

USC ARCHITECTURE

Centre d'Etude d'Architecture et d'Urbanisme
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ARCH 425,426 - FIELD STUDIES IN ARCHITECTURE AND TECHNOLOGY

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SYLLABUS

PEDAGOGICAL GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

This course is an advanced course in field research techniques that focuses on those activities the architect typically engages to complement the work inside his office/studio. One of the most important aspects of field research is the opportunity to gain insight into the discrete design language, building proposition and construction process of specific periods/architects/buildings. It is an occasion to discover not only the tenets upon which an architect bases his work, but allows one to understand and appreciate the complex relationship between a building, its site and the cultural/theoretical context in which it was constructed. Through photo documentation and the production of sketches, measured drawings, diagrams and text you will explore how these external forces influence/direct the form and shape of the architectural response.

The course will be divided into four main bodies of investigation and will be discussed in the following order:

1. **Cultural/Theoretical Context** – This initial phase will situate the building in the broader context of architectural theory, debates and preoccupations that characterize the cultural climate of the era. What critical cultural, political, social and economic circumstances define, influence and distinguish the era? Our inquiry will include parallel discussions about the influence of philosophy, art, cinema and other forms of cultural expression.
2. **City/Site Context** – In this second phase we will discuss how the physical character/quality of spaces, scales and textures of the city and specific site influence the development of the building. In addition, we will discuss the building as an agent for urban change. Lastly, we will explore how urban rituals and events are reconfigured as a result of the building's construction.
3. **The architect** – We will look at recurring themes utilized by the architect. We will investigate the working methods of the architect and those issues that best define his practice.

The Building Proposal – will focus on the building craft as a vehicle for understanding construction ideas. Discussions of building systems will be elaborated on by specific inquiry into the tectonic configuration of the building components. We will critically examine the fundamental spatial, structural and organizational elements of the building to evaluate the success of the architectural responses to the functional purposes and the surrounding context. A typological analysis of the principle ordering systems and their hierarchy will enable students to understand and gauge the physical determinants that contribute to the making of successful architecture.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS & EVALUATION

This course will rely principally on fieldtrips, class discussions and research photo documentation in order to developing a body of information and method of critique. The fieldtrips will provide an opportunity for firsthand observation and documentation of relationships between the buildings and their context. Students will be challenged to articulate the differences between conventional construction and the analysis of the specific context, space, organization and tectonics.

Verbal Presentation Accompanied by Slides	50%
Course Participation	10%
Final Drawings + Diagrams Booklet	30%
Outline, Presentation Draft, Bibliography	10%

The course will meet 2 hours twice a week