

48644 & 48497 "Pre-Thesis" Course Description -- S'21 -- Prof. Kai Gutschow

The primary aim of this course is to hatch and develop a beginning proposal for a professional architectural design Thesis or Independent Project. It prepares B.Arch & M.Arch students for the 9-unit "Thesis Seminar" course in the Fall, and the 18-unit "Thesis Studio" during their final Spring semester.

Students can come in with firm ideas based on previous experiences, or invent a new topic. We will discuss readings on the goals and nature of Thesis and independent work, about the relationship between research and design, and how Thesis relates to discipline, practice, and profession. Students will undertake a series of incremental writing exercises to help them: 1) Situate their ideas among relevant literature, precedents, and other contexts; 2) Frame their ideas as an architectural design problem; understanding how other disciplines and issues might impact the architecture; 3) Write up, and refine their project's crucial argument--a debatable or contestable proposition that needs to be designed and defended; 4) Explore their ideas through a range of design and work methods that lead to propositions; and 5) Outline a rigorous schedule, structure or workflow for your summer and final year.

This course will help students: 1) Demonstrate creativity through fluid reasoning and logical thinking, and solving problems through design. 2) Complete an independent design project. 3) Apply rigorous research and thorough planning methods to a design project. 4) Define and utilize critical and contextual research, including pertinent social, theoretical, historical, and cultural material from other disciplines, to situate the Thesis. 5) Use technical expertise appropriately and effectively to develop design prospects through modeling, scripting, simulation, fabrication, or other media relative to the inquiry. 6) Communicate effectively through visual, verbal, and written formats to create high-quality discussions, essays, models, presentations, and documentation of the process. 7) Show motivation by employing professional and organizational skills to work individually and collaboratively, in matters of personal initiative, meeting deadlines, attendance, communication, teamwork, managing of an advisory committee

