

301- Course Outline

McGill University School of Architecture, M2

Coordinator: Howard Davies

An architect is primarily responsible for designing and overseeing the construction of buildings and urban spaces. Throughout this endeavor the architect may choose to use the vehicle of the building as a means for questioning and evolving aspects of their society: its beliefs, institutions, technology and science. Although this process can be fueled by discussion, readings and other types of research, for the architect, the form of this questioning is primarily visual, making use of drawing, model making and eventually actual construction as a means to speculate on the form and operation of potentially useful and/or revolutionary buildings and urban spaces. It is architecture's position, balanced between the everyday and the exceptional that is its greatest and most defining opportunity. From this position architectural research can speculate on new possibilities with an informed critical understanding of the present and past.

1.0 Introduction:

The M2 design semester provides an opportunity to use the architectural project as a vehicle for speculation into the potential for architecture to help form and question a society's processes and philosophical aspirations. While it is always valued as a moment for research into the limits of inspiring architectural form, it is also an opportunity to undertake the detailed design of a building or public space using the skills, tools and attitudes specific to the domain of architecture. The goal is both the production of drawings and models that describe a potential building or space and contributing usefully to an area of architectural research and debate.

2.0 Overall Project Objectives and Content:

The final project for this term must propose either a building or an urban design. For the purposes of the M2 semester the implied building/urban design must be developed both with respect to its exterior form and its interior spaces. A key aspect of architecture and urban design (as opposed to other art forms) is that they can give shape to spaces we might occupy both as individuals and a society, during particular exceptional moments and over the course of everyday life. The architectural translation of your thesis research must involve the use and production of orthographic representations (drawings) to an appropriate scale. These must include plans, sections and elevations drawn to scale. In addition, work can be developed and presented using any other media seen as appropriate or as complementing the overall objectives of the project. These media could encompass a variety of techniques both real and virtual ranging from traditional hand drawing to complex computer modeling. Real models exploring materials and their assembly can also be included.

An important aspect of any architectural proposition is a clear understanding of its program and how that program must be accommodated for in terms of spatial and functional organization. Despite this it is understood that resolving a program, in and of itself, doesn't represent a thesis proposition in M2. Work completed in M2 must also respond to the issues set up during the Architecture 671-Design Research and Methodology (DRM) course completed the previous semester. M2 isn't a course in analysis and the collection of data. M2 is about putting analysis, information and beliefs into a process whereby buildings and/or urban spaces are proposed. Furniture design, the making of films, sculpture, painting, poetry, digital environments and other creative activities may also be undertaken during the M2 semester but they do not replace the fundamental requirement to produce a building proposition in a manner that uses the tools and attitudes unique to the discipline of architecture.

Each project must demonstrate (as a minimum) the following:

1. A comprehensive understanding of the architectural design process. This understanding must include not only the complete and detailed design of the stated building project or urban space but also its representation in architecturally related media (orthographic drawing, perspective views, models (real and virtual)).

2. The systematic development of an idea over time. In other words the final project must clearly be the result of a semester's worth of studied development. While it is understood that architectural design is a process of informed evolution over time and hence not always linear, it is equally clear that for this course a successful project must be the result of:

- A student's own design initiative and regular weekly work
- Participation in 4 public presentations (reviews)
- Discussions with their advisor throughout the term

3. Knowledge of the relationship between the given project and its contemporary environment. In this case, environment is understood to mean the social, economic, historical, philosophical and physical circumstances pertaining to the project's existence.

4. A studied response to the issues and goals established in DRM. As a Master's level work, the onus is on each student to establish the area(s) of research for their project and propose solutions for these identified interests. It is not the task of their advisors or the course coordinator. Students should acknowledge this fact as it represents one of the clear differences between Master's level work and undergraduate work.

5. An understanding of the implications of ecology on architectural design. While all projects are not required to structure their thesis objectives specifically regarding ecological design strategies, ecological issues may be raised as discussion points during reviews. When this occurs students are expected to have informed responses ready.

6. The presentation and integration of each project's site.

Each student is required to show a detailed knowledge of his or her selected site at all times during the semester. This understanding must include, site topography, adjacent context, municipal regulations, environmental / ecological data, developmental history and the predicted future for the site in question. Projects that renovate existing buildings or otherwise integrate them within their design must include a detailed presentation (in plan, section and elevation) of the relevant aspects of these buildings. This detailed presentation must be ready and actively engaged in the design process by the Preliminary review. Existing buildings intended to be reused in M2 work must be accessible during the M2 semester or have been visited and documented in detail during the previous summer or during DRM.

2.1 EAPUD:

EAPUD (Experiments in Architecture, Planning and Urban Design) is an option for students in ARCH 673 who have successfully completed the requirements for the "M2 Project Description" (see ARCH 671) but feel they do not wish to continue the development of their thesis proposition in M2. In these situations students can be assigned a complex architectural or urban design project that relates specifically to a building or planning study brought to the School's attention by an outside source. McGill University, The City of Montreal and even private corporations would be examples of potential outside sources. EAPUD is seen as an opportunity to fully study and develop a particular architectural or urban project. It has been set up to expand the scope of work undertaken in M2.

The successful completion of an EAPUD project is expected to demonstrate the following:

- A comprehensive understanding of the assigned project (program, site conditions, construction issues)
- A complete programmatic analysis and organization that shows a clear understanding of the clients stated needs.
- Complete and detailed architectural drawings/models that clearly describe the proposed building and/or urban space.

An EAPUD project doesn't have to respond to issue set forth in a student's M2 Project Description. However it is understood that an EAPUD project will still be approached with the same level of dedication and creativity expected in any M2 project.

Additional presentations before invited guests specifically related to the assigned project can take place during an EAPUD project. If such meetings occur it is understood that they are in addition to the normal M2 review Schedule.

The EAPUD option is fully integrated within the M2 studio and is eligible for the same awards/prizes listed in Section 12.0

A student wishing to do an EAPUD project must communicate this intention to the School of Architecture and the Thesis coordinator by no later than August 1st. Students selecting the EAPUD option must have the project's site analysis and program prepared by the Panel review in September. They are also expected to have met with the appropriate sources in order to plan out particular aspects of their project's development.

3.0 Reviews:

There will be four formal reviews during the term. During these reviews each student is required to present and explain their project both orally and visually. It is intended that reviews will take place in the presence of both the thesis advisor and the thesis coordinator. The thesis advisor and thesis coordinator should form a consistent critical unit (a review team) that will be well informed and participate in all the formal reviews of the assigned student's work. Although reviews are not graded if a student's work doesn't represent sufficient effort or progress the student will be notified. The discussion that occurs during a review, whether positive or critical, is intended to help in the overall development of the final project. Withdrawing from a review without a valid medical excuse is unacceptable. If a student fails to show up for a scheduled review without a valid medical excuse the situation will be examined and evaluated on a case-by-case basis by the student's advisor and the coordinator.

For scheduling and logistical reasons all reviews must take place within the School of Architecture building.

3.1 Workshops-Thematic Reviews:

In addition "Thematic Reviews" can be organized over the course of the semester. Thematic reviews are optional sessions on specific topics related to architectural and urban design. In the past these reviews have looked at; landscape design, facades, ecological design and perspective drawing. The student's advisor and studio critic are not required to be present at these reviews. Times for the thematic reviews will be sent out via e-mails to the class.

3.2 Digital Media:

While the use of digital media is encouraged in the M2 semester, work presented for the final review and subsequently displayed at the final exhibition **must be presented in hard copy**. The hard copy (print outs) can be complemented with digital images and animations. The print outs must include as a minimum plans, sections, elevations as well as three-dimensional views of the final project. There are no exceptions to this requirement. Students are required to make their own arrangements for data projection and/or the showing of films+videos if they choose to use these for any review.

4.0 Role of the Advisors:

Advisors should meet their students once a week for a period of time of between 40-60 min per student. The format of these meetings and their location is to be mutually agreed to by both advisor and student. Each advisor should be present during their student's formal reviews. If this is not possible the coordinator must be notified and other reasonable arrangements made. If for any reason there is a breakdown in the advisor student review process (i.e. weekly meetings are not taking place) the advisor or the student must notify the thesis coordinator immediately.

5.0 Role of the Coordinator:

The Coordinator is responsible for organizing and attending the various reviews that will take place during the term. The coordinator may prepare short written evaluations of each student after each formal review. These evaluations will be e-mailed to both the student and their advisor within 2 weeks after the review. The Coordinator will take part in evaluating (grading) each student in the M2 class

6.0 E-mail Communications:

The M2 studio makes frequent use of e-mail for the purposes of announcements and general coordination. As a result it is expected that each student furnish the coordinator with a functioning e-mail address if the one posted on the DRM website is no longer valid. M2 students are expected to check their e-mail daily for possible announcements. M2 students should make sure that e-mails from the coordinators address (howard_davies@atelierbigcity.com) pass into their accounts.

7.0 The Studio:

The M2 studio is intended for students to use in the completion of their final M2 projects. Students who don't require space in the studio because they intend to work at home should notify the coordinator. Any desk that isn't in daily use by the end of the first month can be "claimed" for class use.

8.0 Term Structure and Schedule:

There will be three formal reviews and a thesis panel presentation during the term. The dates for these are indicated on the schedule below.

(Please note that this schedule is an overall guide for the term. If the dates and times indicated below change an announcement(s) will be made)

Panel Review Room 101-102: September 06/07/ 0830hrs-1800hrs (Thursday- Friday)

Each student would have 30 minutes for presentation and discussion

Preliminary Review Room 101-102 October 11/12/ 0830hrs-1800hrs (Thursday -Friday)

Each student would have 40 minutes for presentation and discussion.

The purpose of this review will be to discuss and orient the preliminary architectural translation of the established thesis objectives.

Intermediate Review Room 101-102 November 8/9 0830hrs-1800hrs (Thursday - Friday)

Each student would have 40 minutes presentation / discussion.

The purpose of this review will be to discuss and orient the intermediate architectural translation of the established thesis objectives.

Hand-In of presentation Requirements Wednesday December 5th 1700hrs

In order to plan the final exhibition and review each presenter is required to prepare a detailed description of their presentation needs (space requirements) This is to be done in Imperial units with a scale drawing of your intended layout. The scale drawing must indicate individual panels and whether or not information on those panels is separately contained on each panel or flows across connecting adjacent panels. Ideally these layout descriptions should show (in miniature) the intended drawings/ presentation. These presentation descriptions can be dropped off at the main office or e-mailed in. Wall space is always at a premium for the final exhibition and these layouts are essential for planning it. Those of you interested in setting up free standing installations for your final exhibitions are encouraged to do so pending approval from the Thesis coordinator.

Final Printing + Plotting

M2 design and presentation should be finished by Wednesday December 5th. This will permit plotting to take place between December 5th and December 10th.

Deadline for Installation of Work Tuesday December 11th 1700hrs

In order to present in the final reviews all work must be installed by this time. No work can be done on M2 during the final review period. NB If any M2 students are planning complex installations for their

final presentations they must take into account that the Ground floor crit rooms and the Main exhibition room will be in more or less continuous use by other classes up until Tuesday December 11th. Under normal circumstances installation of student work can begin at 0900hrs December 11th.

Final Review December 12 / 13 / 14 / 0830hrs-1900hrs (Wednesday-Friday)

9.0 Class Meetings:

Class meetings when scheduled will take place on Tuesday, 15:30 to 17:00 in Room 212. Class meetings will be announced via e-mail by the Friday preceding the meeting.

10.0 Final Exhibition:

The Final Exhibition for M2 will take place on the ground floor of the School of Architecture from 1700hrs December 11th until 0900hrs December 20th. In addition to printed panels and models digital presentations involving data projection and video are permitted however the School of Architecture cannot take responsibility for the security of any rented equipment used for such purposes. In addition it is each student's responsibility to insure that such means of project presentation are operating throughout any reviews and for the full duration of the yearend exhibition. Printed outputs and real models are the essential requirements for this exhibition (and the Final review in M2) Projections, installations etc (if undertaken by the student) must be seen as additional and complementary to the panels and models not as replacements.

11.0 Evaluation and Grading:

Projects can be evaluated throughout the term at the discretion of each advisor and the Coordinator. Please refer to the McGill University course calendar for letter grades and their percentile equivalents. In order to be considered for a final evaluation in M2 a project must be presented at the final review in December and also be exhibited for the stated exhibition period. The final grade for each project will be determined by the student's advisor and the M2 coordinator.

If at any point in the semester it is felt by the advisor or the thesis coordinator that a student is in danger of not attaining a passing grade in M2 that student will be notified in writing of this fact.

12.0 Documentation of Final Project:

All students are required to hand-in a CD of project documentation by Friday December 14th at 1700hrs. Handing in a CD of project documentation is part of the requirement for Architectural Journalism ARCH 679A.

13.0 Scholarships and prizes:

Ray Affleck Prize in Design:

Value: \$1,000

Established in 1989 in memory of Raymond Tait Affleck (FRAIC, RCA), B.Arch. 1947, by his family, colleagues and friends. Awarded to a student in the School of Architecture for distinction in Design in the M.Arch.I final design project. The winner will be selected by a jury of three members, at least one of who is an architect who is not a member of the staff of the School of Architecture.

ARCOP/ALCAN Award:

Value: \$1,000

Awarded annually to a student in the final semester of the M.Arch.I program for a design project demonstrating particular sensitivity to the architectural and cultural traditions of its location. The winner will be selected by a jury of three members, at least one of who is an architect who is not a member of the staff of the School of Architecture.

A.F. Dunlop Scholarship:

Value: Several awards of approximately \$3,500

Bequeathed in 1937 by the late Mrs. Catherine A. Dunlop for students graduating with the M.Arch.I degree. Apply, stating proposed study, localities to be visited and date of departure, to the Director of the School before January 31. Selection is made by a

Committee of Staff of the School of Architecture.

Seymour and Shirley Levine Book Prize in Design:

Value: 2 awards of approximately \$350

The prize is awarded by the School of Architecture to a graduating student who has demonstrated excellence and innovation in the integration of environmental systems in the final project of the M. Arch. I Program."

Royal Architectural Institute of Canada Medal:

Offered to a graduating student in the professional program who, in the judgment of the Faculty of the School of Architecture, has completed the most outstanding final design project/thesis for that academic year and who gives promise of being an architect of distinction after graduation.

Selection is made by the School of Architecture.

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