITE // MID CITY // BATON ROUGE**

With the advent of interstate highways and cheap suburban land, many American cities have surged outward, leaving fading infrastructure, lost public spaces and a poor image in favor of the newness found in tract houses and strip malls. Baton Rouge is no exception. Investment in the older core of our city is crucial to its future. This studio will focus on Mid City - an essential part of the urban core of Baton Rouge. While this area is currently confronted with issues of poverty, crime and blighted properties, it is a diverse, centrally located, economically valuable part of Baton Rouge. Mid City will serve as fertile ground for addressing these issues that we face as a modern society. Do instances of community still exist in the inner cores of our cities? Can we identify them? Study them? Harness or transform them through architecture? How might we explore community beyond mere planning? We will use these questions as the framework and driving motivation for this studio.

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This is a communication intensive course which meets all of the requirements set forth by LSU’s Communication Across the Curriculum program including the following: instruction and assignments emphasizing informal and formal Written and Technological communication; teaching of discipline-specific communication techniques; use of 3 to 5 draft/feedback revisions for learning; practice of ethical and professional work standards; 40% of the course grade rooted in communication based work; and a student to faculty ratio no greater than 35:1. The primary outlet for communication intensive learning will be the studio blog (http://www.midcitystudio.org). Following prompts, students will be required to respond to reflection exercises on the studio blog throughout the semester as well as post weekly updates of group work. Students pursuing Distinguished Communication certification may use this CI course for credit. For more information about the Distinguished Communicator program, visit www.cxc.lsu.edu. Students may be required to work with the staff of the Communication Studio (located in the Design Building) in order to develop their speaking and writing skills. The CxC Studio is a useful resource that you should feel free to use for any of your classes. They are particularly adept at providing writing assistance, portfolio assistance, as well as helping you hone your public speaking skills.

PHASE I // ANALYSIS, ENGAGEMENT, PROGRAMMING + PLANNING

We will follow a rigorous process of immersion, research and brainstorming to make connections and draw conclusions in pursuit of an appropriate architectural program for the St. Vincent de Paul Society in Mid City. This project will focus on the geographical area between Government Street and North Boulevard in Mid City from 19th Street to the Railroad tracks. It is important to take a critical approach to the way we understand this part of Mid City – it is not just a neighborhood or geographical area, but a complex system of social and cultural values, people, infrastructure, politics, history and climate. During this phase we will engage the community and develop the parameters and program for an appropriate architectural project that serves the needs of the community. It will culminate in a community event to launch the design phase of the studio. You will be organized into groups with specific tasks to carry out for the studio. Each research group is responsible for weekly updates to the studio blog (http://www.midcitystudio.org) which will comprise part of the CxC (communication across the curriculum) part of this course – see above. You will receive more detailed instruction in class on how to complete this requirement.

PHASE II // DESIGN, REVIEW, PUBLISH

This second phase of the semester will be spent proposing designs for the project developed in Phase I. You will work in design groups of three students. In November, we will stop designing and come together to host a public pinup as part of Mid City’s White Light Night (see calendar). Following the pinup, students will revise design work based on public feedback and digitally publish the work on the studio blog. The blog publication will be utilized as visual aid for a formal, final presentation of your work to faculty and community partners.

STUDIO CULTURE

We will have a specified studio space that will act as our gathering place. It is where we will have in-class discussions, pinups, brainstorming and otherwise navigate our way through the semester. You must remember that we are in this together and that we are a team. We have to stay positive, work collaboratively and leave our egos at the door in pursuit of something bigger than ourselves. This semester will be difficult and unfamiliar, but it will be good. Our hope is to become better designers, better professionals and better collaborators - our mission is to make a positive impact on our communities. Mutual respect, openness, positivity and hard work are of utmost importance, but all are second to a comfortable and welcoming atmosphere in which you will begin to discover who you are as future architecture and as global citizens.

EVALUATION
At the conclusion of this course the student will have completed the following:

- Group research activities and presentations to the class, school and community partners
- Regularly contribute to the studio blog via group updates and personal reflection exercises
- Contribute to the progress and daily operation of the studio and blog
- In-class design charrettes and group brainstorming activities
- Community engagement activities
- Development and proposal of relevant design solutions to problems defined during the course
- Design presentations to the class, faculty and selected jurors as well as community partners
- Production of final presentation drawings and contributions to the studio blog

The following activities will be evaluated for the grade percentages below. Grades will be given at the completion of each phase. Individual participation in activities, contributions to studio operations, as well as behavior and participation in group work will be evaluated as part of your professionalism grade.

- Professionalism / Community Engagement 20% (5% CxC – student perspective blog entries)
- Phase I (research + development) 30% (10% CxC – multimedia blog content)
- Phase II (design) 40% (10% CxC – multimedia blog content)
- Final Presentation 15% (15% CxC – final multimedia presentation)

Students are evaluated on submitted work, quality of inquiry, class participation, and progress on assigned projects. A passing grade will not be awarded for simple completion of requirements (as an English paper with all 1000 required words would not be guaranteed a passing grade). Conversely, an incomplete project may earn a passing grade if the instructor notes significant development, learning and intellectual risk-taking. Late and incomplete work will only be accepted at the instructor’s discretion and will be downgraded for lateness. Assignments not turned in on time will automatically lose one whole letter grade. Every deadline missed thereafter in agreement with the instructor will result in the loss of another letter grade. Any missed deadlines not discussed with the instructor will result in a zero (0) for the given assignment. The following definitions of letter grades, in bold, are from the University General Catalog, followed by more detailed explanations for this course:

A  **Distinguished mastery of the course material.** “A” work (1) responds fully to the assignment; 2) expresses its purpose clearly and persuasively; 3) has a rigorous, consistent and in-depth process; 4) has well organized and supported reasoning; 5) uses an appropriate graphic language; 6) is clearly verbally articulated; 7) maintains a level of excellence throughout the investigation. “A” projects interrogate the assigned problem and propose well-reasoned, well-articulated responses.

B  **Good mastery of course material.** “B” work realizes (1) through (6) competently, often with points of excellence. “B” projects fully understand the assigned problem and propose good solutions.

C  **Acceptable mastery of course material.** “C” work realizes (1) through (6) adequately but contain some errors or flaws. “C” projects show some understanding of the problem and propose sufficient solutions.

D  **Minimally acceptable achievement.** “D” work fails to realize (1) through (6) and contains several serious errors or flaws. “D” projects show little understanding of the problem and propose flawed solutions.

F  **Failing.** “F” work fails to realize (1) through (6) and contains many minor and serious errors or flaws. “F” projects show no understanding of the problem and propose illogical and unsatisfactory solutions.

**LSUSTUDENT TRIP INSURANCE POLICY // all links available on course Moodle**

Student Trip Travel Insurance provides coverage for students attending or participating in off-campus functions or activities.
The Student Trip Travel Policy is a minimal medical policy for accidents only. (Injury sustained while skiing, tubing, tobogganing, or sledding is not covered under this policy.) In the event of illness, the student participant must file through his/her personal health insurance. Departments, student groups/organizations and individuals participating in Service Learning can simply request insurance coverage via an on-line form for groups/organizations or individual/service learning at no cost for LSU students. To request Student Trip Travel Insurance, go to https://sites01.lsu.edu/wp/riskmgt/triptravelservice and complete the on-line Trip Travel Request Form. The request form will be automatically forwarded to the LSU Risk Management Office. The department/group/organization submitting the form will also receive a computer generated confirmation email. A list of participants must be kept on file with the School of Architecture in the event that verification is needed. If you submitted a request for Student Trip Travel Insurance and you need to change the date or venue, please notify LSU Risk Management by responding to the confirmation email you received at the time of your request.

If a University owned or rented vehicle is the mode of transportation, the driver must be an employee of the University, be within the course and scope of their work and have taken the On-Line Safe Driver Course offered through Environmental Health and Safety. Students are not authorized to operate a University owned or rented vehicle. For additional information about the On-Line Safe Driver Course, go https://sites01.lsu.edu/wp/ehs/on-line-safe-drivers-course-information/. An approved Travel Authorization Form must be completed and submitted to Accounts Payable and Travel. For more information regarding travel regulations, please visit the LSU Accounts Payable and Travel website: http://www.fas.lsu.edu/AcctServices/acctpay/

ATTENDANCE / PARTICIPATION

Students are expected to attend all listed / scheduled excursions and activities including all School of Architecture lectures, The Center for Planning Excellence Smart Growth Summit (date TBD), Healthy Neighborhoods Day (date TBD), group meetings and all planned community engagement events and subsequent cleanup. Students will be required to organize and attend meetings and presentations with community partners throughout the duration of the semester. Punctuality is very important, especially when the group is travelling together to a specific location for a scheduled tour or field trip. More than three unexcused absences may constitute grounds for placement on attendance probation (see PS-22 Student Absence General Policy). Arriving late or leaving early, unless authorized by the instructor, will be considered unprofessional behavior and will affect your professionalism grade. Scheduled events and activities will occasionally take place outside of scheduled studio time. You will be responsible for ensuring that this coordinates with work schedules and other classes. If a written excuse is needed, please give faculty a week’s notice.

INDIVIDUALS NEEDING ACCOMMODATION

Any student needing special accommodations due to a disability must inform the instructor at the start of the semester and mutually develop an accessibility plan.

ACADEMIC HONESTY
Academic misconduct is defined in the Code of Student Conduct (rev. March 1990) and each student must read and understand what constitutes academic misconduct, and the policies and procedures that govern the Code’s enforcement. Any student found guilty of committing an act of academic dishonesty will receive appropriate disciplinary action. Visit: http://appl003.lsu.edu/slas/dos.nsf/$Content/Student+Handbook?OpenDocument

RESOURCES

Access to CADGIS Services: Art and Design Students can use services at the CADGIS Lab on the second floor in conjunction with their work in the Art and Design Studio. CADGIS services include large format printing, oversize scanning, equipment check out, file storage and an array of design and presentation software. For more information visit their website: http://www.cadgis.lsu.edu/

COMPUTER PROGRAM REQUIREMENTS

This course will be using computer graphics for presentation purposes. Students must own legal student licenses for software. Special price packages (and some free software) have been acquired for LSU students and are available via Tigerware on your PAWS account (computing services > software downloads).

REQUIRED TEXTBOOKS

You will be regularly assigned readings throughout the semester. Some may serve as prompts for blog entries. Readings will be made available in PDF on the course Moodle or via email upon request.