



## SuperBlock studio

**Contesting the Cultural Hegemony of the car**

The Bernard and Anne Spitzer School of Architecture  
The City College of New York  
Advanced Studio // Summer 2019

Prof. Gonzalo J. Lopez

**Type of Course:** Advanced Studio ARCH 86101 / 51000 / 91102  
**Class Meetings:** M/T/TH: 3:00PM – 7:10PM  
**Instructor:** Gonzalo J. Lopez  
**Location:** Room TBD  
**Semester/Year:** Summer 2019

## SuperBlock Studio: Contesting the cultural hegemony of the car

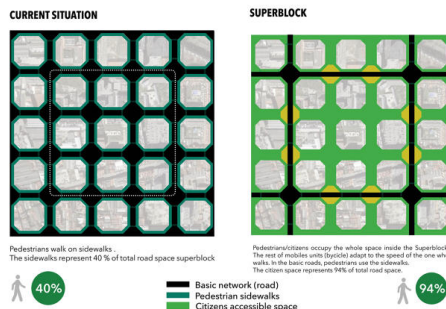
### Course Description & Learning Objectives

In September 2016, the city of Barcelona implemented its first **Superblock**, an urban experiment designed to challenge the mobility of the typical urban road network, based in its 113m x 113 m grid where the car, as in most metropolis around the world, is ubiquitous.

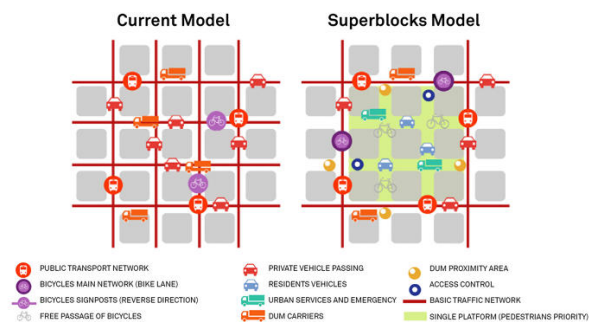
Through the modification of the basic road network and the establishment of differentiated routes for each mode of transport, the Superblock aims to return the public space to the citizen and pedestrian life, while reducing the environmental impacts of vehicles.

The first Superblock covers an area of 40 acres in *El Poblenou* neighborhood, gathering 9 blocks of the city grid into a 400m x 400m area with both interior and exterior components. The interior (*intervia*) is closed to motorized vehicles and above ground parking; and the perimeter is where motorized traffic circulates, making up the basic roads.

#### Space for pedestrians in a Superblock model



#### SUPERBLOCKS MODEL



This simple operation, that doesn't require the implementation of major changes in urban planning, opens up a discussion, both current and necessary, about the future of the urban environment, that the studio will take as its starting point, to speculate with architectural scenarios that can be implemented within the superblock background in order to actively engage in the social role of architecture and its impact in modern cities.



The first set of operations implemented in Barcelona's first Superblock are based in tactical actions on the newly liberated public space: reversible temporary measures of quick execution in order to visualize the activities that could be carried out. The studio will analyze such actions and their impact in current neighbors, and question ideas of use of public space, temporality, and the potential of architecture to generate long term impact structures envisioning the future of the superblock model.



Tactical interventions in *El Poblenou* Superblock



Benedetto Bufalino . The wooden deck over the cars . Logroño . 2019

The semester starts with an analysis of the superblock proposal and its suitability for a city like New York, where experiments and speculation are already populating newspapers and gathering attention from the architecture community.

Students, working in pairs, will analyze the superblock implemented in *Poblenou* and look for potential applications in a defined area in the East Village, in Manhattan. Students will establish potential traffic patterns, limits, pedestrian areas, bike paths, in order to propose the configuration, number of blocks and functioning of the Superblock. In the process, students will study the area's community board (East Village – community board 03), the theoretical stakeholders of the projects, and will look for a collective definition of the term '*Public*', in Public Space.

After the first analytical and speculative exercise, the class will develop a proposal for a NYC Superblock, working on a project through three scales:

- City scale: The situation of the superblock within Manhattan, proposal for a traffic redistribution around it. *Work in pairs.*
- Superblock scale: Exterior and interior spaces within the Superblock. *Individual work.*
- Architectural scale: Each student will identify a potential architectural device that addresses the opportunities offered by the superblock structure and proposes a permanent structure on the site, incorporating the program “**Community Center +**” to it. *Individual work.*

Once established the Superblock site, the studio will speculate within the newly created car-free boundaries, taking as a subject of design every urban and architectural element (roads / sidewalks / facades / buildings...)

The students will develop their proposals both collectively and individually. Each pair will generate a big format drawing of the chosen site in which both individual projects will be represented, and two additional panels to explain their proposals separately.

The deliverables are set with the intention of generating a collective discussion on the future of the cities, encouraging students to challenge what design can do in different scales and with different implications, within the frame of New York City, a familiar environment in their education.

## // Exercises

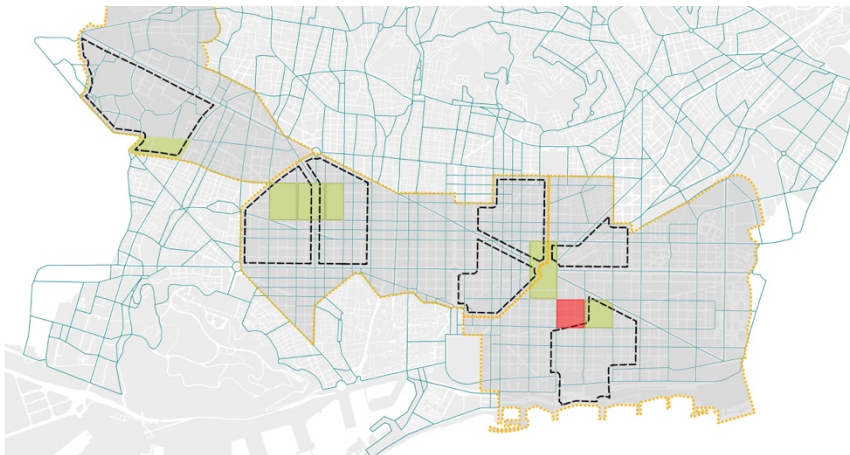
### //01// Barcelona-NYC Superblock//Trans-Media Speculative Collages//1.5 wk//Pairs

Students, working in pairs, will analyze Barcelona's Superblock in Poble Nou and identify its characteristics towards a potential application in New York City through the creation of a *speculative trans-media collage*, surveying the Superblock characteristics and imaging its potential uses.

After the analyses + collage of Barcelona's case, the students will start working in a designated area in Manhattan's East Village:

- **Lower Manhattan – East Village – community board 03:**

<http://www.nyc.gov/html/mancb3/html/home/home.shtml>



Implemented Superblock (in red) and planned superblocks for phase 1 (in green). Barcelona

Area of study in New York.

Each pair will identify the area within that they want to define as Superblock, proposing number of blocks, adjustments to traffic (car / bike / pedestrian), and liberated public space, re-creating the *speculative trans-media collage* in their Manhattan site, and working on a series of small sketch analytical models. The exercise will conclude with a collective pin-up showing the results and a group discussion. Each student will continue working in the area they have analyzed for the next stages of the semester.

### Deliverables:

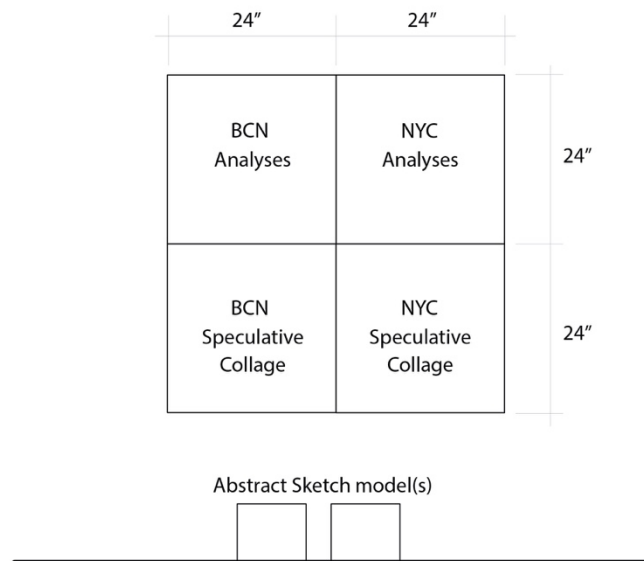
- Case Study 01 / Barcelona  
 24" x 24" Panel with the *Poblenou* Superblock analyses.  
 24" x 24" Panel with *speculative trans-media collage* for BCN *In Pairs*
  
- Case Study 02 / East Village  
 24" x 24" Panel with the assigned Manhattan area analyses and the delimitation of the potential New York City Superblock.  
 24" x 24" Panel with *speculative trans-media collage* for East Village *In Pairs*

- Abstract sketch model(s) of the Superblock boundaries and its way of operating.  
 Street Void  
 Street envelope  
 Street Objects (...)

*In Pairs*

### Proposed Layout:

PINUP MATERIAL \_ PINUP EX01



### //02// Manhattan Superblock. Public Enactments. Program definition//1.5 wk//Individual

Students, working individually, will define the programmatic approach to their SuperBlock area, by proposing the traffic systems for cars, bikes and pedestrians, and envision potential uses for the public space.

Each student will analyze a series of architectural typologies and their relationship with the city (cultural, shelter, commercial, playgrounds...), in order to argue for the selection of typologies to be develop in the last exercise through a **Community Center + (Architectural Devices)**.

For the midterm, each student will present their design for the superblock and its urban impact, and the typological analyses to be developed towards the final.

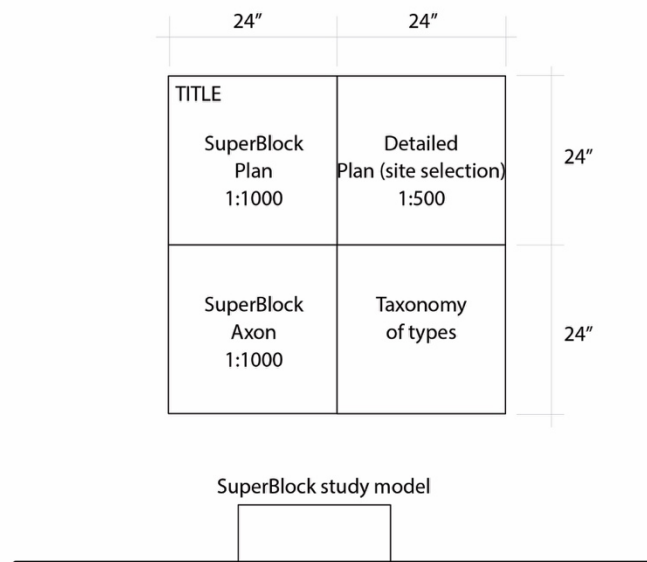
Before the midterm presentation, each student will work in a Schematic Architectural Proposal for the Superblock's Public Space, including a general programmatic approach and strategy for a Community Center, presenting the first stages of the design together with **Exercises 01 & 02** to the jury panel.

**Deliverables:**

- Design document 01:  
 24" x 24" Panel with the Design Proposal for the Manhattan Superblock\_plan  
 24" x 24" Panel with the Design Proposal for the Manhattan Superblock\_axon *Individual*
- Design document 02:  
 24" x 24" Panel with the designated site for the project *Individual*
- Case Study 03:  
 24"x 24" Panel with architecture typological studies and their potential application to the Superblock. *Individual*
- Study Model of the Superblock functions *Individual*

**Proposed Layout:**

PINUP MATERIAL \_ PINUP EX02

**//MIDTERM REVIEW//****Deliverables:**

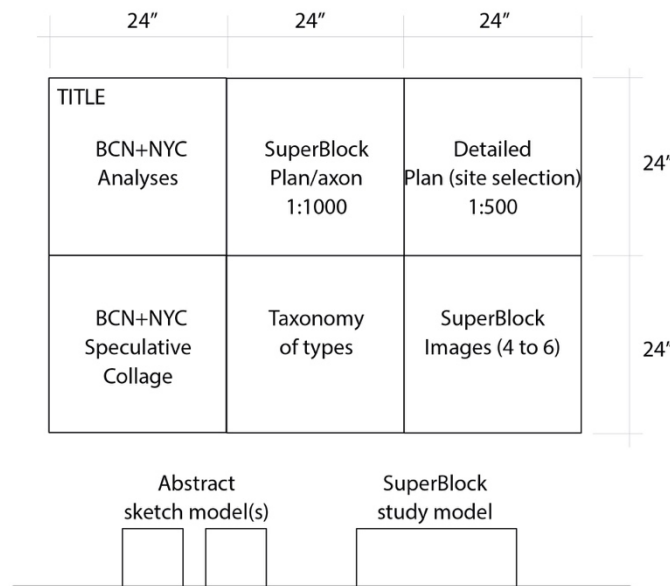
- Case Study 01+02 / Barcelona + East Village  
 24" x 24" Panel with the BCN+NYC Superblock analyses.  
 24" x 24" Panel with *speculative trans-media collage* for BCN+NYC *In Pairs*
- Design document 01:  
 24" x 24" Panel with the Design Proposal for the Manhattan Superblock\_plan and/or axon *Individual*
- Case Study 03: 24"x 24" Panel with architecture typological studies and their potential application to the Superblock. *Individual*



- Design document 02:  
24" x 24" Panel with the designated site for the project *Individual*
- Design document 03:  
24" x 24" Panel with images of the superblock *Individual*
- Abstract sketch model(s) of the Superblock boundaries and its way of operating.  
Street Void  
Street envelope  
Street Objects (...)  
*In Pairs*
- Study Model of the Superblock functions *Individual*

### Proposed Layout:

PINUP MATERIAL \_ MIDTERM REVIEW



### //FINAL EXERCISE// Community Center + //4 wk//Individual

After the midterm presentation, each student will develop the architectural proposal following the programmatic approach determined in the previous exercise and will apply it to the selected site through the design of a **Community Center +** (the '+' will be based on the typological study).

Each student will develop their proposal (plan, sections, elevations, images...) in individual boards, and a series of detail models to support their projects.

The final presentation will focus on the impact of the Architectural Device on the city scale, and a discussion on the superblock as an urban strategy to face the future of our big metropolis.



**Proposed Programmatic Distribution:****COMMUNITY BOARD AREAS (Basic Program)**

- . Meeting Rooms (x2) - 500 s.f. each
- . Auditorium (100 px aprox.) - 1,200 s.f.
- . Shared Office Space – 600 to 750 s.f.
- . Private offices (x2) - 150 s.f. each
- . Counseling Units (x5) – 150 s.f. each
- . Cafeteria - 500 to 750 s.f.
- . Common Areas – 1,000 s.f.
- . Restrooms – 500s.f.
- . Archive + Storage - 500 s.f.
- . Mechanical - 1,000 s.f.
- . Circulation (15% of program area) –
- . Total - 10,000s.f. aprox.

**“PLUS” AREAS (Added Program)**

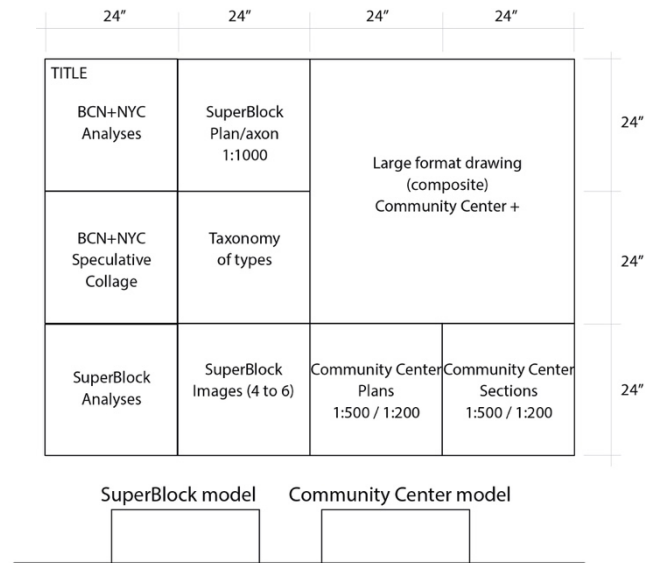
- . To be developed by the student, aprox 1.5 to 2 times the basic program
- . Total - 20,000 to 30.000 s.f. aprox.

**TOTAL - 30,000 s.f. aprox****//FINAL REVIEW//****Deliverables:**

- Case Study 01+02 / Barcelona + East Village  
24" x 24" Panel with the *BCN+NYC* Superblock analyses.  
24" x 24" Panel with *speculative trans-media collage* for *BCN+NYC* *In Pairs*
- Design document 01:  
24" x 24" Panel with the Design Proposal for the Manhattan Superblock\_plan and/or axon *Individual*
- Case Study 03:  
24"x 24" Panel with architecture typological studies and their potential application to the Superblock. *Individual*
- Design document 02:  
24" x 24" Panel with images of the superblock *Individual*
- Design document 03:  
48" x 48" Panel composite drawing of the Community Center + *Individual*
- Design document 04:  
24" x 24" Panel with Community Center + Plans *Individual*
- Design document 04:  
24" x 24" Panel with Community Center + Sections *Individual*
- Project model of the SuperBlock *Individual*
- Project model of the Community Center *Individual*

**Proposed Layout:**

PINUP MATERIAL \_ FINAL REVIEW

**Resources****Redesigning the Grid: Barcelona's Experiment with Superblocks:**

<https://urbanland.uli.org/planning-design/barcelonas-experiment-superblocks/>

**Ecology, Urban Planning and Mobility:**

<http://ajuntament.barcelona.cat/ecologiaurbana/en/what-we-do-and-why/quality-public-space/superblocks>

**Barcelona's Car-Taming 'Superblocks' meet resistance:**

<https://www.citylab.com/transportation/2017/01/barcelonas-car-taming-superblocks-meet-resistance/513911/>

**The Barcelona Superblock of Poblenou:**

<https://bicycledutch.wordpress.com/2017/11/07/the-barcelona-superblock-of-poblenou/>

**Redesigning the Grid: Barcelona's experiment with Superblocks:**

<https://urbanland.uli.org/planning-design/barcelonas-experiment-superblocks/>

**Superblocks: Barcelona's war on cars (BBC video):**

[http://www.bbc.com/news/video\\_and\\_audio/features/magazine-38895435/38895435](http://www.bbc.com/news/video_and_audio/features/magazine-38895435/38895435)

**What New York can learn from Barcelona's 'Superblocks':**

<https://www.nytimes.com/2016/10/02/nyregion/what-new-york-can-learn-from-barcelonas-superblocks.html>

**Rethinking Manhattan's Grid:**

<https://www.citylab.com/perspective/2018/08/rethinking-manhattans-grid/568486/>

## Course Schedule

Week	Date	Assignment
1 M	June 3 <sup>rd</sup>	<b>Intro</b> – Syllabus and Superblock lecture
		Start of Speculative trans-media collage of PobleNou
W	June 4 <sup>th</sup>	Start of Manhattan collages / Distribute sites
T	June 6 <sup>th</sup>	Start of Analytical models / Research on community board
2 M	June 10 <sup>th</sup>	Studio deskcrits
W	June 11 <sup>rd</sup>	<b>Review Project 01</b> - Speculative trans-media collages
T	June 13 <sup>th</sup>	Start of Individual work - The Manhattan Superblock
3 M	June 17 <sup>th</sup>	The Manhattan Superblock – Individual reviews
W	June 18 <sup>th</sup>	The Manhattan Superblock – Individual reviews
T	June 20 <sup>th</sup>	<b>Review Project 02</b> – NYC Superblock - Public Enactments
4 M	June 24 <sup>th</sup>	General Strategy & Program – individual reviews
W	June 25 <sup>th</sup>	<b>MIDTERM REVIEW</b>
T	June 27 <sup>th</sup>	Start of Community Center Design
5 M	July 1 <sup>st</sup>	Studio deskcrits
W	July 2 <sup>nd</sup>	Studio deskcrits
T	July 4 <sup>th</sup>	<b>INDEPENDENCE DAY – NO CLASSES</b>
6 M	July 8 <sup>th</sup>	Studio deskcrits
W	July 9 <sup>th</sup>	Studio deskcrits
T	July 11 <sup>th</sup>	Group discussion – collective material
7 M	July 15 <sup>th</sup>	Studio deskcrits
W	July 16 <sup>th</sup>	Studio deskcrits
T	July 18 <sup>th</sup>	Group discussion – collective material
8 M	July 22 <sup>nd</sup>	<b>FINAL REVIEW</b>

## 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%
- Projects development in response to semester schedule: 50%
- Projects 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 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 and attendance at all scheduled portfolio related events (as applicable).

### Grading Criteria:

**Note: C is the lowest passing grade for M Arch I and M Arch II students.**

**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/> for more information.

#### **Absence & Lateness**

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; 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.

#### **Absences due to Religious Observances**

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.

**Noise Policy:**

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.

**Readings & Journals:**

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.

**Academic Integrity:**

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.

The CCNY Academic Integrity Policy: <https://www.ccny.cuny.edu/about/integrity>

For citations, the Chicago Manual of Style is recommended: [http://www.chicagomanualofstyle.org/tools\\_citationguide.html](http://www.chicagomanualofstyle.org/tools_citationguide.html)

**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.ccny.cuny.edu/accessability>

**Library:**

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:**

Gonzalo J. Lopez  
Adjunct Associate Professor  
[glopezgarrido@ccny.cuny.edu](mailto:glopezgarrido@ccny.cuny.edu)