

48-711 Paradigms of Research in Architecture

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Architectural “research” by many practitioners is often limited to precedent studies and/or expedient evaluations of alternative design solutions and materials because systematic analytical activities are generally perceived as unnecessary overhead expenditures. On the other hand, “architectural” research by many scholars is often confined to laboratory settings or so esoteric that the findings are of little use to practitioners, in part because fundamental research has traditionally been strongly preferred to applied research to earn tenure. Fortunately, the false dichotomy between these two frames is being challenged by a growing number of practice-oriented academics and research-oriented practitioners. Therefore, this course is open and suitable for all SoA degree tracks (BA, BArch, MArch, MA, MS, DDes, and PhD) and provides an introduction to a wide range of research strategies including Experimental, Simulation, Qualitative, Correlational, Interpretive-historical, Logical Argumentation, Case Study, and Mixed Methods that can be used successfully across a wide spectrum of knowledge production. Throughout the semester there will be guest lectures from a variety of CMU faculty and external practitioners who will share their expertise, successful research strategies and methods, the results of their current and past research, and innovative ideas for future research. This course requires a significant amount of reading and writing to fuel our frequent discussion sessions and culminates with an independent architectural research proposal