

Description

Why would architects write computer programs? Why would architects draw? This studio suggests one answer to both of those questions: architecture thrives within media that extend the capacity of the individual human author while simultaneously limiting, filtering or structuring the domain of inquiry. Drawing and writing computer programs—“coding” for short—require mastery of instruments, deployment of knowledge, and definition of line. As a result, coding and drawing are transformative. They can transform our ideas in the pursuit of architecture, certainly. But they can also transform architecture, thereby allowing us to cultivate ideas in the pursuit of new architecture. To begin this studio, students will design a coded line-based representational system specific to one portion of an existing built work of architecture. Lines will be taxed to perform that many hundred lines of code, in multiple ways. It is expected and multiple weeks of research, many thousands of lines on paper, experimentation and critique will be required investment for the reward of a drawing that is simultaneously pictorial, analytic, projected, formal, atmospheric, and measured. Python will be our programming language, pen plotters will be our mark-making machine, and engravings and hatched terrain relief maps will be our references. Gradually, we will wean ourselves off of the building as referent and begin to identify and refine salient features, problems, and ambiguities in the drawing. Then, we’ll work in reverse. Drawing will lead to a construct, which will be interpreted as the portion of a building, which be extended in self-evident terms into a resolved architectural proposition for a built project in the landscape.

Advanced Studio:
Architecture leads
to drawing of
architecture leads
to drawing leads to
architecture

Pedagogy and Expectations

As an advanced studio, this course aims to convolve a research agenda with an educational agenda. Students are asked to confront and produce (and combine) questions, techniques, methods, and products that are new to them and new to the discipline. Process and product will be subject to rigorous critique. This studio will rely on and leverage the foundational education. Students will continually be asked to operate at their “highest level of craft and intellectual acuity to date” while simultaneously critiquing and advancing individual, communal, and disciplinary conventions and knowledge.

This studio will include technical instruction and an inquiry into the “topic” of computation. Our agenda is for technique to influence concept and the reverse: concept influencing technique. As has been the case throughout the foundational core of this curriculum, thinking and making will be seen as indistinguishable.

Grading and Evaluation

Process and product will both be evaluated together. Iteration and other strategies for asserting methodological rigor will be essential for student success. Students will be evaluated for their participation (through their work and their verbal engagement) in every studio session. Students are expected to respond to prompts provided in each assignment brief as well as those offered through in class discussion and critique. RISD defines final letter grades as follows: A Excellence; B Above Average; C Average (successfully fulfilled all course requirements); D Below Average (course requirements minimally met); F Failing Grade (course requirements not met)

Attendance

This is a fast paced studio with little opportunity for redundancy. Absences, excused or otherwise, will set a student back and will be difficult to make up.

Advice

Assignment sheets are carefully crafted. They are law of the land. Read them over and over, carefully. Some aspects of the project briefs will be open ended. Embrace that flexibility. Some aspects of the project briefs are rigidly specific. Embrace those limits. Finally, remember to be comfortable with ambiguity, especially the kind of ambiguity that is specific.

Tentative Schedule

Phase 1: Draw a Building: Review March 10

Phase 2: Draw some More: Due March 24

Intermission: Analytic Writing in pursuit of a Building Project: Review April 11

Phase 3: Building in the Landscape: Final review week of May 23

NAAB

This course satisfies the following conditions for accreditation by the National Architectural Accrediting Board, Inc: Design Thinking

Department/Institution Academic Policy

Please refer to the “Studio Culture” and “Rules and Regulations” statements on the BEB students resource site.