

Course Number: **ARC**
Course Title: **VIA Analytical Sketching**
Term: **Fall 2025**
Section Number: **tbd**
Credits: **3**
Meeting times: **Monday 10:15-1:15/ Wednesday 10:15-1:15/ Thursday 10:15-1:15 (shares Design 7 time)**
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For office hours refer to the charts posted at the doors of the faculty office.

Syllabus

Course description, and role within the undergraduate sequence

Analytical sketching is a course designed specifically for undergraduates while in a VIA semester abroad. The goal of the course is to train the students in architectural sketching by using the opportunities that travel offers for both daily direct exposure to significant buildings, and to the European urban environment.

This Analytical Sketching class will pair and complement the Design Seven studio. Both will continue the trajectories of city and building analysis started in lower division and developed in Design 6. The role of analysis in the two courses – Analytical Sketching, and Design Seven-- is twofold, first the document the existing conditions in dense gridded European cities, and second to improve the students understanding of the complex mix of spatial, formal, organizational, constructive, and material issues at stake in the making of buildings.

The support materials brought to this course by both the faculty and the students can have a significant impact on the direction the course will take. The sample cities chosen for the Design Seven studio (Barcelona and Rome), and trips to both cities will have an impact on the sketching class. There is an abundant set of possible sources for architectural readings, historical readings, web sites, cinema and art for both cities and for others that can be incorporated by the students into the support thinking for the course. The VIA library has abundant relevant material on the subject easy to access with a set of books on Rome and Barcelona which could be useful for grounding historically and conceptually the buildings and spaces that will be considered in this Analytical Sketching class.

Calendar Sequence of exercises and expectations:

This is a very structured class divided in two parts.

Weeks 1-8. Part One: Guided sketches

The class starts with a series of brief lectures to introduce the students to a set of specific architectural sketching techniques. These are presented as techniques specifically different from artist sketching techniques. While frequently short time artist sketches are intended to make the student grasp quickly the appearance of objects and bodies, the techniques presented in this class favor the understanding of the act of drawing as an analytical exercise. Learning from a common dictionary definition of analysis as “the act of breaking a whole into its constituent parts” the students are asked to consider, distinguish, and draw each and all of the “elements” that constitute a particular architectural realities. The exercises cover different architectural scales, from the urban compound to the building to the room to the detail.

Immediately after the first lecture, the students start with timed field-exercises, either done collectively at class time or requested as homework exercises. In general the minimum time dedicated to each exercise is from 30 minutes to one hour, favoring always meditated drawings instead of quick exercises.

The first technique considered is the one of axonometric sketches. The class favors at the beginning aerial view as a mental exercise that conceptualizes realities normally perceived by the student at ground level. Rather than starting with a static point of view, the students are asked to walk around and within the architectural reality at stake, to try to comprehend its totality and main parts. Only then, they are requested to sit at a particular point of view and imagine a corresponding aerial view in axonometric that favors the representation of what the student considers to be its constituent

parts. Special attention is given to where each the particular drawing should start and finish. Rejecting the picturesque technique of the window frame, the class proposes that the first element to draw at all ends is an identifiable and “complete” element result of the particular analysis.

In some cases, especially when considering the organizational formal and special qualities of a building, the class, borrows a technique learned from Cooper Union’s “Ledoux Exercise” (as presented by Raimund Abraham in the second volume of *“The Education of an Architect”*). In this method, rather than analyzing (decomposing) the whole by –say– real constructive criteria, the students are asked to re-imagine the building by breaking it into elementary geometric parts of they own interpretation, one that is based in the geometric characteristics of the building. The drawing reconstitutes them into a new logical construct.

After reaching a basic degree of proficiency in both conceptual approach “and” a minimum of line quality in these two kinds of axonometric exercises, the class considers several other kinds of sketches, using always architectural conventions as the guiding technique, specifically plan, section, site plan etc.

In the last weeks of “Part One: Guided Sketches”, the students are asked in each exercise to document a particular given condition with at least three drawings that span the complementary techniques studied in the class, aerial axonometric, Ledoux drawings, plans and sections. in the first comprehensive exercises of this kind, the student is given a specific set of requirements, and in the last exercises each student is allowed to choose the particular combination of drawings that they consider adequate for the problem of representation at hand.

All “Part One: Guided Sketches” exercises are included in a sketchbook that has to be presented at mid term, and will contribute to the final grade for the class according to the grading factors described below.

Week 8. Mid-term exam

The students are brought to a particular Vicenza spot and given a building as problem. During the next 90 minutes, they must represent the building in a single double page of their sketchbook by using three to five complementary drawings using the techniques studied in the class, aerial axonometric, Ledoux drawings, plans and sections, by choosing the particular combination of drawings that they consider adequate for the problem of representation at hand.

Weeks 9-16: individual thesis

Each student chooses a sketching thesis issue. These issues can be chosen according to the interests of the particular student while conducting his/her individual and collective trips, to the point that help the student to have specific intentions for particular personal trips. They can also range in scale, from the urban space, to the building as whole, to portions of buildings to details. Examples of possible thesis are thousands, but I write the following only to break the ice: 1. National Pavilions at the Venice Biennale Grounds. 2. Piazzas of the Veneto. 3. A particular building program: i.e. libraries or museums. 4. A particular building materiality. 5. A particular building subject: i.e. skylights, light volume and section. Etc.

Each of the remaining 8 weeks the students must produce “one” double page sketch on the thesis issue. The drawings must be understood as comparative to each other and as part of a series of 8 that will be presented in the notebook in the last meeting of the class in early December.

Methods by which students will be evaluated and their grade determined.

Policy related to class attendance.

Policy related to exams or other work

The Studio System

Given its nature the class will be conducted within the model of the Studio system, both indoors at the facilities of VIA and outdoors in field exercises, with the logical restrictions, while in field exercises, the environment must be considered akin to the university environment with identical corresponding rules of conduct and restrictions as if it were in the University of Florida grounds.

The studio structure is substantially different than a lecture format, more closely approximating a lab class. The basic assumption of the studio format is that the student learns as much from fellow students as from professors. Your design studio will be a group of between 10 and 25 students. Studio time will involve your active participation in discussion and exercises. The process is an active and communal one, involving redundant sequences of doing, looking, articulating, clarifying and doing again. All effort and critique are public - therefore it is essential that you learn to trust and respect

one another. Success in the early years of Design seems directly correlated to whether or not the student is working in school or at least in groups with his or her peers.

Critique

From time to time at the end of a project or at a critical moment of the work Critiques are scheduled. These are public presentations of the work and provide a forum for discussion. Usually external critics - or several - are brought in to provide a fresh viewpoint and to stimulate discussion. These sessions are usually more formal than class sessions and should be taken quite seriously. Critics come in on their own time and expend a serious level of energy on trying to understand your endeavors and give you good feedback. You should think of your presentation not as a moment of judgment, but as an opportunity to get input on implications and possible directions for development. The critiques of your fellow students will also be essential to your education as a designer.

Room and field use

While at VIA facilities, 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. Please note that power tools are prohibited in the studio.

Policy on Retaining Work

Please note that the University of Florida, College of Design, Construction, and Planning policy states that student's 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. Not to worry, you will be able either to retrieve your original work or retrieve it temporarily to make copies or photograph it for your own personal purposes.

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. Un-excused 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 and Grading

There are also no right or wrong answers per se in drawing and analysis. 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 drawing things over and over. Each time you will take on new questions or bring 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.

The goals of the class are:

- (1.) To have at your fingertips a several fruitful ways to approach any sketching 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 drawing. 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://vlvw.registrar.ufl.edu/catalog/policies/regulationgrades.html>

Of the final grade

35% will come from evaluating progress and completion in your notebook from the first 8 weeks of the class

15% will come from the midterm sketch as described above

50% will come from evaluating, completion, concepts, and progress in the 8 sets of multiple sketches that will constitute your sketching thesis as described above.

The system of grading will be similar to other 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

UF Academic Policies and Resources

For additional UF "Academic Policies & Resources," go to: <https://go.ufl.edu/syllabuspolices>. These resources include information about:

- Requirements for class attendance, make-up exams, and assignments
- Processes for students with disabilities who may require accommodations
- Current UF grading policies
- Expectations for course evaluations and constructive feedback
- The University's Honesty Policy regarding cheating, plagiarism, etc.
- In-class recording of class lectures for personal use
- Academic resources, including contact information
- Campus health and wellness resources, including contact information

Required and recommended textbooks

This class has no required texts, there are in the VIA library a few books in reserve dedicated to architects sketches. The bibliography on the subject is not easy. While many architect monographs do have the occasional architect sketch, you have to search very specifically for books dedicated exclusively to discuss architects sketches. But there are still significant contributions. Please find below a selection of books dedicated to sketches that you may want to consider. While many in the list are in European languages other than English, since they rely mainly in graphic information, they are still valuable even if you do not speak the languages. Finally, although not mentioned below, the serious complete works of twentieth century masters available at UF library (i.e. Mies van der Rohe, Alvar Aalto, Frank Lloyd Wright Le Corbusier, and architects of this stature) contain their sketches even if frequently mixed with all other documentation.

01. *Jo Coenen, Schetsen / Roughs Noordknoop Ceramique Maastricht*, by Herman Coenen, Nai Publishers, 2001
02. *Aldo Rossi, The Sketchbooks*, by Paolo Portoguesi, Thames & Hudson, 2000
03. *Carlo Aimonino, Disegni, 1972- 1997*, by Efizio Pitsalis, Federico Motta Editors, 2000
04. *Adolfo Natalini, Disegni, 1976-2001*, by Fabrizio Arrisoni, Federico Motta Editors, 2002
05. *Aldo Rossi, Drawings and paintings*, by Morris Adjmi and Giovanni Bertolotto, Princeton Architectural Press, 1993
06. *Le Corbusier e La Spagna, Riproduzione Carnet Barcelona*, by Juan Jose Lahuerta, Mondadori, 2006
07. *Ricardo Porro, sketchbooks*, by Patrice Boulet, Institut Francais de Architecture, 1993
08. *Gehry Draws*, by Mark Rappolt and Robert Violette, MIT Press, 2004
09. *Steven Holl, Written in Water*, by Steven Holl, Lars Muller Publishers, 2002
10. *Sketch, Plan Build*, by Alejandro Bahamon, Harper Design, 2005
11. *Alvaro Siza, Imaginar a Evidencia*, by Alvaro Siza, Edicoes 70, 1998
12. *Alvaro Siza, City Sketches*, by Brigitte Fleck, Birkhauser, 1994

13. *Alvaro Siza, Esquissos de Viagem*, by Alvaro siza, Documentos de Arquitectura, 1988
14. *Alvaro Siza, Esquissos do Douro*, by Alvaro Siza, Figueirinhas/ICEP editor, 1999
15. *Alvaro Siza, Thinking by Means of Drawing*, Kenchiko Bunka vol. 52, May, 1997
16. *La Ciudad y el Paisaje*, by Julio Cano Lasso, Edicion del Autor, 1985
17. *Mask of Medusa*, John Hejduk, Rizzoli, 1985
18. *Pewter Wings Golden Horns Stone Veils*, John Hejduk, The Monacelli Press, 1990
19. *Patterns in the Landscape, The notebooks of Phillip Hugues*, by Glenn Murcutt, Thames & Hudson, 1998
20. *Drawing Berlage's Exchange*, Daniel Castor, NAI Publishers, 1999
21. *The Elements of Style*, drawings by Mayra Kalman, Penguin Books, 2000
22. *The Principles of Uncertainty*, Mayra Kalman, The Penguin Press, 2007
23. *Alvaro Siza, O que a luz ao Cair Deixa nas Cosas*, by Bernardo Pinto de Almeida, BPI editor, 2005
24. *Ralph Rapson, Sixty Years of Modern Design*, by Jane King Hession, Afton Historical Society Press, 1999
25. *I Disegni di Carlo Scarpa per Castelvechio*, by Alba di Lieto, Marsilio Editori, 2006
26. *Le Corbusier, Journey to the East*, by Ivan Zaknic, 1980
27. *Voyage D'orient, Carnets*, Le Corbusier, Electa Editors and le Corbusier Foundation, 2002
28. *Les Voyage D'Allemagne, Carnets*, Le Corbusier, Electa Editors and le Corbusier Foundation, 2002
29. *Architects Sketches, Dialogue and Design*, Kendra Schank Smith, Architectural Press, 2008
30. *Le Corbusier Sketchbooks, Volumes 1 to 4*, Le Corbusier Foundation, 1981