ARCH 203 Visualizing and Experiencing the Built Environment

CATALOGUE COURSE DESCRIPTION
Methods for direct observation and recording of the directly experienced built environment are learned through lectures, readings, exercises and direct field experience. Techniques used for acquiring place understanding include drawing, diagramming, photographing, and writing.

INTENT
This course is intended to introduce the processes of visualization in relation to the alert experience of built environments and their inhabitation. Visualizing the built environment is recognition of places and activities, their organization, and the processes of change they embody. Visualization is thus a process of directly seeing and engaging places in order to discern conditions and finding the means to reflect on the findings. Reflection requires not only such direct engagement, but also systematic means for considering experience across multiple times and seasons as well as influenced by culture and dynamic city life. Students are expected to develop an urban sensibility and the ability to use non-verbal as well as verbal methods of inquiry for appreciating the spatial structure and life of built environments.

ASSIGNMENTS
There are three major kinds of assignments due throughout the semester, each with their own specific character and deliverables.

Quizzes: Diagrams, drawings, and brief essays
Exercises: Diagrams, drawings, notes, and photographs documented in the sketchbook
Final Project

Requirements for each major assignment will be handed out in writing. Daily or weekly assignments may be given verbally and may differ from section to section. Full completion of all assigned work is critical to success in this course. Assignments that do not reflect adequate progress or completion will not be discussed during desk critiques, pin-ups and reviews.

SCHEDULE
Week 1 Visualization methods to understand physical objects and spatial form: DIAGRAMS as means for INVESTIGATION and DISCOVERY of parts and wholes (Exercise One: diagrams and notes)
Week 2 Visualization methods to understand physical objects and spatial form: DRAWINGS to SEE form and surface and space (Exercise Two: drawings)
Week 3 Visualization methods to understand physical objects and spatial form: DRAWINGS to explore and document SPATIAL STRUCTURE of solid and void (Exercise Three)
Week 4 Visualization methods to understand physical objects and spatial form: CASE STUDY as an exercise to use diagrams and drawings and notes to understand place and experience (Exercise Four)
Week 5  Visualization methods to understand physical objects and spatial form: CASE STUDY continuation as an exercise to use diagrams and drawings and notes to understand place and experience (Exercise Four continued)

Week 6  Quiz One: diagrams, drawings and brief essays

Introduction to methods for observing and documenting life in public space

Week 7  Methods for observing and documenting life in public space: DIAGRAMS to record spatial form and human behaviors through time (Exercise Five)

Week 8  Methods for observing and documenting life in public space: CASE STUDY as an exercise to use diagrams and drawings and notes to record spatial form and human behaviors through time (Exercise Six)

Week 9  Methods for observing and documenting life in public space: CASE STUDY continuation as an exercise to use diagrams and drawings and notes to record spatial form and human behaviors through time (Exercise Six continued)

Week 10 Experiencing the Built Environment: LECTURE on aesthetic experience and brief FIELD STUDY using diagrams and notes about the life of the senses (Exercise Seven)

Week 11 Inquiries to understand experiencing the built environment: FIELD TRIPS to explore the processes of “entering and leaving” using diagrams, photographs and notes (Exercise Eight)

Week 12 Inquiries to understand experiencing the built environment: FIELD TRIPS to explore “being there” using drawings, photographs and notes (Exercise Nine)

Week 13 QUIZ TWO: diagrams, drawings and brief essays

FIELD TRIP to explore “The City at Eye Level” (Exercise Ten: Photographic essay of a selected public space)

Week 14 FIELD TRIP to explore “The City at Eye Level” (Exercise Eleven: Diagrams and written narrative of a selected public space)

Week 15 Summary and class discussion

Final Consult USC Schedule of Classes (Final Project Due)

REQUIRED TEXTS


SKETCHBOOK
Students are required to maintain a studio sketchbook. It is meant to be a thorough and well-organized record of and instrument for critical inquiry and design process. The sketchbook is to include (freehand and/or digitally produced) generative diagrams and design sketches, weekly process drawings, notes/diagrams/sketches from desk critiques, graphic analysis of relevant precedents, class/lecture/reading notes, as well as any other material relevant to design exploration in this course. Date and label all entries clearly and in a consistent manner. Sketchbooks will be collected and graded periodically during the semester.

PORTFOLIO
Each student will be required to submit a portfolio at the end of the semester. The content should be thoughtfully presented in a letter size (8.5”x11”) portfolio. All assignments must be included in the portfolio, so students are advised to regularly document all work.

EVALUATION AND GRADING
Final grade evaluations will be based on the following breakdown:

- Two Quizzes, 20%
- Eleven exercises (documented in sketchbook), 55%
- Final Project 15%
- Weekly Preparation and Class Contributions, 10%

Students are required to attend all classes and field trips. Work will be evaluated periodically so that you have an indication of your progress. Unsatisfactory performance warnings will be issued to students whose work does not meet minimum requirements.

A minimum grade of ‘C’ is required to continue on to ARCH 303, ARCH 403 sequence. Consult University polices for IN (incomplete) grades and deadlines for withdrawal (‘W’ grade).

University guidelines on plagiarism pertain to original design work. Students are expected to do all of their own design and presentation work. Substantial assistance in the form of model construction and drawing preparation, or deliberate appropriation of the design work of others will be considered non-original work and will be treated as plagiarism. See “Academic Integrity” section below for more information.

ACADEMIC INTEGRITY
USC seeks to maintain an optimal learning environment. General principles of academic honesty include the concept of respect for the intellectual property of others, the expectation that individual work will be submitted unless otherwise allowed by an instructor, and the
obligations both to protect one’s own academic work from misuse by others as well as to avoid using another’s work as one’s own. All students are expected to understand and abide by these principles.

Scampus, the Student Guidebook, contains the Student Conduct Code in Section 11.00, while the recommended sanctions are located in Appendix A: http://www.usc.edu/dept/publications/SCAMPUS/gov/.

Students will be referred to the Office of Student Judicial Affairs and Community Standards for further review, should there be any suspicion of academic dishonesty. The Review process can be found at: http://www.usc.edu/student-affairs/SJACS/.

DISABILITY ACCOMMODATIONS

Students requesting academic or physical accommodations based on disability are required to register with Disability Services and Programs (DSP) each semester. Letters of verification for approved accommodations from DSP must be delivered to your instructor at the beginning of the semester. DSP is located in STU 310 and is open 8:30 a.m. to 5:00 p.m., Monday through Friday. Phone DSP at (213) 740-0776.

SUSTAINABILITY INITIATIVE

The School of Architecture has adopted the 2010 Initiative for Sustainability. Solutions to design problems must engage the environment in a way that dramatically reduces or eliminates the need for fossil fuel.