

# situation studio

48400 Design Studio  
Carnegie Mellon University School of Architecture Fall 2013  
Faculty | Christine Mondor Jeff King

## COURSE SYLLABUS

### Objectives

#### THEORY

Students will become familiar with the theory and practice evolving around community resiliency, including ecodistrict planning.

#### TYOLOGY

Students will be able to define major characteristics of the cohousing typology and its relationship to human occupancy through compositional exercises, prototyping and through field visits.

#### CULTURE

Students will be able to apply the cohousing typology to sites in Millvale to identify how the typology would adapt to specific locations within the urban, social and ecological context, and relate to Millvale's ecodistrict planning.

#### PLACE

Students will be able define guidelines to guide further architectural development, including technologies, systems, and other goals as distilled in the research.

Cities are interwoven diagrams of economic, social and ecological patterns. As our has society developed, we have created technology to build power lines, dams and levees, transportation, food supply networks, and other modern infrastructure and ecological issues that were once limiting factors seemed to have been vanquished. Recent weather events have proven that we are not as powerful as we might have thought and that environmental issues need to come to the forefront of planning and design as we face a future of climate change.

Sustainability frameworks such as the ILBI's Living Cities Challenge (Institute 2011) are changing the practices of urban and architectural design by advocating for urban scale systems that are environmentally performative. The emerging term ecodistrict has been used to describe this planning. This planning is often focused on the technical and engineering implications of performative place-making, especially with infrastructure related to distributed power generation, net zero water, and net zero energy. Consequently, technology has been seen as the biggest challenge. In our work in urban communities we have observed that while infrastructure—the “hardware” of a community will continue to be a focus for problem solving, the “software” of community capacity is a variable that greatly affects the success of a project. We believe that community capacity will be the locus for transformation and the next threshold for design opportunity.

This studio investigates the possibilities of advancing ecodistrict planning through the design of a cooperative housing type, cohousing. Cohousing first originated in Denmark and has evolved into a housing type of affordable housing that activates people with shared community engagement. Similar to condominiums/lofts or apartments, units are typically smaller in scale but have common facilities and planned events where residents can host share resources, information and efforts. Cohousing distinguishes itself in that the creation of that community is intentional, with residents sharing community goals and living patterns while questioning the typical assignment of purpose to public and private spaces such as kitchens, childcare, offices, dining areas and outdoor amenities.





Cohousing can take many forms depending on the urban fabric and the goals of the people who live there:

Alley housing with small units and shared vehicle/ pedestrian space, appealing to young professionals, older residents

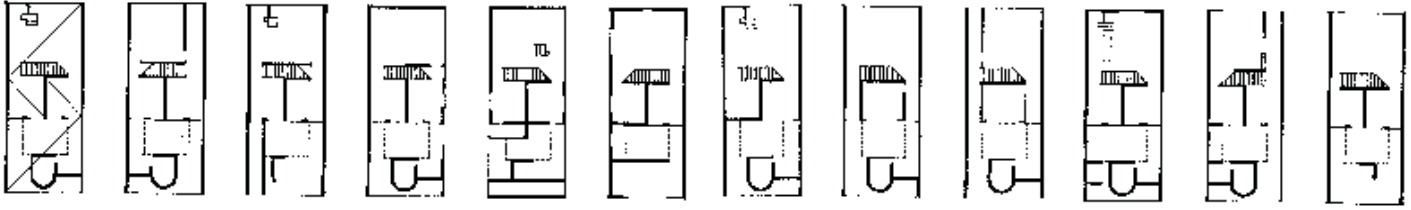
Mixed use cohousing with apartment-like units and live-work spaces, residents may include permanent residents with some allocation for shorter term rentals

Urban farm cohousing with agricultural production, kitchen facilities for production

Ecodistrict thinking is an emerging practice; cohousing is a relatively early in its development in the US. This studio will investigate both to situate them within relevant cultural and theoretical contexts through proposals of formal and spatial significance.

This studio will be focused on the typology of urban cohousing and will connect formal and spatial definition to the ecological, social and urban contexts. There may be a second semester course that will focus on the applying the studies of Semester One to the specific design of a cohousing project.





## Policies



At the discretion of the studio instructor, students may work in groups of two on their studio project. Other work may be done individually or in groups per assignment.

Studio lectures and departmental lectures are a required part of the coursework. Studio faculty and guests will present lectures or host discussions. Subjects will include topics of importance to the students' planning of their projects. Lectures will be given during studio time and some after hours visiting lectures may be required. Consult the department e-calendar for information on departmental lectures.

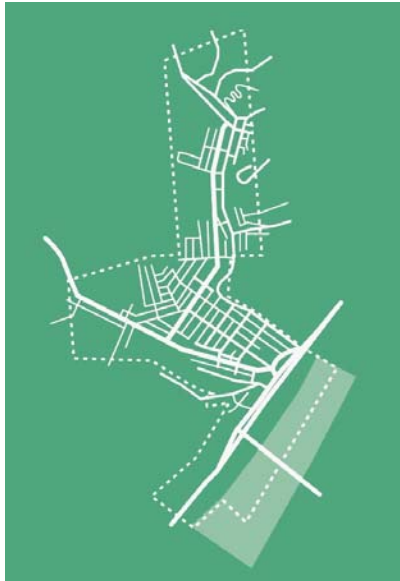
Material from this studio may be incorporated into a presentation to be given in November at the Ecodistricts Conference in Boston, MA. A reduced entry fee is available to students and all are encouraged to go. Studio deliverables will be adjusted to allow for this to fit into the schedule. Costs are the responsibility of the student. Some financial aid may be available.

Readings may be given in hard copy or available on Blackboard for the use of students in this course. The readings are meant to assist in developing an understanding of the material and are a required part of the coursework.

Work for the semester is required to be documented and posted electronically per the departmental requirements. Specific information on this assignment will be given later in the semester. All interim assignments are to be submitted electronically per the required format.

This course is planned so that students and faculty can perform within a schedule and without imposition of this course on others. To prevent conflicts, students are asked to plan their time so that they can complete the requirements and assignments of the course, and to inform instructors when conflicts with other courses are impending. It is the student's responsibility to coordinate the studio schedule with the demands of other classes and to notify the studio instructor one week in advance if any alteration of deadline is to be considered.

Late work may be refused or penalized as deemed appropriate. A student may not be permitted to pin up for review if the project submitted is incomplete or tardy.



## Evaluation

Qualifications for grades are as listed below:

**a** Performance of superior quality; intellectually, formally and technically. There is clear evidence of genuine talent and architectural insight. Reserved for work that evidences the course goals in a professional and timely manner.

**b** Performance of good quality that has aesthetic merit and technical competence, although some problems are noted. Work reflects a solid commitment to the learning process and an understanding of the issues.

**c** Performance of acceptable quality that meets the basic goals of the exercise, is presented in a complete manner and does not contain serious errors of judgment or omission.

**d** Performance of inferior quality that may reflect a conscientious effort on the part of the student, but contains many serious errors of judgment, lacks aesthetic skill and/or is incomplete in presentation. The work did not meet the instructional goals in several areas.

**r** Performance that is seriously deficient in merit and effort. Given to those projects that reflect a lack of class attendance, significant incompleteness and/or lack of interest in the subject material

Plagiarism, cheating and disrespect for the work of others will not be tolerated in this course. Individuals caught engaging in any of these activities will be penalized per the University policy, which may include grade penalty, failure of the course or expulsion from the university, depending on the severity of the infraction.

The studio environment is the most important tool in your learning experience. As such, it should be kept clean and free of debris during class. During lectures or other presentations, there is no use of cell phones, computers or any other sound emitting or electronic device except as needed for the assignment. There should be no audible equipment in studio during class time. No spray painting is allowed in the studios at any time and may be grounds for expulsion if found.

Attendance is required at all studio sessions. Per course policy, three unexcused absences will lead to failure of the course. If an absence is unavoidable and can be anticipated, inform your instructor of the situation as early as possible.

For the purpose of reporting a final grade to the Registrar, the instructors will use the university's classification system. Grades will be based on process and the final product. A grading rubric may be used for assignments or projects.

The studio instructors will report to each student on his or her progress. In the event that members of a team do not perform at comparable levels, instructors may give different grades within a single project team.

Grades of "Incomplete" are granted only for legitimate extended emergencies (with evidence) as stated in both the school handbook and the university handbook. Likewise, no work may be submitted after the completion of the published deadlines at the end of the semester as a means to improving one's grade. Three absences may be grounds for repeating the course or a failing grade.

Assessment of the course through a midsemester evaluation and faculty course evaluations (FCEs) are useful to the future development of this course. Responses are expected to be open and professional in tone.

# Situation Studio Course Schedule and Assignments

Professors Christine Mondor & Jeff King

26 August 2013

<b>Aug 26</b> All School Meeting	<b>Oct 21</b> Work session
<b>28</b> Studio Introduction	<b>23</b> Work session
<b>30</b> Site visit	<b>25</b> Work session/Thesis Meetings
<b>Thesis Preliminary Submission</b>	
<b>Sep 2</b> Work session	<b>28</b> Work session
<b>4</b> Work session	<b>30</b> Work session
<b>6</b> Work session/Thesis Meetings	<b>Nov 1</b> Work session/Thesis Meetings
<b>Thesis Lit/Source Review</b>	
<b>9 REVIEW</b>	<b>4 REVIEW</b>
<b>11</b> Lecture / Work Session	<b>6</b> Lecture / Work Session
<b>13</b> Work session/Thesis Meetings	<b>8</b> Work session/Thesis Meetings
<b>Thesis Project Statement Draft</b>	
<b>16</b> Work session	<b>11</b> Boston Conf. or Worksession
<b>18</b> Work session	<b>13</b> Boston Conf. or Worksession
<b>20</b> Work session/Thesis Meetings	<b>15</b> Boston Conf. or Worksession
<b>Thesis Project Statement Due</b>	
<b>23 REVIEW [c]</b>	<b>18</b> Work session
<b>25</b> Lecture/Work session	<b>20</b> Work session
<b>27</b> Work session/Thesis Meetings	<b>22</b> Work session/Thesis Meetings
<b>30</b> Work session	<b>25 REVIEW</b>
<b>Oct 2</b> Work session	<b>27</b> NO CLASS - THANKSGIVING
<b>4</b> Work session/Thesis Meetings	<b>29</b> NO CLASS - THANKSGIVING
<b>7</b> Production Shift	<b>Dec 2</b> Production Shift
<b>9</b> Work session	<b>4</b> Work session
<b>11</b> Work session/Thesis Meetings	<b>6</b> Work session/Thesis Meetings
	<b>7or8 FINAL REVIEW</b>
<b>14 REVIEW [c]</b>	<b>9</b> Exam Week
<b>16 REVIEW</b>	<b>11</b>
<b>18</b> NO CLASS - MIDSEMESTER	<b>13</b>