Everything began with objects, yet there is no longer a system of objects. The critique of objects was based on signs saturated with meaning, along with their phantasies and unconscious logic as well as their prestigious differential logic. Jean Baudrillard, The Ecstasy of Communication

Visible Knowledge: Tools for Learning to Un-Dō

Architecture is a key component of our built environment in many ways. Its presence glosses entire cities, but the building, perhaps the main feature of architecture, is not the sole figure within this complex scenario. Architecture is the design that surrounds us, but also the relations between our hand-size design objects and our city-wide aspirations. Architecture is part of a larger cultural apparatus, and it is a character that both interacts and creates a wide mode of social forms of engagement. Architecture is design and simultaneously the dialogue to the culture that is contained within and outside of it. Architecture is both the visible and the invisible that encompasses culture, and the ideas and concepts that produce it, visually and conceptually. This course will take the form of an architectural studio, New York City will provide the background to develop our projects, and it will also be the place where we develop our sketchbooks, understand architecture and visual culture with concrete examples, and where we will contest our reading assignments.
studio:  
a. the building or room where an artist works  
b. a place where people go to learn, practice, or study an art (such as singing, dancing, or acting)  
c. a place where movies are made  

As such, this course should be conceived as a studio. In definition, a studio is whatever room or building where and artist, and architect, a musician, and actor, performs her or his duties. But also a studio is a place for experimentation, for learning, for practicing, for doing and redoing until you get to a desirable outcome. A studio is also the space for making things, to draw, to model, to argue, test and contest your own ideas. Our studio will be the university, as well as the city, and the spaces and times in between these.

visible:  
a. able to be seen  
b. easily seen or understood  
c. known to or noticed by the public  

knowledge:  
a. Range of mental perception; awareness; ken.  
b. The fact or state of having a correct idea or understanding of something; the possession of information about something.  

tools:  
a. ‘Any instrument of manual operation’; a mechanical implement for working upon something, as by cutting, striking, rubbing, or other process, in any manual art or industry; a means of effecting something; an instrument.  

learn:  
a. To acquire knowledge.  
b. To acquire knowledge of a subject or matter; to receive instruction.  

un:  
a. Expressing reversal or deprivation.  
dō:  
a. To give, to confer.  
docēo:  
a. To teach.  
doctus:  
a. Learned.  
doctor:  
a. Teacher.  
docilis:  
a. Teachable, apt to learn.  
docile:  
a. Apt to be taught; ready and willing to receive instruction; teachable.  
b. Submissive to training; tractable, manageable.  

discipline:  
a. Instruction imparted to disciples or scholars.  
b. A branch of instruction or education; a department of learning or knowledge.  
c. To train to habits of order and subordination;  
d. To subject to ecclesiastical discipline.  

un-dō:  
a. To deprive of disciplinary knowledge.  
b. To learn to reverse what is given.  
c. To reverse docility.  

Architecture and visual culture are in continuous dialogues with system of objects, of physical, virtual, conceptual and cultural objects. Following Jean Baudrillard assertion that there is no clear system of objects that are capable of containing the meaning they were assigned, we will create our own system of understanding —and awareness— of our built environment. In this course we will work in analytical terms to make things visible. By making things visible we are referring to exposing what could be the invisible systems or orders of objects and events in daily life, ranging from the scale of our body (awareness), to the scale of the city (understanding). A system of order implies the identification of rules and limits, of constraints, and of defining an argument for the construction of a consistent visualizing apparatus. For the course exercises and projects we will consider the following concepts as reference to nurture our analytical thinking:

Design as system, discovery and research process, visibility (cutting, peeling, smashing, juxtaposing, overlaying, dislocating, reflecting, placing, positioning, locating, revealing), Diagrams, Space, Program, Methods, Critique, Operations, Projections, Time, Translation and Communication.
This introductory studio course for non-majors approaches design as an analytical, representational and productive tool. Emphasis will be made on the development of a methodology for creating systems of orders for making things visible. Students are encouraged to experiment with various modes of representation (photographic collage, sketching, orthographic drawing, physical models) to translate their ideas into a visualization piece.

Projects

During the course of the semester we will develop a series of five (5) exercises that will constitute a larger project when considered together. This is, all work will be accumulative, we will build up a body of work mostly by drawing (hand and technically), modeling physical objects and creating mixed media presentations. Exercises will be assigned independently during the semester as shown on the schedule.

The projects will be assigned as per the schedule, titles include: The Practice of Everyday Life: A Self Notational System, Making a Spatial Construction/Drawing a Spatial Construction, Embodying the Body and Place Intervention. We will discuss the work of artists and architects to expand the references for our own work, will include figures such as: Julie Mehretu, Louis Kahn, Sol Lewitt, Gordon Matta-Clark, Constant Nieuwenhuys, OMA, Bernard Tschumi, Morphosis, Lebbeus Woods, Haus-Rucker Co, among many others.

Requirements

Readings:
The readings will be chosen from the attached bibliography (for general reference) and it is essential that they are completed in order to have a productive discussion in class. It is necessary that the students demonstrate through the class debates their understanding and analytical capacity. Specific readings assignments will be scheduled per project. Readings will be provided by the instructor as a PDF file available through Courseworks. Students are responsible for checking into Courseworks to look up the readings.

Sketchbook:
Students are required to keep a sketchbook (white sheets, letter size) with annotations, drawings, and notes, as a record of the assigned exercises and readings.

Events:
During the course of the trimester we could coordinate activities that can include visits to: exhibitions, talks, lectures, projects, juries, movies and cultural events in general. Some will be arranged during our class period, however, others could be scheduled out of our class hours, students will not be penalized for not assisting, but everyone is encouraged to make the proper arrangements to be able to attend.

Attendance:
Attendance to the course is required and compulsory to all course sessions. Absences will only be valid under mandatory health or religious conditions. All absences should be notified to the instructor in advance as permitted by each case. If a student is absent three times, she/he will be considered dropped from the class. Three late arrivals (more than 15 minutes) will be considered as one absence. Please be on time. Depending on the students’ performance, the instructor may arrange additional visits to the studio if required by the students.
**Evaluations**

Student will be evaluated on their own capacity to fulfill the course goals, not only requirements. Working in this field goes beyond completing the requirements, it implies a stronger engaging with the given material and a passion to accomplish things. Students need to develop their critical thinking skills, analytical comprehension, and rigor in the process of making the projects. These exercises are based not only on a final product, they are based on a daily progression and evolution of the work, on a process. It is crucial that all students work rigorously to develop strong means of production, the more rigor, the more you will be able to work independently and consistently. Each exercise will comprise a percentage of the final grade, however, the three main components for grading are the Mid-Term Review, the Final Review, and Content/Process (which includes daily work and the development of ideas). Student will be given a letter grade following the University’s conventions. Students should read and familiarize with the Honor Code and Academic Integrity of both Barnard + Columbia Colleges.

**Goals:**
The class have various goals. First, to expose students to basic knowledge and skills related to architectural design and the larger visual culture associated with it. Second, to make students understand those skills and being able to implement them in the various exercises through drawings (analytical, diagrams, plans, sections, free hand, etc), 3D physical models, and any other media that the student might develop to explain her or his project. These works are intended not only to be done or accomplished, but developed with the highest possible craft and quality. Both drawings and models should be made with rigor and precision. A third goal is to expand the field of what students may think of architecture as a discipline, into the larger cultural, social, political and economical apparatus in which it is located. Fourth and last, would be to develop the capacity to translate observations and analysis into visual and verbal means. A student successful evaluation will satisfy and overpass these four goals by the work presented during the weekly meetings as well as the final reviews. Remember, process and development is as important as the final product.

**Tools & Supplies**

- Portable drafting board with parallel ruler included 18” x 24”
  *Alternative – 1/8” white board and 24” T-square - with plastic edge
- Cutting surface (cutting board or 30” x 40” piece of 1/8” chipboard)
- 24” stainless steel straight edge ruler with cork bottom
- 8” or 10” 30/60/45 degree adjustable triangle (pencil drawing)
- 8” or 10” 30/60/45 degree adjustable triangle (*ink drawing in case needed)

Lead Holder / Lead Pointer
Pencil Sharpener
X-acto knife with #11 blades (100 blades package convenient)
6-sided architectural scale (avoid metal ones, wood or plastic is preferred)
Digital camera or camera phone
Drafting Leads (4B, 2B, HB, F, H, 2H, 4H)
Sketching Pencils - (4B, 2B, HB)
Black permanent markers (Sharpie and/or Pentel)
White pencil eraser
12” roll of white or buff colored tracing paper
White glue (Sobo or equivalent) / UHU glue stick
Masking tape / artist tape / Scotch tape
Sketch book (letter size)***

Tools and supplies will be required at different times, do not purchase all in advance. Stores:
- Janoff’s – 2870 Broadway (close to campus but with limited materials)
- Utretch and/or Blick art supplies (locations varies)
# Class Schedule

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Month</th>
<th>Day</th>
<th>Remarks</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>January</td>
<td>20-Tu</td>
<td>Introduction / Exercise 1 and First Reading assigned</td>
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<tr>
<td>January</td>
<td>22-Th</td>
<td>Reading and Exercise 1 Group Discussion</td>
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<tr>
<td>January</td>
<td>27-Tu</td>
<td>Pin-Up</td>
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<tr>
<td>January</td>
<td>29-Th</td>
<td>Desk-Crit</td>
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<tr>
<td>February</td>
<td>03-Tu</td>
<td>Exercise 1 Due - Pin-Up / Exercise 2 assigned</td>
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<tr>
<td>February</td>
<td>05-Th</td>
<td>Group Discussion</td>
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<tr>
<td>February</td>
<td>10-Tu</td>
<td>Pin-Up</td>
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<tr>
<td>February</td>
<td>12-Th</td>
<td>Desk-Crit</td>
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<tr>
<td>February</td>
<td>17-Tu</td>
<td>Exercise 2 Due - Pin-Up / Exercise 3 assigned</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>February</td>
<td>19-Th</td>
<td>Group Discussion</td>
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<tr>
<td>February</td>
<td>24-Tu</td>
<td>Desk-Crit</td>
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<tr>
<td>February</td>
<td>26-Th</td>
<td>Desk-Crit</td>
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<tr>
<td>March</td>
<td>03-Tu</td>
<td>Pin-Up</td>
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<tr>
<td>March</td>
<td>05-Th</td>
<td>Desk-Crit</td>
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<tr>
<td>March</td>
<td>10-Tu</td>
<td>Desk-Crit</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>March</td>
<td>12-Th</td>
<td>Mid-Term Review - Exercise 3 Due</td>
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<tr>
<td>March</td>
<td>17-Tu</td>
<td>Spring Break - No Classes</td>
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<tr>
<td>March</td>
<td>19-Th</td>
<td>Spring Break - No Classes</td>
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<tr>
<td>March</td>
<td>24-Tu</td>
<td>Exercise 4 assigned</td>
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<tr>
<td>March</td>
<td>26-Th</td>
<td>Group Discussion</td>
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<tr>
<td>March</td>
<td>31-Tu</td>
<td>Desk-Crit</td>
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<tr>
<td>April</td>
<td>02-Th</td>
<td>Desk-Crit</td>
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<tr>
<td>April</td>
<td>07-Tu</td>
<td>Exercise 4 Due - Pin-Up / Exercise 5 assigned</td>
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<tr>
<td>April</td>
<td>09-Th</td>
<td>Group Discussion</td>
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<tr>
<td>April</td>
<td>14-Tu</td>
<td>Desk-Crit</td>
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<tr>
<td>April</td>
<td>16-Th</td>
<td>Desk-Crit</td>
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<tr>
<td>April</td>
<td>21-Tu</td>
<td>Desk-Crit</td>
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<tr>
<td>April</td>
<td>23-Th</td>
<td>Pin-Up Preliminary Review</td>
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<tr>
<td>April</td>
<td>28-Tu</td>
<td>Desk-Crit / Final Production</td>
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<tr>
<td>May</td>
<td>30-Th</td>
<td>Final Review - Exercise 5 Due</td>
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<tr>
<td>May</td>
<td>05-Tu</td>
<td>Final Review - Exercise 5 Due (alternate date)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Schedule is subject to change depending on the studio progress. Any in-advance known health or religious absence should be notified to the instructor during the first week of class or as soon as possible.

## Bibliography (general reference)

The following bibliography serves as general reference for the class.


**Representation / Drawing:**


