

Type of Course: ARCH 51000 Advanced Studio
Class Meetings: M/TH 2:00-5:20pm
Office Hours: Per Request and as convenient
Instructor: Professor Martin Stigsgaard
Location: 307
Semester/Year: Fall 2024

URBAN ReduX 2.0:

OVERVIEW

Urban Redux 2.0 is a cutting-edge architectural research and design studio that delves into contemporary living configurations in global metropolises. Inspired by the concept of "Intentional Communities," which blend pre-capitalist ideals with a focus on local autonomy, this studio aims to explore the transformation of office real estate into vibrant residential areas in the post-pandemic era. The initiative will closely examine the evolving needs within New York City, emphasizing architectural innovation, sustainable practices, and the integration of diverse community elements. By utilizing AI and tapping into the dynamic rhythms of urban life, the studio is set to convert vacant office spaces into flourishing urban habitats, thereby crafting a new typology of urban living spaces. The overarching goal is to introduce a novel architectural typology that not only responds to the changing necessities of urban residents but also addresses potential impacts on the city's real estate market. A significant component of this exploration will be to understand and adapt to the shifting household structures, moving away from traditional configurations towards more communal setups, as informed by the "Intentional Communities." The analysis will extend to the challenges and opportunities in repurposing office buildings, taking into account factors like architectural adaptability, community integration, sustainability, and the overarching urban dynamics. Through rigorous design proposals, thorough research, and critical analysis, students will formulate comprehensive proposals that reimagine the function of office structures, contributing significantly to the revitalization of urban spaces. The primary case study locations for this investigation will include the districts of Midtown and downtown Manhattan, with additional insights drawn from downtown Los Angeles and Chicago, which are confronted with similar urban challenges.



AI generated images

RESEARCH

Contemporary Living: Communes and Modern Urban Cohesion

Communes around the globe, particularly in the United States, have experienced a revival, merging historical communal values with contemporary ambitions for social revolution, local autonomy, and transnational solidarity. These communities, drawing lessons from the historical Paris Commune, have adapted to modern challenges, like those faced by the egalitarian and feminist democratic structures in Rojava, Syria, and are seen in the diverse, assembly-based activism of movements such as Occupy Wall Street and Nuit Debout. The U.S. itself is home to over 300 documented intentional communities, including notable examples like Virginia's Twin Oaks and Georgia's Lake Claire Cohousing and Serenbe, which prioritize sustainable living and shared economic systems. The "Kommuna" network in Germany and the urban kibbutzim in Israel exemplify the broad spectrum of communal living experiments globally, focusing on collective decision-making and ecological responsibility. The studio will explore how these communal living strategies might be applicable to developing a new typology of architecture that interlaces the stark realities of New York City's real estate market with the changing residential desires of its urban population.



Unité d'habitation, Fondation Le Corbusier



Star Apartments, Los Angeles, by Michael Maltzan Architecture, 2014

Background: The Real Estate Crisis and Urban Adaptation

Commercial landlords in New York City, particularly post-pandemic, are encountering an unprecedented real estate crisis with office buildings remaining largely unoccupied. The office-vacancy rate in Manhattan has soared to approximately 22%, the highest recorded since statistics began in 1984. Concurrently, rising interest rates pose substantial risks for refinancing commercial mortgages, potentially diminishing the value of many properties. This scenario has catalyzed initiatives like "Project Kodak," which aims to discern which buildings are salvageable and which should be relinquished. Despite these challenges, repurposing vacant office buildings presents a viable solution to the city's acute housing shortage, although it requires significant government subsidies and confronts logistical hurdles in transforming large office spaces. The most promising examples of such conversions are currently observable in the Financial District, with alternative applications for these spaces ranging from healthcare facilities to urban farms, shelters, educational institutions, and even pet care centers.

PROGRAM

Studio Objectives: Expanding Architectural and Urban Horizons

- Grasp and articulate the nuances of contemporary living arrangements and the evolving urban demographic landscape.
- Analyze and delineate these demographic shifts to pinpoint specific needs and desires.
- Critically evaluate the prevailing conditions within the urban real estate market.
- Develop and hone skills in data visualization and analytical techniques pertinent to assessing vacancy rates and spatial utilization in commercial properties.

- Acquire deep insights into the principles and methodologies for transforming commercial spaces into residential units and associated amenities.
- Formulate innovative design proposals that address the current urban challenges and opportunities.
- Apply sustainable design principles, ensure community integration, and embrace the dynamic forces shaping urban environments in architectural planning.
- Generate comprehensive architectural designs that play a pivotal role in urban regeneration.



Midtown Manhattan

Studio Process: A Journey Through Design and Innovation

- Expeditions: Initial forays will involve trips to specific locales in Midtown Manhattan, which are central to global supply chains, technological advancements, and financial ecosystems, yet are undergoing significant transitions that may not be apparent in conventional urban narratives.
- Field Research: These expeditions will be complemented by immersive field research, involving story gathering, video documentation, interviews with local residents, and extensive data collection. This approach is aimed at fostering a rich, multifaceted understanding of the visited sites and the interconnected systems at play.
- Speculative Design and Storytelling: Leveraging the findings from field research, the studio will craft speculative narratives, artifacts, and various representational forms, utilizing architectural, design, filmic, and speculative fiction methodologies. The objective is to challenge prevailing perceptions of the present and inspire imaginative contemplations of future urban possibilities.
- Public Engagement: Insights and discoveries from the studio's work will be disseminated to a broader audience, including professional architects and thought leaders, through various mediums. The goal is to stimulate discussions and reflections on the often-overlooked systems and processes that influence our urban existence.
- Education and Collaboration: The studio encourages a collaborative ethos by organizing assignments as charette/workshops. This collaborative approach is underscored by a commitment to fieldwork, a critical and speculative design mindset, and an overarching aim to develop novel conceptualizations for urban life.

Preparation and Conceptualization: Before commencing, students will delve into current real estate trends in Manhattan, encompassing data on office space pricing, vacancy rates, recent closures, and the transformation of properties into residential or mixed-use developments. Stay updated on the latest developments involving key players in the local real estate sector. Develop a structured approach for conducting interviews, incorporating a diverse array of perspectives—from real estate brokers and small business owners to remote workers, urban planners, and economists—to thoroughly understand the implications of the reduction in office space usage.

Locations and Technical Aspects: Select visually impactful and thematically relevant locations in midtown Manhattan for conducting interviews, such as outside former office buildings now vacant or undergoing conversion, popular remote working spots, and areas where new businesses have emerged due to shifts in work patterns. Ensure high-quality audio and video capture during interviews, utilizing smartphones equipped with portable microphones in quiet, well-lit settings.

Post-Production and Program Design: In the editing phase, intersperse the interviews with pertinent visuals, infographics, and other relevant media to enrich the narrative and engage viewers. Design and implement a comprehensive program for the conversion of office real estate into a new typology that supports a livable neighborhood, integrating housing, recreation, work, and entertainment facilities.

Methodology, Software, and Tools: Employ a variety of tools and technologies, including Lidar scans, AI-driven research and visualization techniques, video recordings, animations, 3D modeling, physical study models, and diverse analytical software, to advance the studio's objectives and enrich the educational experience.



AI generated images

Studio Assignments: (Student groups are designated to select areas of research for the first two assignments)

Assignment 1: Demographic and Housing Analysis

1. Analyze current demographics and housing in NYC/Manhattan.
2. Explore communes and other non-traditional housing typologies.
3. Review indigenous, historic, and global housing references.

Assignment 2: Real Estate and Urban Planning

1. Create a visualization of real estate vacancies.
2. Compare real estate trends between NYC and other major U.S. metropolitan areas.
3. Discuss Mayor Eric Adams' 2023 housing proposal or the current status of these initiatives.
4. Analyze NYC zoning and building codes.
5. Neighborhood interviews

Assignment 3: Urban Revitalization Charette

1. Research global urban revitalization precedents, such as the High Line in NYC.
2. Develop a concept for a neighborhood revitalization.
3. Design and present your revitalization proposal.

Assignment 4: Building Conversion Charette

1. Research precedent building conversions, including examples by CetraRuddy and SHoP Architects.
2. Develop a building conversion concept.
3. Design and present your building proposal.

Assignment 5: Final Presentation

1. Present your comprehensive project, synthesizing insights and designs from previous assignments.
2. Model
3. Graphic/drawing visualization

READINGS & REFERENCES

Adams wants to rezone NYC's Garment District for residential use to ease housing crisis. Nolan Hicks
August 17, 2023

<https://nypost.com/2023/08/17/nyc-mayor-adams-wants-to-rezone-garment-district-for-residential-use-to-ease-housing-crisis/>

Here's How to Solve a 25-Story Rubik's Cube By [Emily Badger](#) and [Larry Buchanan](#) March 11, 2023

<https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2023/03/11/upshot/office-conversions.html>

What It Takes to Convert a Multimillion-Dollar Office Into Housing

<https://www.wsj.com/video/series/wsj-explains/what-it-takes-to-convert-a-multimillion-dollar-office-into-housing/88CDF171-D046-4FD4-A4BB-72130DCCB4C6>

Empty office spaces can be converted to residential buildings – but it won't be affordable

Published: July 14, 2023 2:47pm CEST

<https://theconversation.com/empty-office-spaces-can-be-converted-to-residential-buildings-but-it-wont-be-affordable-207168>

These downtown S.F. office buildings could yield thousands of housing units. [Noah Arroyo](#) Feb. 24, 2023.

<https://www.sfchronicle.com/sf/article/office-conversion-housing-17769370.php>

Carol Willis Form Follows Finance: The Empire State Building:

<https://eportfolios.macaulay.cuny.edu/goldwyn17/files/2017/01/Form-Follows-Finance.pdf>

"The Rise of Co-living: A New Urban Communal Living" by Maria Brenton - This article, found in the journal Urban Studies, explores the phenomenon of co-living spaces in major cities, discussing their benefits, challenges, and future prospects.

"The New Communalism" by Keith Melville - This book provides a comprehensive history of intentional communities in America, discussing their rise, influence, and the ideologies that fuel them.

"Urban Intentional Communities: Challenges and Opportunities" by Laura F. Salazar - Published in the Journal of Urbanism, this article provides a comprehensive look at intentional communities within urban environments, examining how they navigate the complexities of urban life and what drives their formation and endurance.

"Cohousing Communities in Urban Environments: A Comparative Analysis" by Charles Durrett - This article analyzes various cohousing models in urban settings across Europe and North America, focusing on their design, community engagement, and sustainability practices.

"Integrating Community and Dwelling: Insights from Cooperative Living" by Lynda Grose - Found in Environment and Urbanization, this article looks at how cooperative living arrangements integrate social community and physical dwelling spaces in urban contexts.

"Building Community: Social Bonding in Modern Urban Cohousing" by Daniela Ciaffi - This piece delves into how modern urban cohousing projects foster community bonds and social networks among residents, highlighting successful strategies and common pitfalls.

unknown fields division:

<http://www.unknownfieldsdivision.com/projects.html>

Liam Young:

<https://www.liamyong.org/projects/where-the-city-can-t-see>

The Guardian "Lebbeus Woods

<https://www.theguardian.com/artanddesign/architecture-design-blog/2012/oct/31/lebbeus-woods>

Evolo: Skyscraper competition

<https://www.evolo.us/osteon-cumulus-vertical-city-kilometer-high-city/>

Emily Badger's lecture on this topic. She was our Mumford lecturer last spring:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1B8vInYzwvY>

Architectural Drawings: 10 Clever Plans for Tiny Apartments

<https://architizer.com/blog/inspiration/collections/tiny-apartments/>

Watch:

"Commune" (2005) directed by Jonathan Berman

<https://www.imdb.com/title/tt0439511/>

"We the Tiny House People" (2012) by Kirsten Dirksen

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IDcVrVA4bSQ>

WEEKLY SCHEDULE, M/TH 2:00-5:20pm

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

W1

Th 08.29

Convocation @ 2:00pm, rm. 107
Advanced Studio Lottery @ 3:00pm, Aaron Davis Hall
Followed by first studio meeting

W2

Mon 09.02

College Closed (Labor Day), no classes

Th 09.05

Hour SSA/JEDI Climate Survey (in studio) 2-3pm
Sciame Lecture: Maria Carrizosa

W3

Mon 09.09

Studio

Th 09.12

Studio: **Assignment 1 Presentation**
Sciame Lecture: Lawrence Vale

W4

Mon 09.16

Studio

Th 09.19

Studio

Rudin Lecture: Alan Hantman

W5

Mon 09.23 Studio: **Assignment 2 Presentation**
 Th 09.26 Studio

W6

Mon 09.30 Studio
 Th 10.03 No Classes

W7

Mon 10.07 Studio: **Assignment 3 Presentation**
 Th 10.10 Studio
 Sciamé Lecture: Anna Pashynska & Tania Pashynska

W8

Mon 10.14 College Closed (Columbus/Indigenous Peoples' Day), no classes
 Tu 10.15 Studio (Classes for a Monday schedule)
 Th 10.17 Studio
 Sciamé Lecture: Jon Michael Schwarting & Frances Campani

W9

Mon 10.21 Studio
 Th 10.24 Studio - **Midterm Reviews / Assignment 4 Presentation**
 Sciamé Lecture: Nora Akawi

W10

Mon 10.28 Studio
 Th 10.31 **Mid-semester assessments**
 Sciamé Lecture: TBD

W11

Mon 11.04 Studio
 Th 11.07 Studio
 Sciamé Lecture: Sabine Malebranche

W12

Mon 11.11 Studio
 Th 11.14 Studio
 Sciamé Lecture: TBD

W13

Mon 11.18 Studio
 Th 11.21 Studio

W14

Mon 11.25 Studio
 Th 11.28 College Closed (Thanksgiving), no classes

W15

Mon 12.02 Studio: **Assignment 5 Presentation**
 Th 12.05 Studio

FINAL REVIEWS, Dec 9-13

| Mon 9 Dec | Tues 10 Dec | Wed 11 Dec | Th 12 Dec | Fri 13 Dec |
|---|---------------|------------------------------------|----------------|--------------------|
| Advanced | Core Studio 1 | Advanced | Core Studio 3 | Core Studio 5 |
| Stigsgaard, Brahmbhatt, Hackett Keramati | Horn (coord) | Edmiston, Bolhassani, Gebert | Wainer (coord) | Volkman (coord) |

Mon 12.16 Clean-up Day (all materials, projects, and any other items must be removed from studio)

Tu 12.17 End of Semester Assessment (faculty only)

FINALS

Tu 12.17 Student Portfolios due for: SSA/CCNY Archive, etc. as directed by instructor

Fr 12.27 Final Grade Submission Deadline

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 documented medical emergencies or other extraordinary circumstances. Excused absences and project delays must be officially cleared by the professor in advance to be considered valid.

Community Agreement:

- During the first full studio meeting, the professor will make time for an *Hour* SSA session for the JEDI Climate Survey.
- Studio members will work *together* to create a community agreement for interacting together over the semester. Definition: "A consensus on what every person in our group needs from each other and commits to each other in order to feel safe, supported, open, productive and trusting... so that we can do our best work." <https://www.nationalequityproject.org/tools/developing-community-agreements>

Methods of Assessment:

- Attendance and participation in class discussions and other activities: 10%
- Project development in response to semester schedule: 60%
- Project presentation, level of completion and resolution: 30%

Grading Assessment & Learning Outcomes:

- Students demonstrate the ability to respond to studio discourse and feedback in a consistent and clear manner throughout the semester as demonstrated in the evolution and development of design work.
- Students demonstrate the ability to utilize both digital and manual drawing and model-making techniques to precisely and creatively represent architectural ideas.
- Students demonstrate an understanding of the theoretical and applied research methodologies and practices used during the design process, and test and evaluate recent innovations in the field of architecture.
- Students demonstrate the 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.
- Students demonstrate the skills associated with making integrated decisions across multiple systems and variables in the completion of a design project, in different settings and scales of development, from

buildings to cities. 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 final portfolio or collection of studio work as directed by instructor and/or coordinator and attendance at all scheduled portfolio related events.

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 ambition and effort 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. Deadlines are missed. While presentations may be somewhat 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.
- 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 and/or work missed due to illness must be explained with a physician’s note.

Notes:

D is the lowest passing grade for B. Arch students. Working in teams does not guarantee the same grade for each team member; grades are based on a range of criteria for each individual student.

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

Office Hours:

Each studio faculty member schedules 30 regular office hours over the semester, as posted at the top of the syllabus. If a student needs to speak in private with a studio critic, they should ask or email in advance to request a specific 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:

Undergrad: Amy Daniel adaniel@ccny.cuny.edu
Tony Bowles abowles@ccny.cuny.edu

Studio Culture:

Working collaboratively and respectfully on studio assignments, with and alongside others, is an expectation in studio. Studio culture is an important part of an architectural education, and it extends to expectations for Faculty and the School’s Administration as well. Please see the Spitzer School of Architecture Studio Culture Policy, which can be accessed on the SSA website here: <https://ssa.ccnycuny.edu/about/policies/>.

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; 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 discussions.

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.

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 as serious an instance of academic dishonesty in this 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.ccnycuny.edu/about/integrity>

For citations, the Chicago Manual of Style is recommended:

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). For further information, go to <http://www.ccnycuny.edu/accessability/> or email disabilityservices@ccny.cuny.edu

Health And Wellness Support:

City College's Office of Health and Wellness Services offers free and confidential counseling. Contact: Health and Wellness Services, Marshak Science Building, room J-15: counseling@ccny.cuny.edu.

Gender Based Violence Resources

City College has resources to support you if you have experienced sexual violence, intimate partner/domestic violence, gender-based discrimination, harassment or stalking. For confidential support, you can contact the Student Psychological Counselor: Confidential Advocate at (212) 650-8905 or the Gender Resources Program at (212) 650-8222. If you would like to report sexual misconduct, you can contact the Chief Diversity Officer and Title IX Coordinator, Sheryl Konigsberg, Esq., at (212) 650-6310 or skonigsberg@ccny.cuny.edu. If there is an emergency on campus, you can call Public Safety at 212-650-777 and off campus call 911. For more information, see: <https://www.ccnycuny.edu/affirmativeaction>

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-Rodriguez:
nsanchez@ccny.cuny.edu

NAAB (National Architectural Accrediting Board):

The following criteria from the 2020 NAAB Conditions are addressed in this course:

Program Criteria (PC) These criteria seek to evaluate the outcomes of architecture programs and student work within their unique institutional, regional, national, international, and professional contexts, while encouraging innovative approaches to architecture education and professional preparation.

PC.2 Design: How the program instills in students the role of the design process in shaping the built environment and conveys the methods by which design processes integrate multiple factors, in different settings and scales of development, from buildings to cities.

PC.5 Research and Innovation—How the program prepares students to engage and participate in architectural research to test and evaluate innovations in the field.

Students should consult the NAAB website www.naab.org for additional information regarding student performance criteria and all other conditions for accreditation.

CONTACT INFORMATION:

Martin Stigsgaard
Adjunct Associate Professor of Architecture
Bernard and Anne Spitzer School of Architecture
The City College of New York/CUNY
mstigsgaard@ccny.cuny.edu

studioSTIGSGAARD
325 Canal Street, 4th Floor,
New York, NY 10013
T 212 431 6743_
www.martinstigsgaard.com