USC School of Architecture

ARCH 698B: Advanced Design Research: The Los Angeles River, 8 Units
Listed Name: "MLArch Thesis"

Semester: Spring 2020
Studio: Mondays & Wednesday & Friday 2-5:50PM (12-5:50PM on occasion on M/W)
Studio Location: Watt Hall, 3rd Floor, MLA+U Studios

Photo by Justine Holzman

Instructor: Alexander Robinson, Associate Professor
Office: Watt (WAH) 319
Office Hours: send email to schedule an appointment
Contact Info: alexander.robinson@usc.edu or via Group WhatsApp
(I will try to respond to emails within 24 hours Monday-Friday or on the Monday following a weekend or holiday break)

IT Help: Dipak Shirke
Contact Info: dshirke@usc.edu

Prerequisite(s): ARCH 698A

Course Description

This is the Advanced Design Research (ADR) studio that follows the ADR seminar in the Fall Semester focused on designing the Los Angeles River and specifically a pilot channel modification project. These courses are focused on two primary aspects of the Los Angeles River: (1) its powerful current role as a form and place of cultural consciousness and the subsequent activities, byproducts, and mechanisms of such, including alternate and endemic ecologies and cultural practices and (2) how the river's re-design can best proceed in such a context while also meeting an extensive set of multi-functional goals, all within a complex and dynamic terrain of political, ecological, technical and community factors. Building upon the research and development of the last semester, this course will lead to the development of a final design project.

Learning Objectives

Refining and Developing Research Questions + Thesis Statement: Ability to formulate and enforce a project statement and narrative that drives research and adds new knowledge to the field and the Los Angeles River revitalization. Have and express a strong stance.

Research: Ability to understand and deploy deliberate research methodologies and practices during the design process, as developed in the seminar 698A.

Critical Interpretation: Ability to critically read the site, landscape, and relevant forces and entities 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 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 may be modified to fit each student as per their project approach.

689A: 15%; Work from first 698a and how you develop and apply ideas from first semester.

Detail Studies: 4%

Morphology Exploration: 8%

Morphology Refinement: 10%

Full Scale Mock-Up: 3%

Final Design Deliverables: 25%; quality, content, rigor and integration of progressive feedback

Participation & Presentations: 15%

Thesis book & statement: 20%

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

- Writing: Position statement, Los Angeles River 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.

To this end, each student must complete and submit certificates for the following:
https://libraries.usc.edu/tutorial/academic-dishonesty
https://libraries.usc.edu/tutorial/avoiding-plagiarism

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
These will be revised as necessary as required for individual student directions and other contingencies.

Thesis Statement + written argument/narrative (1200-1500 words min); due progressive submissions / final book
This statement will build on the RFP from 698a. It will position, explain and argue your approach.

You will develop a narrative of the River that your project responds and fits within. It <u>must</u> include a bibliography and footnotes. This text will be integrated into your final "book" that will include visual material.

Detail Studies; Due: 1.22
Brief assignment modeling different means of integrating vegetation into the channel, as observed in condition and other proposals and precedents.

Morphology Exploration; Due 2.10
Exploratory morphology assignment, experimenting with different form and mark making proposals for the river channel.

Morphology Refinement; Due 3.4 (Mid Review)
Development and refinement of (at least one) morphology proposal for Mid Review.

Full Scale Mock-Up; Done on 2.12
We will draw out a full-scale version of a part of one of your proposals, on-site.

Final Deliverables; Due 5.10/11
The final list of drawing deliverables will develop throughout the semester and may be individual to each student, but at minimum must include the following:
- a set of illustrated measured drawings (plan, section, detail, and orthographic)
- perspectives
- "pilot" approach
- Phasing and other diagrams
- physical model

Thesis Book; Due progressive submissions/final submission
The book will include most of the above and will be formatted in a clear and attractive way. Specific guidelines will be distributed by mid-review. At minimum it will include a table of contents, your thesis statement, and a selection of model photographs and drawings.

Class Schedule (subject to change):

General weekly schedule will be:
Mondays: Pin-up work (contingent on having sufficient progress submitted previous Friday)
Wednesdays: Desk-Crits
Fridays: Work in studio w/o Professor Robinson, digitally submit progress by 5:30PM (to qualify for Monday pin-up)

On Friday students will digitally submit progress as discussed during Wednesday desk crit. Failure to submit progress and qualify for/miss pin-up will affect your participation grade 2% each time.

After two late pin-up days, if work is not pinned by the beginning of class on pin up days, there will an automatic 1% reduction in participation grade.

Week	Schedule	Content
1	1.13 Introduction 1.15 Desk Crits 1.17 Work in Studio	Detail Studies

2	*1.20 MLK Holiday* 1.22 Desk Crits **1.24 Review**	**Note altered schedule** **Detail Studies Review** + Site Model
3	1.27 Pin Up 1.29 Desk Crits 1.31 Work in Studio	Morphology Exploration + Site Model
4	2.3 Pin Up 2.5 Desk Crits 2.7 Work in Studio	Morphology Exploration + Site Model Due
5	**2.10 Review** **2.12 Site Visit** 2.14 Work in Studio	**Morphology Exploration Review** **On Site Drawing of a Morphology**
6	*2.17 President's Day* 2.19 Desk Crits 2.21 *Possible Pin Up*	Morphology Refinement **Pin-up on Friday dependent on progress**
7	2.24 Pin Up 2.26 Desk Crits 2.28 Work in Studio	Morphology Refinement Mid Review Prep
8	3.2 Pin Up **3.4 Mid Review** **3.5-8 Field Trip**	Morphology Refinement Mid Review Prep **Mid Review!** **Field Trip 3.5-3.8** (Tentative)
9	3.9 Pin Up 3.11 Desk Crits 3.13 Work in Studio	Final Development
10	*Spring Recess!*	*No Studio!*
11	3.23 Pin Up 3.25 Desk Crits 3.27 Work in Studio	Final Development
12	3.30 Pin Up **4.1 Review** 4.3 Work in Studio	Final Development **Internal Interim Review**
13	4.6 Pin Up 4.8 Desk Crits 4.10 Work in Studio	Final Development
14	4.13 Pin Up 4.15 Desk Crits 4.17 Work in Studio	Final Development
15	4.20 Pin Up 4.22 Desk Crits 4.24 Work in Studio	Final Development: Final Review Prep, Drawings

16	4.27 Desk Crits 4.29 Pin Up 4.31 Pin Up	Final Development: Final Review Prep, Presentation
18	**Final Review 5.10** *or* **11**	**Final Review**, Verle Annis

Course Specific Policies

Technology in the classroom
This class focuses on digital work although paper and pencil sketch work might also be done. Therefore, expect to use personal electronic devices (laptops, tablets, and phones) only for the purposes of note taking, researching online, and uploading assignments. Students using a device for purposes not directly related to the class will be asked to put the device away.

Blackboard
USC Blackboard will be utilized for formal announcements (students will NOT be emailed ever) and to share files and other information. It may be used for the Friday digital submissions (TBD).

Classroom Norms

Sharing our work with others and opening ourselves to critique (or peer feedback) can be a vulnerable process. To model the expectations of a professional work environment in our field, and promote a respectful classroom environment, we agree to the following.

- Do not interrupt when someone else is speaking

- Critique design work, not people

- Support critique with evidence, or speak from personal experience

- Allow everyone to critique (i.e., don't dominate or remain silent)

- Keep a positive tone when offering critique and responding to it

- Accept critique in the positive spirit with which it is given as a means of development

Course Expenses

The instructors estimate that the cost for travel fares alone will cost a minimum $200 per student. Additional costs for paper, models, etc. will be similar to past studios.

Attendance

As per USC School of Architecture guidelines, students may miss one week of classes without adverse consequences. Missing more than one class will result in 1/3 of a letter grade deducted per missed class over one. Students over 10 minutes late will be considered tardy and this will detrimentally affect their 10% participation grade by minus 2% for each tardy. Any student absent (in any form including sleep, technological distraction, or by leaving mid class for a long bathroom/water break) for more than 1/3 of the class time can be considered fully absent.

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" https://policy.usc.edu/scampus-part-b/ Other forms of academic dishonesty are equally unacceptable.

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/ssa
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.