

ARCH698b: MLA Thesis studio

Spring 2019

Instructors:

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Course Description

This is the second semester of the two-semester final design-research studio focused on the myriad challenges of the Great Central Valley, with a particular regional focus on Fresno County. By this time you will have each developed a thesis statement and significant design-research to support it. This semester is dedicated to refining your thesis, developing your research through physical design experiments and proposals, *and* generating a clear and powerful means of communicating your argument in public presentation and in book form. Because of the individuality of each student's thesis topic, the semester will be more self-directed and deliverables will be more specific to each project.

Learning Objectives

Refining and Developing Research Questions + Thesis Statement: Ability to formulate and enforce a thesis statement that drives research and adds new knowledge to the field. *Have and express a strong stance.*

Research: Ability to understand and deploy deliberate research methodologies and practices during the design process.

Critical Interpretation: Ability to critically read territories and sites across history, scales and disciplines and apply relevant insights to the design process. *Ability to self-critique and constructively participate in critiques of the work of classmates.*

On-site Fieldwork: Ability to conduct wideranging fieldwork, including interviews with critical organizations/persons, investigative research and observation, and interpretive visualization.

Investigative Skills: Ability to gather, assess, record, and comparatively evaluate relevant information and performance in order to support ideas across design scales.

Design Thinking: Ability to raise clear, precise critical questions, use abstract ideas to interpret information, consider diverse points of view, develop well-reasoned theories, *take a position* and test alternative outcomes against relevant criteria and standards.

Iterative Design Experimentation: Ability and willingness to take risks and try new design techniques, methods, materials, (etc). Ability to craft ideas through repeated processes of making and refinement.

Vision Creation: Ability to design bold multi-purpose landscape systems, which address future paradigms and spatially challenge the *status quo*.

Strategic Projects: Ability to identify site specific themes/ issues that materialize and anchor the vision in tangible projects at a number of scales that address localized systems and communities.

Professional Communication Skills: Ability to write and speak effectively and use representational media appropriate both within the profession and with the general public. Ability to communicate a stance through short, succinct and well-structured logics.

Grading Breakdown

The grading rubric is less precise for this term because of the individuality of each thesis pursuit.

Iterative modeling exercises: 10%

Futures Assignment: 5%

Development and Refinement of Thesis Topic and 1st Semester Research: 10%

[how you develop and apply ideas from first semester; there is some ambiguity here; see criteria for evaluation below]

Site Design + Design-Research Development (drawings + required model): 25%

[quality, content, rigor and integration of progressive feedback]

Verbal-Graphic Presentations (Fresno/Mid/Final): 25%

[graphic/verbal clarity, persuasiveness, quality of presentation, etc; see criteria below]

Thesis book: 25%

The following will be specifically evaluated to generate the final grade for the Thesis Book:

- Writing: Statement, written narrative, captions
- Drawings + Layout
- Overall clarity of argumentation

Each of the above will be evaluated according to the following criteria (as appropriate):

Academic Integrity: You will be closely evaluated for your adherence to academic standards on avoiding plagiarism and exhibiting responsible scholarship.

Design Intent: You will be evaluated based on their ability to articulate design rationale in all aspects of the project including the following: verbal, written, visual, and physical modelmaking.

Critical Input and Participation in Discussion: While the studio this term is more self-directed, we will have many pin-ups and other opportunities to participate in critical discussion that pushes your project forward. You will be evaluated by your presence and participation in collective discussion and feedback sessions.

Process: You will be evaluated on the iterative process of design. You are expected to take risks in your design process and engage in design exploration. *Your project must develop over time and respond to critique.*

Applied Research: You will be evaluated on your research and analysis through verbal discussion, text, visual communication, and the demonstrated integration of the work into a given project.

Clarity: You will be evaluated on the clarity and comprehensiveness of your final presentation and book. This includes the organization, cohesiveness, and clarity of your verbal narrative *and your graphic representation.*

Skill and Technique: You will be evaluated on the quality of your drawings, models and verbal+written presentation, which demonstrate your mastery of the skills and techniques introduced in this course.

General Deliverables (specifics will depend on the particularities of each thesis project)

Thesis Statement + written argument (1200-1500 words); DUE: progressive submissions/final book

You have already begun to refine your thesis statements which will most likely continue to evolve. The "written argument" is more-or-less your narrative for presenting the project in its entirety but with bibliographic references/citations to sources, including visual materials that might illustrate your introduction in the book format.

Bibliography); DUE: progressive submissions/final book

Using Chicago Manual of Style (17th edition), you will generate an annotated bibliography of texts that have enriched your design-research.

Futures Assignment; DUE: January 18

Brief written assignment intended to really get you thinking about both anticipated plausible futures (existing projections) and speculative possibilities. You will submit a written statement forecasting the future of thinking in your areas of investigation while citing very specific studies and texts. This assignment is required because of the lack of imagination and research rigor in thinking about future innovation and change. You will be evaluated for how you integrate this research into your developing projects.

Iterative Modeling Exercise; DUE: January 18 + final review/book

This exercise will build off the final transect model assignment and will require you develop these models with more rigor, thought and care for moving forward. You will be asked to experiment and take risks. As stated in the description of the Transect Model exercise from Fall 2018, models should be measured (at a scale) and site referential but is not necessarily a site model. You might model dynamics or processes you hope to catalyze with your strategic visions or the actual territory conceptually or physically transformed. They should be developed progressively in study models culminating in a final model. The objective of this exercise is to stimulate spatial and organizational thinking as related to concepts and geographies you have

been exploring. The hope is this exploratory model opens up new ways of thinking about your “site,” and catalyzes spatial design thinking.

Site Design/Design Development Drawings + Site Model; DUE: progressive pin ups and final review/book

This particular “deliverable” will range for each student, however everyone will be required to generate a final site model, site plan(s) and sections *across scales* (regional, site, body scales) and phasing diagrams. In other words, your drawings should integrate regional strategies, site design, and design details.

Thesis Book; DUE: progressive submissions/final submission

The book will integrate all of the above and will be formatted in a clear, precise way. Specific guidelines will be distributed within the first weeks of semester. You will have a table of contents, thesis statement/written argument with bibliographic citations and integrated reference images, then drawings and model photographs with proper annotations and captions. It will conclude with your annotated bibliography.

Course Schedule (subject to change)

General weekly schedule will be:

Monday: Pin-up with Aja+Alison (7 students required to be present for 1st half of class; 7 for 2nd half)

Wednesday: Alison conducts deskcrits with 7 students

Friday: Alison conducts deskcrits with remaining 7 students

Week 1	<u>Introductory Week</u> Monday (January 7) Wednesday (January 9) Friday (January 11)	Introduction to expectations and modeling Desk crits re: reflections + moving forward Desk crits re: reflections + moving forward
Week 2	<u>Modeling Week+</u> Monday (January 14) Wednesday (January 16) Friday (January 18)	Pin up models Desk crits Desk crits
Week 3	<u>Site Design/Research Development</u> Monday (January 21) Wednesday (January 23) Friday (January 25)	NO CLASS: MLK Day Desk crits + submit initial deliverables/calendar (focus on Mid-Review) Desk crits + submit Futures Assignment
Week 4	<u>Preparing for Fresno Presentations</u> Monday (January 28) Wednesday (January 30)	Pin-up: site geographies + schematic sketches Develop strategy/deliverables for Fresno presentations + desk crits

	Friday (February 1)	Desk crits
Week 5	<u>Fresno</u> Monday (February 4) Wednesday (February 6) Friday (February 8)	Prepare for Fresno (Aja only) Pin up: presentations Fresno (presentations); arrive Thursday, Feb 7
Week 6	<u>Site Design/Research Development</u> Monday (February 11) Wednesday (February 13) Friday (February 15)	Follow-up discussions + introduce book template (Alison only) Desk crits Desk crits
Week 7	<u>Pre-Review Week</u> Monday (February 18) Wednesday (February 20) Friday (February 22)	PRESIDENT'S DAY: NO CLASS Desk crits Desk crits
Week 8	<u>Mid-Review Week</u> Monday (February 25) Wednesday (February 27) Friday (March 1)	Desk crits MIDTERM REVIEW No class
Week 9	<u>Site Design/Research Development</u> Monday (March 4) Wednesday (March 6) Friday (March 8)	Desk crits with Aja Remote desk crits with Alison Remote desk crits with Alison + submit thesis statement + narrative
Week 10	<u>Spring Break</u> Monday (March 11) Wednesday (March 13) Friday (March 15)	SPRING BREAK SPRING BREAK SPRING BREAK
Week 11	<u>Site Design/Research Development</u> Monday (March 18)	Pin up + submit book design

	Wednesday (March 20) Friday (March 22)	Desk crits Desk crits
Week 12	<u>Site Design/Research Development</u> Monday (March 25) Wednesday (March 27) Friday (March 29)	Pin up Desk crits Desk crits
Week 13	<u>Site Design/Research Development</u> Monday (April 1) Wednesday (April 3) Friday (April 5)	Pin up Desk crits Desk crits + submit book
Week 14	<u>Site Design/Research Development</u> Monday (April 8) Wednesday (April 10) Friday (April 12)	Pin up Desk crits Desk crits
Week 15	<u>Refining Layout + Narrative</u> Monday (April 15) Wednesday (April 17) Friday (April 19)	Pin up Desk crits Desk crits + submit thesis statement + narrative
Week 16	<u>Refining Layout + Narrative</u> Monday (April 22) Wednesday (April 24) Friday (April 26)	Pin up Desk crits Desk crits + submit book
Week 17	<u>Study Days: FINALS PREP</u> Monday (April 29) Wednesday (May 1) Friday (May 3)	Study Days Undergrad Final Reviews (desk crits as req) Undergrad Final Reviews (desk crits as req)
Week 18	<u>Final Review Week</u> Monday (May 6)	Final Review + Final Book Submission

	Friday (May 10)	Thesis Exhibition for Commencement
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Statement on Academic Conduct and Support Systems

Academic Conduct:

Plagiarism – presenting someone else’s ideas as your own, either verbatim or recast in your own words – is a serious academic offense with serious consequences. Please familiarize yourself with the discussion of plagiarism in SCampus in Part B, Section 11, “Behavior Violating University Standards” policy.usc.edu/scampus-part-b. Other forms of academic dishonesty are equally unacceptable. See additional information in SCampus and university policies on scientific misconduct, policy.usc.edu/scientific-misconduct.

Support Systems:

Student Health Counseling Services - (213) 740-7711 – 24/7 on call
engemannshc.usc.edu/counseling

Free and confidential mental health treatment for students, including short-term psychotherapy, group counseling, stress fitness workshops, and crisis intervention.

National Suicide Prevention Lifeline - 1 (800) 273-8255 – 24/7 on call
suicidepreventionlifeline.org

Free and confidential emotional support to people in suicidal crisis or emotional distress 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

Relationship and Sexual Violence Prevention Services (RSVP) - (213) 740-4900 – 24/7 on call
engemannshc.usc.edu/rsvp

Free and confidential therapy services, workshops, and training for situations related to gender-based harm.

Office of Equity and Diversity (OED) | Title IX - (213) 740-5086
equity.usc.edu, titleix.usc.edu

Information about how to get help or help a survivor of harassment or discrimination, rights of protected classes, reporting options, and additional resources for students, faculty, staff, visitors, and applicants. The university prohibits discrimination or harassment based on the following protected characteristics: race, color, national origin, ancestry, religion, sex, gender, gender identity, gender expression, sexual orientation, age, physical disability, medical condition, mental disability, marital status, pregnancy, veteran status, genetic information, and any other characteristic which may be specified in applicable laws and governmental regulations.

Bias Assessment Response and Support - (213) 740-2421
studentaffairs.usc.edu/bias-assessment-response-support

Avenue to report incidents of bias, hate crimes, and microaggressions for appropriate investigation and response.

The Office of Disability Services and Programs - (213) 740-0776
dsp.usc.edu

Support and accommodations for students with disabilities. Services include assistance in providing readers/notetakers/interpreters, special accommodations for test taking needs, assistance with architectural barriers, assistive technology, and support for individual needs.

USC Support and Advocacy - (213) 821-4710

studentaffairs.usc.edu/ssu

Assists students and families in resolving complex personal, financial, and academic issues adversely affecting their success as a student.

Diversity at USC - (213) 740-2101

diversity.usc.edu

Information on events, programs and training, the Provost's Diversity and Inclusion Council, Diversity Liaisons for each academic school, chronology, participation, and various resources for students.

USC Emergency - UPC: (213) 740-4321, HSC: (323) 442-1000 – 24/7 on call

dps.usc.edu, emergency.usc.edu

Emergency assistance and avenue to report a crime. Latest updates regarding safety, including ways in which instruction will be continued if an officially declared emergency makes travel to campus infeasible.

USC Department of Public Safety - UPC: (213) 740-6000, HSC: (323) 442-120 – 24/7 on call

dps.usc.edu

Non-emergency assistance or information.