

Commoning the City

48-708 Urban Design Studio IV

Also function as sections as 48-510 / 48-410 / 48-660

This two semester research-based-design studio is focused on the bottom-up transformation of cities and explores how designers and planners can tap into the self-organizing behavior of cities in order to empower citizens to claim their right to the city. The first semester, taught by Stefan Gruber provides a theoretical framing and collective case study research as stepping stone toward the development of an individual design thesis proposal. The second semester, taught by Jonathan Kline, will support students in developing their individual projects culminating in an online exhibition and a final thesis book. For the thesis project students will be expected to take a personal position and formulate a thesis, expressed and explored through design. This year-long studio is required for all second year Master of Urban Design students and open to 5th year BArch students and MArch students. For ASOS students the studio is an opportunity to pursue a year long thesis within a structured research context exploring urban commoning.

The commons are emerging as a key concept beyond the binaries of public and private space for tackling the challenges of the contemporary city: How to build community resilience in the face of systemic and growing inequity? How to design with finite resources in the face of accelerating environmental crisis? How to articulate common interests despite splintering social ties? And how to find agency as architects given the scope of these wicked problems? Here commoning is understood as a set of practices dealing with the production and self-governance of shared resources and spaces beyond contemporary forms of domination, such as class, gender or race. The studio's research continues to feed into the long term traveling ifa-exhibition and publication project "An Atlas of Commoning" in collaboration with ARCH+. This year, we will focus on conceptualizing neighborhoods as commons, with a particular scrutiny towards contemporary notions of community in relation to the school wide theme of propinquity.