Thesis Meeting, Sept. 27, 1:30, CFA206

- Poster exhibit in CFA?

  - Previously I asked you to read one chapter from Piotrowski & Robinson, eds. The Discipline of Architecture (2001). Suggest articles by Leatherbarrow, Fisher and Anderson
  - What are the central architectural issues/problems of our day that need attention/research/speculation?
  - What is architecture? What is the future of architecture?

- Set up student dialogues / crits / discussions?

- Faculty concerns about thesis
  - Defining a thesis
    - At its core, it must be an idea generated by the student, and worked on in collaboration with an advisory team
    - A true thesis must be a challengeable or contestable proposition that if designed or defended successfully, can lead to new ideas, understanding, or paradigm.
    - It is not just a project;
    - It is not just research or accumulated data or ideas*

- How to create / impose a self-motivated, self-disciplined, productive work process?
  - Student obligations, responsibility, opportunity

- 18 units of studio credit implies:
  - More than analysis and reading
  - Defining the scope, knowing the resources
  - Precise site selection
  - Defining the program exactly
  - DESIGN work before December

- Primary Advisor / Studio Instructor / Multiple Advisors
  - Role of studio instructor? Role of studio colleagues?
  - Working with multiple advisors if the topics are not closely related to studio project.
  - Receptiveness to multiple kinds of feedback
  - Thesis as collaboration with team of advisors

- Official Advisor “Contract”?  
  - Gather signatures
  - Can be changed
- Keeping/creating a notebook, documenting the RESEARCH process:
  - Documenting steps/results: design variations, iterative steps in a process
  - Notes, sketches, ideas
  - Precedents
  - Bibliography
  - Summaries of readings, websites, conversations
  - Uniform format, suggest 8.5x11 (easily printable)

- Starting a weekly email “newsletter” sent to all advisors to keep them up-to-date

- Creating (ambitious) Lists of Deliverables, for mid-review and final review.
  - Get advice from your advising team. Work in collaboration; set up a “contract” of work
  - Create a “syllabus” with daily/weekly goals (not just bar graphs)

**DRAFT DUE: Fri. Oct. 4, 2013** - by email to Kai & advisors

- Mid-Review: week of Oct. 21
  - Public display/feedback necessary. Format?
  - Booklet due (pdf)


- Final booklet due Fri. Dec. 13.

- All work will be evaluated in December, and none will be allowed to proceed that don’t have the support of the faculty…

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*An Architecture thesis is not:

... A Written Paper. The Architecture Thesis is a project executed in analog or digital drawings, models, constructions, diagrams, with all the accompanying process work.

... A Device. You cannot say “My thesis is about light”. Light is a device through which architecture is manifest and perceived. It is not a thesis.

... A Question: You cannot ask “Why is architecture so cool?”

... An Announcement: “I will use architectural concrete in a new way”

... Vague Statements: “Modernism is bad”

... A Limited Subject: “Housing” “Libraries” “Hospitals”

... A List: “Light, Space, Form, Structure, Environment, and Architecture”

... An Autobiography: “A House for an Architecture Thesis Student’s Parents”

So what’s left?

A thesis is a position. It is a claim or a speculation you make about architecture and its relationship to the world. You should be able to say: “Architecture is ______”, Architecture can ______” or “What if Architecture ______”. A thesis is your chance to do more than demonstrate your accumulated skills—you are positing a direction for architecture, speculating on an aspect of the discipline, taking a stand on an architectural issue.”

– Pablo Garcia, as quoted by Rami El Samahy