

How to expand your discipline and keep it relevant in transformative times

Teachers in Charge: Pr. Ole Bouman

Teaching team: Assistant professor: Pr. Weng Chao

Enrolled Students: 10 (including international students)

Time: Monday 7:00 pm – 8:35 pm, Thursday 7:00-8:35 pm. 17 weeks

Venue: D515



A kangaroo jumps past a burning house in Lake Conjola, Australia in December 2019. That season's bushfires were among the worst the country had ever seen, with nearly three billion animals killed or displaced.



project by Pritzker Prize 2024 winning architect Riken Yamamoto.



Facing Mount Ararat, Turkiye. Scene from Cycling Journey to the East 2024 by Ole Bouman.

Overview:

This course aims to help students understand the massive challenges architecture is facing in our contemporary society and explore how the discipline can deepen its resilience, and expand its boundaries in response to technological innovation, societal needs, environmental challenges, and cultural changes.

Through case studies, theoretical discussions, and hands-on practice, students will learn how to conceive of and design forward-thinking architectural works and address the rapidly changing social and technological landscape.

Introduction:

Architecture as a discipline is under severe pressure. BIM, Automation, AI, and other technological breakthroughs are revolutionizing the profession from within. Ecological and other major issues challenge all what we know and what we are capable of as architects from without. Meanwhile, the market demand for a specific service called “architecture”, and hence for professionals called “architects”, is on the wane.

The common way to respond in architecture is by innovation of the successive parts of the design + build process. New ways to design. New ways to prepare. New ways to construct. New ways to manage. But the core qualities remain the same. Architects design buildings. Construction engineers prepare the execution. Contractors build them. Building managers manage them. Nothing really happens in the way we want to organize our spaces in terms of the fundamental features of architecture: shelter, occupation, enclosure, symbolism etcetera. Nothing really happens to change the paradigm of bigger + better, faster + fitter. How can we find a new architecture of architecture, that comprehensively respects the new realities of (human) life on earth? How can we find new balance not despite architecture, but thanks to it.

In other words, this course will explore how architecture can remain relevant in times of transformation.

The studio will be divided by the following stages:

The Gap between Urgency and Practice:

- Analyze the evolution of architecture from the Industrial Revolution to the Information Age.
- Discuss how architecture responds to societal needs, cultural changes, and environmental challenges across the decades.
- Theorize the current gap between urgency and practice.

Technological and Social Innovation in Architecture:

- Understand the concept of value chain in architecture.
- Study the nature of innovation in architecture from the era of modernism to today.
- Explore how new technologies are changing architectural design and construction methods through case studies.
- Define a concept of “the architecture of architecture” as a discipline.

Strategies of Innovation:

- Discuss how architecture can be brought back in balance with contemporary needs, such as renewable energy, circularity, social equity, cultural diversity, human rights.
- Initiate an agenda for strategic innovation
- Identify overlaps with other disciplines such as environmental science, urban planning, art, and engineering.
- Develop a prototype to exemplify the above.

Objectives:

- Gain a comprehensive understanding of the transformations in architecture and the challenges it faces in modern society, by strengthening strategic skills.
- Analyze and design architectural solutions that meet the needs of sustainability, social equity, and cultural values.

- Apply modern architectural technologies, digital tools, and cross-disciplinary knowledge to creatively solve complex design problems.
- Develop critical thinking skills, combining a global perspective with local practices, driving the relevance and innovation of architecture in a transformative era.

Methods:

We will implement a pedagogic methodology in which the students will go from identifying urgencies, developing concepts, design strategies and eventually translate them into project agendas and form.

From the classical pedagogic science we will follow the approaches listed down below:

- Flipped classroom. Students will lead the class when presenting their proposals.
- Observation by cycling
 - Concrete experience
 - Reflective Observation (sketching, interviewing, filming)
 - Abstract Conceptualization (diagnose, prototyping, modeling, testing)
 - Active Experimentation (prototypes, testing, actual construction)

The students will be asked to map both their own reflections on the topic and their research results, as a previous stage for their project. Personal and cultural backgrounds are also important to enrich the final results.

Information of the teacher in charge:

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