

Course Number: **ARC 6356**  
Course Title: **VIA Advanced Graduate Architectural Design 3**  
Term: Fall 2016  
Section Number: **4883**  
Credits: 6  
Meeting times: Monday 10:10-1:15/ Wednesday 10:15-1:15/ Thursday 10:15-1:15  
Professor: **Prof. William Tilson** wtropic@ufl.edu  
University of Florida, Vicenza Institute of Architecture  
Contrà SS. Apostoli 51  
Vicenza - Italy 3600  
Tel 348 8239298  
Office: 3<sup>rd</sup> floor VIA building, Vicenza, Italy

## Syllabus

*I am unquestionably deformed by relationships with everything that surrounds me.*

Walter Benjamin

### Course description

Advanced Graduate Design Studio 3 explores the reciprocal relationship between cultural, historical and physical context and building tectonics. Vicenza and Venice-two cities with great historical depth that are easily accessible to documentation, and analysis through repeated firsthand visits-provide the setting for two building projects. Each project or "tectonic probe" requires a thoughtful and ongoing documentation and analysis of the two cities and the transformation of specific sites through building intervention. Programmatically, the two probes are small public buildings with simple programs set within historically significant sites. The design purpose of the probes is to study the act of construction and its importance in the making of place: a dialogue between historic artifacts, contemporary culture, marking the ground, the creation of bounds and foundations; making space for human occupation. Investigations of ancient, traditional, currently available, and potential future structural methods and constructional materials; their relation to regional building traditions, spatial character, culture and climate, as well as to more widely-deployed universal technological developments are explored using the vehicle of a small strategically located intervention. The projects allow space for students' MRP theses to be tested and advanced.

### Specific Studio methods

- Strategies developed to analyze and design utilizing acts of making or methods construction as initial generators of architectural form and space, rather than as final product of design process, i.e., the *tectonic probe*.
- Developing a sequence of structural, material, and contextual investigations: relation to historic conditions, interior and exterior space, light and shadow; inhabitation and experience.
- The establishment and evaluation of strategies for creation of meaning and character through construction and material; to establish the essential importance of construction in the experiential realization and meaningful inflection of architectural program in a particular place.

### The Transit Station-site

Straddling the edge of the Piazza Matteotti (dominated by the Palazzo Chiericati)-and the Fiume Bacchiglione is a sliver of marginal land currently used as a bus stop and café-bar. A new transit station of larger scale and expanded facilities is proposed for this site. For the most part, the site is experienced peripetically; out of the corner of the eye and in motion as a way point in a journey. The station point serves the local bus circuit and some stops for intercity and tour buses. Adjacent to the north edge of the site is a Villa serving as a youth hostel. To the east the Bacchiglione becomes a straight run to the south east crossed by several bridges-the closest is an historic landmark-the Ponte Ferro designed by Officine Aurora, Milano in 1890. The east side of the river is largely housing, the west, the south side faces the lower end of Piazza Matteotti which is dominated by a traffic round about.

## **Program**

The station is inadequate for its purpose and needs greater space for buses, waiting areas both inside and out as well as support facilities such as a larger cafeteria, gathering spaces, bathrooms, storage lockers for bikes and some temporary sleeping spaces that are now appearing in airports, train stations and bus stops around the world (admittedly longer term situations of travel). The location is also ideal a transit authority office, for a "police box" for the *polizei locali* and perhaps several small shops.

## **Urban considerations**

Although small in size the intervention can have an impact beyond its immediate site. Public space towards the Piazza and towards the river needs expansion and resolution of boundaries. Following the concept of the greenway, paths connecting the site to other places in the city should be considered to better connect the station to other parts of the city. The most obvious are ones that parallel the Bacchiglione running south. Other considerations of these pedestrian paths might be to run them north along the edge of the river and the housing blocks to the north. The adjacent youth hostel presents some interesting possibilities for connection—a space between the two structures used by the hostel, shared rooming facilities, bike storage lockers, etc. This includes, but is not required, creating a series of smaller station points located strategically along bus routes. If required by your design position, these should address memory through similarity—"tectonic effigies", in effect.

How much the station affects the larger piazza in terms of visual presence, redefinition of spatial boundaries, surface and environmental character should be defined from a position on singular buildings and their impact on urban space. One consideration is to explore the idea of the loggia in the design of the station. Loggias are arguably an Italian invention which allow for a view of the city or landscape. They create transitions between inside and out and are often a space for leisure. Notable examples are the fifteenth century loggia of the Casa dei Cavalieri di Rodi surmounting the Domitian Terrace in Trajan's Forum, the 9 bay loggia at Ospedale degli Innocenti facing the piazza, the Loggia della Mercanzia in Sienna and Palladio's Loggia del Capitano on the Piazza dei Signori.

## **Travel**

A transit station on this context is something of urban oxymoron. Does it fall in the category of a "non-place" as defined by Marc Augé (Non-Places: Introduction to an Anthropology of Supermodernity)? Given the fact that the bus lines are principally intercity, many riders use will use this station every day waiting for buses, having a coffee or toast, gazing at the river—the building perhaps! But the true nature of the station is one of desertion. Here we might employ Solà-Morales's discussion on monumentality coming from his essay "Weak Architecture" (available on Google books). Weak monumentality, unlike the monuments of the classical or modern era, does not come from the representation of a permanent ideal but that of the fleeting moment, the gesture or the recollection. These are ideas to be explored tectonically in the design of the building and site.

## **Calendar**

### **Week 01**

- The Transit Station: Interventions at the Margins of the Historic Center-Introduction of project and site visit.
- Project diagram visually stating the physical limits, programmatic outline and issues list that will comprise the of the design investigation.

### **Week 02**

- First three dimensional iterations in situ
- Elaborated program, issues

### **Week 03.** Breganz Trip Trip-Journal entries

### **Week 05**

Barcelona Trip-Journal entries: Documentation of at least three buildings relevant to the Vicenza project through web documents (and then in situ)

**Week 7 Mid-term Jury.** A completed architectural and tectonic proposal, fully developed from site scale, to building scale and interiors as appropriate to the project program, including architectural documentation of investigations of

structure and construction materials as they are inflected by the environmental qualities, and regional construction practices of the context.

**Week 09-15:** Venice Project-Campo Intervention-site to be selected through research and visits

### **Week 16 Final Jury all day**

A completed architectural and tectonic proposal, fully developed from site scale, to building scale and interiors as appropriate to the project program, including architectural documentation of investigations of structure and construction materials as they are inflected by the environmental qualities, and regional construction practices of the context.

### **Travel-Design Journal**

Travel figures as important reflective and generative component of the VIA design studio. As a supplement to the studio design work, all students are asked develop and keep a log or journal that records things encountered in travel. The journal may take any form or any combination of media but its purpose is both generative and reflective-directed by studio and MRP interests and following the lead of Le Corbusier's "Journey to the East", or the "Poème de L'angle Droit"(The Poem of Right Angle).

### **Weekly Thesis Discussions**

Once a week we will devote an hour of studio time to a discussion of the Masters Research Projects. During the course of the semester, each student is expected make a brief presentation of their work sharing theses, research methods grounded in architectural making, travel journals and relationship between the Italy studio work and the MRP.

### **Sources and Influences**

The materials brought to this course by both the faculty and the students will have a significant impact on the direction the course will take. It is assumed that travel-particularly to the two project sites generates an increasing familiarity with their history and current physical appearance. There is an abundant set of possible sources for architectural readings, historical readings, web sites, cinema and art that can be brought to discussions and design studies

This class has no required texts, but it is expected that you will develop a reading list supporting your design research. In regards to travel, there are numerous books in the VIA library that can give an excellent background for the studio and personal travel. Here are but a few on Barcelona:

Journey to the East and the Poème de L'angle Droit (The Poem of Right Angle). Le Corbusier  
Transforming Barcelona, edited by Tim Marshall, Routledge  
Barcelona, The Urban Evolution of a Compact City, Joan Busquets, Harvard University, Graduate books in reserve  
School of Design  
Urban Change and the European left, Tales from the New Barcelona, Donald McNeill, Routledge  
Building Barcelona, A Second *Renaixença*, Peter Rowe, Actar  
Barcelona, by Robert Hughes, Knopf.

For Paris: Seven Ages of Paris, Alistair Horne  
For Berlin: Berlin, David Clay Large  
For London: London, The Biography, Peter Ackroyd  
For Rome: Rome from the Ground up, James McGregor  
For Florence: Florence a Portrait, Michael Levey.

### **Room Use**

Since many students are working in the same room it is essential that you work quietly and unobtrusively, that you respect your fellow student's work, and that you clean up after you are finished. Please note that Spray Painting anywhere on the VIA grounds is prohibited.

### **Safety**

Please use every precaution in the studio. Note that power tools are prohibited in the studio.

### **Policy on Retaining Work**

The University of Florida, College of Design, Construction, and Planning policy states that student work may be retained indefinitely for academic purposes. You should be prepared for the instructor to ask that it be exhibited or photographed during or after the term. Having your work retained for photography or exhibition is evidence of its quality and value to the School. You will be able either to retrieve your original work or retrieve it temporarily to make copies or photograph it for your personal use if it is retained for the school archives.

### **Attendance**

There is no possibility to make up a missed studio session. Notes will be useless, and although a long conversation with a fellow student will help you begin to figure out what to do to prepare for the next session, it can never make up the learning. A session with your professor may or may not be possible and cannot duplicate the collective conversation. As a result our policy on attendance is extremely strict:

ANY absence must be explained; i.e. call into the office and have a note left for your professor or an email. It is your responsibility to get the assignments from your fellow students. **Unexcused absences will adversely affect your grade and excessive absences can result in a failing grade.** The number of absences adversely affecting your grade is at the discretion of the professor. Lateness is not permitted if not justified. It is never permissible to miss a Critique. Nor is it permissible to be late or to leave early. It will be considered a direct insult to your fellow classmates and the invited critics.

If something is seriously wrong please do not hesitate to talk to your professor about it. Arrangements will be made to cope with serious illness, family or personal crises.

### **Performance**

As you know, there are no tests in Design. There are also no right or wrong answers per se. You will not be taking in information over the course of the term and regurgitating it in another form. You will begin as you will go on - by making things over and over and over. Each time you will take on new questions or the same questions at another level of sophistication. Therefore, there is no single answer for which we are looking. We will give you feedback on the directions you have taken, suggestions for further work, and assess the architectural implications of your projects.

Our goals for you are:

- (1.) to have at your fingertips a thousand fruitful ways to approach any problem and
- (2.) to learn to critique yourselves effectively. What we ask from you is a concerted effort, an innovative take on the problem, constructions that raise architectural issues, and, most importantly, for you to challenge yourself and be constantly willing to continue to develop a scheme. Grades will be assigned as much on dedication and improvement as on talent - if you enter the course gifted and sit on your skill all term, you will not get an A.

You will be graded not only on the work itself but also in your ability to perform on the goals stated above. All grading will follow UF policies that you can find at: <http://v1\VVV.registrar.ufl.edu/catalog/policies/regulationgrades.html>

To clarify the system of grading for studio classes:

- A Outstanding work only
- A- Close to outstanding
- B+ Very Good Work
- B Good Work
- B- Good work with some problems
- C+ Slightly Above Average Work
- C Average Work
- C- Average Work with some problems
- D+ Poor Work with some effort
- D Poor Work
- E Inadequate Work

### **Regarding accommodations for students with disabilities**

"Students requesting classroom accommodation must first register with the Dean of Students Office. The Dean of Students Office will provide documentation to the student who must then provide this documentation to the Instructor when requesting accommodation.