

Advanced Studio ARCH 85101 / ARCH 51000 / ARCH 92102  
Class Meetings: M/TH 2:00PM – 5:50PM; Thursday lectures @ 6:30PM  
Instructor: Associate Professor Shawn L. Rickenbacker  
Location: Spitzer, Studio TBD  
Spring 2019

# STACK

135<sup>th</sup> NYC Street River 2 River

## STUDIO OVERVIEW/DESCRIPTION

As part of the J. Max Bond Center for Urban Futures, and a CCNY wide initiative involving several collaborating academic departments and community partners, the 135<sup>th</sup> Street Initiative, River 2 River Project will examine the NYC Mayor's Office Urban Resilience identified "Urban Stress" of affordable housing and its supportive social and economic services. In addition, the studio will seek to introduce a fundamental shift and or redefinition of the architectural and development term, 'site' and explore its inherent potential to foster innovation within the field of architecture and urban design.

### Premise:

Urban centers within the United States are currently facing a crisis, an extreme shortage of affordable housing. The crisis is fueled in part by ever-increasing urban land values, that is predicated on the simple formula of Supply vs. Demand, of which there is limited supply. The escalating land values alone, directly impacts the prospect of building affordable housing in these urban centers, making it feasibly improbable if not impossible. This is due to a fundamental 'return on investment' calculation which affordable developments are not able to meet. The principal factor in this calculation is land cost, which when factored against available market returns, such as rents and or sale prices of the developed units, creates investment returns with very low margins. In the private sector which accounts for the vast majority of all urban development, these are not desirable returns and or considered high-risk investments. One solution to this economic barrier has been to identify City owned sites as potential sites for affordable development (NYC For All, Mayors Affordable Housing Initiative). This solution has limits: one, there is a finite amount of City owned properties and sites available for development. Secondly, the vast majority of developed and or developable property is privately owned. This suggests the potential and need for a reconsideration of what constitutes a developable property / site and at the very least an expanded definition of property / site.

### Research: Urban Behaviors and Collective Form

In this studio we will examine the theme of Complex Urban Behaviors and Collective Form through the program of housing. Housing as a collective form within the urban structure of cities dictates a mode of living reflected in unique urban demographics, such as neighborhoods, precincts, communities etc. Everything from patterns of movement, occupation, access and social exchange and or isolation stem from the overarching organization of housing. From a sociological position housing is often a reflection of a society's tendencies toward the environment, economic stability and its social patterns of behavior. These interrelated conditions often define architecture as a political act reaffirming and or realigning such relationships. Such relationships are typically expressed as housing density vs. open space, live work arrangements, access to transport, and access to social, cultural and environmental amenities

etc. If we are to understand architecture as a body of knowledge, then the goal of our research studio will be twofold; to revisit and inspect its existing catalogue of architectural knowledge and secondly to realign the contents of this catalogue in search of new arrangements addressing the evolution of urban contexts as well as the rather public contesting of architecture.

The process of architectural production is at once familiar for the architect yet also unintelligible due to increasingly opaque political and economic forces. This raises the question, what is the role of architect in this rapid yet incomprehensible transformation. To fully understand and contribute meaningful research to a city-wide crisis the studio will consult with community leaders, elected officials, researchers from other academic departments, the private sector and the construction industry. The goal of such collaborative work and consultation is to understand the dependencies and interrelated economic, social, environmental conditions that contribute to the physical environment and ultimate form of the City. Collecting, compiling and analyzing data related to population demographics, local economies, energy, and environmental factors will be an essential part of the studio. This work will provide a foundation for future presentations of the work to City agencies on behalf of established clients and partners. Secondly, it will assist in redefining exhausted development terms and well as architectural and urban vision of what is realistically possible in addressing the urban needs of growing Cities of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century.

#### Autonomous Architectures

Is there such a thing as an autonomous architecture? Can architecture operate independently from physical and or phenomenological contexts?

Architecture is a political act, by nature. It has to do with the relationships between people and how they decide to change their conditions of living. And architecture is a prime instrument of making that change – because it has to do with building the environment they live in, and the relationships that exist in that environment.

-- **Lebbeus Woods**

The specific histories and qualities of the 135<sup>th</sup> corridor are an amalgamation of places, spaces and histories that operate as a collective. The history of programmatic uses, geography, built environment and perceived boundaries create several unique opportunities to research future physical and spatial assets. These assets are the basis for exploring innovative interdependent new architectures developed as the instruments of change. This will provide the studio an opportunity to further question and debate the question of an autonomous architecture and instruments of change.

#### Conceptual Basis:

Many design critics and policy makers agree that regulatory zoning as it is currently practiced has produced a deficit of spatial innovation. As cities deal with unprecedented growth, zoning has done little to challenge and or mitigate the very tangible negative effects, such as environmental degradation, inflated land values, displacement, and equitable economic distribution to name a few. As part of the studio's research teams will investigate as well as interrogate parts of the NYC zoning code. Our explicit purpose will be to illustrate contradictions and false assumptions that limit applicable innovative solutions toward increasing density in sustainable and equitable ways. Building upon this research the studio will seek to exploit this information by translating it into actionable design, building strategies and typologies currently underrealized within New York City.

Stack /stak/

*noun*

- 1. a pile of objects, typically one that is neatly arranged

*Verb*

- 2. shuffle or arrange (a deck of cards) dishonestly so as to gain an unfair advantage.



As a response to the question “what is the role of architect in this rapid yet incomprehensible urban transformation” the studio will conduct research and develop proposals that strategically seek to uncover and illustrate new urban development opportunities embedded within existing urban fabric. One such conceptual basis for this operation will be that of the ‘Stack”. The Stack here is defined simultaneously as a noun referring to the entire suite of policies, economic interest, and community interest that contributes to the built environment. Secondly, as a verb, illustrating the action of arranging information and physical material so as to gain a measurable advantage.

#### **Sites 2.0:**

135<sup>th</sup> Street, Harlem River to The Hudson River. Along the 135<sup>th</sup> Street corridor East to West are several strategic publicly and privately-owned buildings, undeveloped land and ‘next urban’ sites. A ‘next urban’ site for the purposes of this studio is one which does not easily fit the familiar definition of an urban building site. Each of these ‘next urban’ sites identified have unique characteristics worth closer examination due to either their configuration, volumetric utilization, current F.A.R. availability or speculative future availability. Several of the available sites speculate on the rationale of supply versus demand where, a shortage on supply of traditional sites requires further examination of context or ‘next urban’ sites to meet demand. The characteristics of ‘next urban’ sites are expected to solicit innovative, as well as economically ambitious proposals that are uniquely responsive to addressing the affordable housing shortage, community interests and concerns, and equitable economics.

#### **Programs:**

Future Urban Housing

Energy Planning

Technology Workforce Incubator

Workforce Vehicle Parking

Stacks

## **ACADEMIC + WEEKLY SCHEDULE**

Note: schedule below is subject to revision through the duration of the semester.

### **W1 INTRODUCTION**

Mon 01.28 First day of class (Lottery and general presentation)

Thu 01.31 Studio

Team Organization + Research Assignments:

Sample Demographics Study

Comparative Density Studies

Fri 02.01 Portfolios DUE: M.Arch I and M.Arch II students

### **W2**

Mon 02.04 Studio

Site Modeling

Thu 02.07 Studio

Designing + Exploiting Information

Data Exploration 1 – Technical Workshop 1

### **W3 Reasoning as Design. Establishing Need. New Assets**

Mon 02.11 Studio

Data Exploration 2

Thu 02.14 Studio

Community Partner Consultation + Presentations

**6:30pm. Lecture: Nandini Bagchee**

Fri 02.15 Portfolios DUE: B.Arch 4<sup>th</sup> year students

### **W4**

Mon 02.18 College Closed / Presidents Day

Thu 02.21 Studio

Exploiting Zoning – Technical Workshop 2

Site Modeling Completed

### **W5 Political + Policy Strategy Outline**

Mon 02.25 Studio

Structural Workshop + Precedent Research

Thu 02.28 Studio

**6:30pm. Lecture: Olalekan Jeyifous**

## **W6 The Physical Manifestation of an Idea.**

NIMBY – 2025

Mon 03.04 Studio

Expanding Environmental Sustainability – Technical Workshop 3 + 4

Thu 03.07 Studio

**6:30pm. Lecture: Walter Hood**

## **W7 Organizational Promise**

Mon 03.11 Studio

Modular Industry Workshop - Devon Prioleau

Thu 03.14 Studio

Originals vs. Copies

**6:30pm. Lecture: Byron Merritt**

## **W8**

Mon 03.18 Studio

Multiple Scale models / drawings / diagrammatic models / experimental montages / Data Documentation

Thu 03.21 Studio

Guest Review

**6:30pm. Lecture: Ferda Kolatan**

## **W9**

Mon 03.25 Studio

Design Sprint: Iterative Development and Proposal Testing

Thu 03.28 Studio

**6:30pm. Lecture: Jennifer Newsom**

## **W10**

Tue 04.01 Studio

Social Impact + Design of the Built Environment

Thu 04.04 Studio

**6:30pm. Lecture: Monica Bertolino**

## **W11**

Mon 04.08 Studio

Thu 04.11 Studio

**6:30pm. Lecture: Brian Goldstein**

## **W12**

Mon 04.15 Studio

Thu 04.18 Studio

Community Presentation

04.19 - 04.28 SPRING RECESS

**W13**

Mon 04.29 Studio

Thu 05.02 Studio

**W14**

Mon 05.06 Studio

**W15**

TBD **FINAL REVIEW**

**W16**

TBD Final Studio Materials due for: SSA/CCNY Archive, "Super Jury," end of semester assessment, Graduation Show, etc. as directed

**READINGS**

Periodic readings will be assigned throughout the semester to provide a practical as well as theoretical foundation for advancing architectural research and useful speculation. Students will be expected to summarize the readings and engage in studio wide discussions.

**BIBLIOGRAPHY**

Thom Mayne, *Combinatory Urbanism : The Complex Behavior of Collective Form* (2011);

Peter Trummer. *What is architecture?* <http://vimeo.com/70166958>

Jeffrey Kipnis. *What is architecture?* <http://vimeo.com/70166956>

Daniel Libeskind, *MICROMEGAS* (1979)

Gaston Bachelard, *The Poetics of Space* Paperback – April 1, 1994

Sanford Kwinter, *The Architectures of Time, Chapter 1 The Complex and The Singular*, MIT Press 2002

Manuel De Landa, *MATTER MATTERS* by Manuel DeLanda, *DOMUS Magazine*

Manuel De Landa, *Deluze, Diagrams and the Genesis of Form*

Jeffrey Kipnis, *A Question of Qualities: Essays in Architecture (Writing Architecture)* – August 2, 2011

Rodolfo Machado. *Monolithic Architecture (Architecture & Design)* – November 1, 1995

Alison Smithson. *Mat Building* 1974 article,

Roland Barthes. "Death of the Author"

Cousins, Mark. "The Ugly." *Architectural Association Files*, Number 28, 29, 30, Autumn 1994. pp. 61-65, p. 3- 6, p. 65-68.

Judith Clark - Mark Cousins' 'The Ugly' - 20 Years On [http://showstudio.com/project/ugly/article\\_judith\\_clark](http://showstudio.com/project/ugly/article_judith_clark)

Hensel, Menges, Hight. *Space Reader: Heterogeneous Space in Architecture (AD Reader)* – 31 Mar 2009

Antoine Picon. *Ornament: The Politics of Architecture and Subjectivity - AD Primer* – May 6, 2013

Antoin Picon <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KnwSoRUZEto>

Lebbeus Woods. *Anarchitecture Architecture Is a Political Act (Architectural Monographs, No. 22)*

Rene Descartes.(1596-1650 ) *Discourse on the Method of Rightly Conducting the Reason, and Seeking*

*Truth in the Sciences* 1637

"Atomism Structure and Form", Lancelot L. Whyte, in *Structure in Art and in Science*, Gyorgy Kepes, ed., George Braziller, Inc. , pp. 20-28, (1965).

"The Discovery of Form", Jacob Bronowski, in *Structure in Art and in Science*, Gyorgy Kepes, ed., George Braziller, Inc. , pp. 55-65, (1965).

**REFERENCES**

<https://www1.nyc.gov/assets/rentguidelinesboard/pdf/18HSR.pdf>

<https://comptroller.nyc.gov/reports/nyc-for-all-the-housing-we-need/>

## GRADING/ATTENDANCE POLICIES AND STUDIO CULTURE

### Course Expectations:

- That students will develop a high level of independent thought and rigor and a willingness to go beyond both basic project requirements and their own perceived limits and abilities.
- That students will successfully complete all project requirements. No make-up or postponed project submissions will be accepted except in the case of medical emergencies or other extraordinary circumstances. Excused absences and project delays must be officially cleared by professor in advance in order to be considered valid.

### Methods of Assessment:

- Attendance and participation in class discussions: 20%
- Project development in response to semester schedule: 50%
- Project presentation, completion and resolution: 30%

*Note: The Research component of the studio will be weighed more heavily in assessment of graduate student work and class performance.*

### Key areas of Grading Assessment:

- **Studio performance & work habits:** Ability to respond to studio criticism & discourse in a consistent & clear manner throughout the course of the semester as demonstrated in the evolution and development of design work.
- **Clarity of representation & mastery of media:** Ability to utilize both digital and manual drawing and model-making techniques to precisely and creatively represent architectural ideas.
- **Pre-design:** Ability to prepare a comprehensive program for an architectural project that includes such tasks as: an assessment of client and user needs; an inventory of spaces and their requirements; an analysis of site conditions (including existing buildings); a review of the relevant building codes and standards, including relevant sustainability requirements, and an assessment of their implications for the project; and a definition of site selection and design assessment criteria.
- **Research:** Understanding of the theoretical and applied research methodologies and practices used during the design process.
- **Integrated evaluations and decision-making design process:** Ability to demonstrate the skills associated with making integrated decisions across multiple systems and variables in the completion of a design project. This demonstration includes problem identification, setting evaluative criteria, analyzing solutions, and predicting the effectiveness of implementation.
- **Attendance:** Consistent level of preparation and on-time presence for each studio class and scheduled evening lectures.
- **Portfolio:** Completion of portfolio as described below and attendance at all scheduled portfolio related events.

### Portfolio

- All M.Arch I third year students and all M.Arch II students are required to submit a portfolio on February 1st, 2019. Third year students and M Arch II students may submit either a hard copy portfolio or email a link to a digital portfolio to [hborgeson@ccny.cuny.edu](mailto:hborgeson@ccny.cuny.edu). Digital submissions must be a link, not a file attachment.
- All B.Arch 4<sup>th</sup> year students are required to submit a hard copy portfolio on February 15<sup>th</sup>, 2019. Submit to the Architecture Program office (there will be a bin for your use).

**Grading Criteria:**

**A (+/-)** Work meets all requirements and exceeds them. Presentations are virtually flawless, complete, and finely detailed. Work exhibits professional, “museum quality” level of craft. Student has developed an individual design process that shows a high level of independent thought and rigor. Work shows evidence of intense struggle to go beyond expectations, and beyond the student’s own perceived limits of their abilities.

**B (+/-)** Work meets all requirements. Presentations are complete and finely detailed. Work exhibits professional level of craft. Student has developed an individual design process that shows a high level of independent thought and rigor.

**C (+/-)** Work meets minimum requirements. While presentations may be complete, student has struggled to develop an individual design process and/or is lacking in craft or design resolution.

**D (+/-)** Work is below minimum requirements. Presentations are incomplete, student has struggled to develop an individual design process and/or is lacking in craft or design resolution.

**F** Work is well below minimum requirements. Student does not develop adequate design process, and/or does not finish work on time.

**INC** Grades of “incomplete” are not given under any circumstances unless there is evidence of a medical or personal emergency. In such cases, instructor and student develop a contract to complete work by a specified date, as per CCNY policy. Classes / work missed due to illness must be explained with a physician’s note.

**Notes:**

C is the lowest passing grade for M.Arch I and M.Arch II students. No D grades are given to graduate students. Working in teams does not guarantee the same grade for each team member; grades are based on a range of criteria for each student.

For more information on grading guidelines and other CCNY policies and procedures, consult the current CCNY academic bulletins: <https://www.ccny.cuny.edu/registrar/bulletins>

**Office Hours:**

Office hours are set by appointment. If a student needs to speak in private with a studio critic they must email in advance to request a meeting time. Students may seek office hour appointments to discuss any matters of concern including personal, private matters and general inquiries about course related work, grading, assessment and content.

**Probation & Dismissal:** for program specific information related to grades, academic standing, probation and dismissal, please see your program academic advisors:

B.Arch: Amy Daniel [adaniel@ccny.cuny.edu](mailto:adaniel@ccny.cuny.edu)

M.Arch: Hannah Borgeson [hborgeson@ccny.cuny.edu](mailto:hborgeson@ccny.cuny.edu)

**Studio Culture:**

Working in the studio is mandatory. Studio culture is an important part of an architectural education. Please see the Spitzer School of Architecture Studio Culture Policy, which can be accessed on the SSA website here: <https://ssa.ccny.cuny.edu/about/policies/>.



Arriving more than ten minutes late to class will constitute an absence. Two unexcused absences will result in a whole letter grade deduction from a final grade; more than four will result in a failing grade. It is expected that all students will participate in all scheduled working, midterm and final reviews and contribute constructively to the discussion.

Students who will miss any class sessions, exams, presentations, trips, or the like due to a religious observance should notify the instructor at the beginning of the semester so that appropriate adjustments for observance needs can be implemented. This could include an opportunity to make up any examination, study, or work requirement that is missed because of an absence due to a religious observance on any particular day or days.

The studio environment should be a quiet and respectful place where all students can work and think in peace. At no time may students play music out loud in studio, even at a low volume. If you desire to listen to music, either during class hours or after hours, headphones are a requirement. Conversations must also be kept to a reasonable volume to respect classmates and those students in adjacent studios.

Students are expected to keep a journal or sketchbook throughout the duration of studio to document their thought process & take notes of any texts, books, terms or references that are mentioned by either the studio critic or fellow classmates and to selectively follow up on these and any other assigned readings before the next class.

As a student you are expected to conduct yourself in a manner that reflects the ethical ideas of the profession of architecture. Any act of academic dishonesty not only raises questions about an individual's fitness to practice architecture, but also demeans the academic environment in which it occurred. Giving or receiving aid in examinations, and plagiarism are a violation of an assumed trust between the school and the student.

Plagiarism, i.e. the presentation as one's own work of words, drawings, ideas and opinions of someone else, is a serious instance of academic dishonesty in the context as cheating on examinations. The submission of any piece of work (written, drawn, built, or photocopied) is assumed by the school to guarantee that the thoughts and expressions in it are literally the student's own, executed by the student. All assignments must be the student's original work. Any copying, even short excerpts, from another book, article, or Internet source, published or unpublished, without proper attribution will result in automatic failure of the entire course.

For citations, the Chicago Manual of Style is

**AccessAbility Center (Student Disability Services):**

The AccessAbility center (AAC) facilitates equal access and coordinates reasonable accommodations, academic adjustments, and support services for City College students with disabilities while preserving the integrity of academic standards. Students who have self-identified with AAC to receive accommodations should inform the instructor at the beginning of the semester. (North Academic Center 1/218; 212-650-5913 or 212-650-6910 for TTY/TTD). <https://www.cuny.edu/accessability>

The school's library is a shared resource that is necessary supplement to all research and design work. Please direct questions to the library staff or the Architecture Librarian Nilda Sanchez: [nsanchez@ccny.cuny.edu](mailto:nsanchez@ccny.cuny.edu)

**NAAB (National Architectural Accrediting Board):**

The National Architectural Accrediting Board (NAAB) is the sole agency authorized to accredit US professional degree programs in architecture. Since most state registration boards in the United States require any applicant for licensure to have graduated from a NAAB-accredited program, obtaining such a degree is an essential aspect of preparing for the professional practice of architecture. While graduation from a NAAB-accredited program does not assure registration, the accrediting process is intended to verify that each accredited program substantially meets those standards that, as a whole, comprise an appropriate education for an architect.

More specifically, the NAAB requires an accredited program to produce graduates who: are competent in a range of intellectual, spatial, technical, and interpersonal skills; understand the historical, socio-cultural, and environmental context of architecture; are able to solve architectural design problems, including the integration of technical systems and health and safety requirements; and comprehend architects' roles and responsibilities in society.

The following student performance criteria from the 2014 NAAB Conditions are addressed in this course:

**Realm B: Building Practices, Technical Skills, And Knowledge.** Graduates from NAAB-accredited programs must be able to comprehend the technical aspects of design, systems, and materials and be able to apply that comprehension to architectural solutions. In addition, the impact of such decisions on the environment must be well considered.

**B.1 Pre-Design:** ability to prepare a comprehensive program for an architectural project that includes an assessment of client and user needs; an inventory of spaces and their requirements; an analysis of site conditions (including existing buildings); a review of the relevant building codes and standards, including relevant sustainability requirements, and an assessment of their implications for the project; and a definition of site selection and design assessment criteria.

**Realm C: Integrated Architectural Solutions.** Graduates from NAAB-accredited programs must be able to demonstrate that they have the ability to synthesize a wide range of variables into an integrated design solution.

**C.1 Research:** understanding of the theoretical and applied research methodologies and practices used during the design process.

**C.2 Integrated Evaluations and Decision-Making Design Process:** ability to demonstrate the skills associated with making integrated decisions across multiple systems and variables in the completion of a design project. This demonstration includes problem identification, setting evaluative criteria, analyzing solutions, and predicting the effectiveness of implementation.

*Students should consult the NAAB website [www.naab.org](http://www.naab.org) for additional information regarding student performance criteria and all other conditions for accreditation.*

**CONTACT INFORMATION:**

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