

M.Arch Design Course IV, 2026AW

College of Architecture and Urban Planning- CAUP, Tongji University

(International Joint Design) **Shanghai Lab: Sustainable Renewal on Circular Regeneration at the Neighborhood and Unit Scale**

Course Director: Liu Kan

Teaching Team: Liu Kan, Hua Xiahong

Teaching Assistant: Liu Hong

Class Time: Thursdays, Periods 1–4, 8:00–11:35, 4×16 weeks

Language of Instruction: English

Venue: Building E, Room 206



OVERVIEW

"Shanghai Lab" is a Series M.Arch Design Course IV offered by the Department of Architecture, College of Architecture and Urban Planning, Tongji University, under the pedagogical framework of "City as Method." The 2026 Shanghai Lab focuses on the Circular Economy Action Plan, exploring how to achieve sustainable and resilient architectural and urban spatial renewal around the concepts and utilization methods of circular regeneration at the neighborhood/unit scale within Shanghai's urban regeneration process.

Through urban experience, urban observation, urban clues, and urban discovery, the course will guide students to progressively understand the critical value and significance of enhancing architectural and urban spatial quality for livable cities. Students will discover the concept of Holistic Design as manifested in the neighborhood/unit system of architecture, urban space, and infrastructure, as well as the interaction mechanisms between architectural and urban spaces. The course investigates sustainable pathways for spatial self-regeneration amid economic cyclical changes, explores the internal logic and economic value of aligning cultural and social perspectives with spatial restructuring in urban renewal, and ultimately

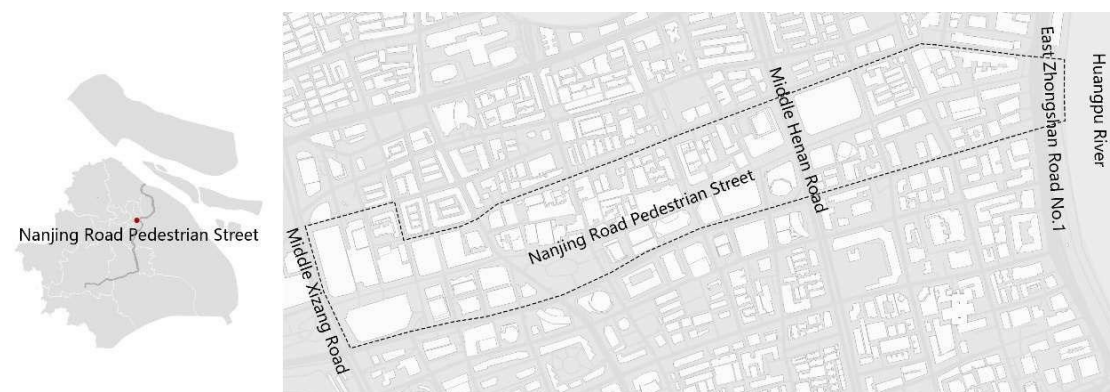
aims to enable everyone to enjoy more spatial and temporal opportunities and more equitable participation and integration into diverse architectural and urban environments.

The study site is located on Nanjing Road Pedestrian area in Huangpu District, Shanghai. The research area extends approximately 1.5 kilometers in total length, from Xizang Middle Road in the west to the Huangpu River in the east. Situated in the heart of Shanghai, Nanjing Road Pedestrian area connects People's Square to the west and the Bund's historical waterfront complex to the east. It stands as a quintessential and continuous core sample of the evolution of Shanghai's urban commercial space since the city's opening as a treaty port.

As a core historical district of Shanghai, Nanjing Road has been in a constant state of dynamic transformation in terms of architectural form and spatial configuration. From the preservation and restoration of historic buildings to the comprehensive adjustment of commercial business mix; from the conversion of the section between Xizang Middle Road and Henan Middle Road into a full-time pedestrian mall in 1999 to the completion of the eastern extension's pedestrianization in 2020, Nanjing Road has, over its century-long temporal-spatial evolution, continuously responded to the city's developmental context and promoted multi-layered systemic spatial restructuring across urban, architectural, and infrastructural scales.

At the same time, Nanjing Road Pedestrian area faces multiple spatial-structural dilemmas: homogenization of business types leads to convergence of commercial frontages; historical and cultural resources have not yet been effectively translated into narrative scenarios; and a significant spatial fragmentation exists between the main street and its backstreets. Consequently, the district is caught in a spatial efficiency paradox of "high foot traffic, low dwell time."

The course's research and design process involves both group collaborative work and individual independent outcomes. Ranging from urban design to architectural design, the studio takes Nanjing Road Pedestrian Mall as a spatial specimen and research subject to explore spatial models, pathways, and design methodologies for circular regeneration within the contemporary urban context.



INTRODUCTION

Phase 1: Urban Experience (2 weeks)

Exercise: Urban Experience. Emphasizes students' effective and comprehensive understanding, through experiential engagement, of the interaction mechanisms between urban space and people in daily life. Students will discover patterns of spatial efficiency correlation and the resulting expressions of spatial quality. Students are required to fully immerse themselves in the experience and rapidly define valid and reasonable neighborhood/unit boundaries, exploring how to construct interactions between people and spatial functions within an open spatial framework. Emphasis is placed on diagrammatic and multimedia-based expressive communication.

Phase 2: Urban Observation (3 weeks)

Exercise: Urban Observation. Investigates how simple sustainability can be achieved through economic circulation in everyday urban life, and how public spaces can bring together broader audiences and generate multiple values through resilience and inclusiveness. Students will explore sources of sustainability derived from daily living and working patterns. Observation will be combined with specific urban spatial case studies to recognize and understand the underlying causes of urban renewal, and to develop reasonable strategies and methodological principles.

Phase 3: Urban Design (Group Work) (5 weeks)

Exercise: Urban Design. Focusing on the approximately 1.5-kilometer stretch of Nanjing Road Pedestrian Mall in Huangpu District, Shanghai, students will analyze the surrounding spatial characteristics. From the perspective of people and space, the studio investigates how urban, architectural, and infrastructural elements, along with slow-traffic systems, can accommodate the spatial relationships among multiple factors—commerce, residence, daily life, culture, education, etc.—within high-density urban units. Through specific urban design strategies, students will propose renewal approaches and feasible plans that link economic value with everyday life.

Phase 4: Architectural Design (Individual Work) (5 weeks)

Exercise: Architectural Design. Based on the outcomes of the group urban design work, students will undertake specific renewal and renovation design at the architectural scale. Task assignments will be based on the depth of architectural schematic design, requiring the completion of corresponding design work alongside the systematic proposal of building and urban spatial renewal strategies and schemes informed by the concept of economic circulation. Deliverables include basic schematic manual models, logical diagrams, and architectural design drawings.

Phase 5: Design Review and Exhibition (1 week)

Integrating the design and research outcomes from the previous four phases, the course will culminate in a final expert review and defense session in the format of an exhibition and critique.

INSTRUCTOR INFORMATION

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FIRST LESSON

Date & Venue: September 17, 2026, Tongji University, Building E, Room 206

