

Texas A&M University
Department of Architecture

ARCHITECTURE 451-500
Emerging Strategies in Architectural Management

(3 credit hours)
Spring 2010 - Revised: 01/25/2010

This course fulfills DIRECTED ELECTIVE III (Multidisciplinary)
This course has been approved as a university "W" course

Time: Tue, Thu: 3:55-5:10 pm
Place: Building A, Room TBA
Instructor: Robert E. Johnson, Arch.D., AIA
Room A444
Email: rejohnson@tamu.edu
Tel: 2-4560
Office hours: M,W or F; 1:00-2:00pm or by appointment

ARCH 451 - EMERG STRAT ARCH MGMT

Catalog Description

451. Strategies in Architectural Management. (3-0). Credit 3.

Emerging strategies in the architecture and construction industry, with an emphasis on understanding the changing structure of the industry and the management of both firms and projects. Prerequisite: Senior classification or approval of degree coordinator.

DESCRIPTION

This seminar will investigate the theories, processes and procedures that are used at a variety of architectural firms to take design ideas from concept to reality. The topics of this seminar are designed to be especially applicable to students who are interested in learning about what it means to be a practicing professional.

While this course focuses primarily on the profession of architecture, the issues are similar for other professional firms and therefore it is open to students of all professions.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

There are two major learning objectives of this course.

1. Students taking this course will learn what they can expect during the first few years of working in an architecture firm.
2. Students will learn how they can evaluate the potential of an architecture firm within the context of their own career inclinations and prospects. Each session will endeavor to link an essential body of knowledge - theory - to the application of that knowledge in a complex and constantly evolving professional situation - practice. Subjects to be discussed in class include the

business of design practice, ethics, the sociology of the design workplace and how these influence the distinctive qualities of the design firm.

3. Students will investigate these issues primarily through the case method of teaching. Therefore, writing about subjects discussed will be an important part of the learning process.

CONTENT/METHOD

The course will meet two times for 1-1/4 hours each week. Most sessions will require you to read and evaluate a case from the professional world. These cases will require that the student identify problems, evaluate possible solutions, and make a specific recommendation to resolve the problem identified. Readings will be required for most sessions. This course will use the following methods to facilitate learning:

SHORT PAPERS AND STUDENT PRESENTATIONS/DISCUSSIONS

Students will be asked to write three short papers (approximately 3 typewritten pages each) on a case covered in class of their choosing. These papers will be a written analysis and recommendation for class discussions and will be due at the start of the class session. Grades for these papers will be based on the ability to articulate a persuasive, in-depth and *critical understanding* of a major professional practice issue. These papers are to be a minimum of 3 pages (750 words) in length. Assignments will be written and will be due at the start of the relevant class session. There three types of short paper case analyses:

- a) *Mandatory case short paper analysis.* All students will be required to write a short paper analysis of the case presented for the topic: INTERNING AND ETHICS. This will be an introduction to the process for writing drafts and reviewing cases throughout the rest of the semester.
- b) *Student-selected case analyses:* Students will vote to select two (2) cases of their choosing. The student peer review of these two cases will take place *outside of class* using the approach introduced above for CASE 1.

The following is an example of student-selected case due dates. These will be established more specifically after students have selected the two cases.

Session N:	CASE DRAFT due
Session N+1:	Peer-reviewed (outside class). CASE DRAFT given to instructor
Session N+2:	Instructor returns CASE DRAFT to student with his comments
Session N+3:	CASE Final paper due. <i>The CASE will be discussed in this class.</i>

- c) *Other case analyses.* All other cases will be analyzed by the student at various times and in various ways during the class. These analyses will often include a mini-writing assignment, usually followed by class discussion or a peer-review session.

FIRM ANALYSIS PAPER

An important part of this course will be the written analysis of a professional design firm. This project will enable students to develop insights about the design profession through an in-depth analysis of a firm of their choosing. It will also give them an opportunity to focus on that part of design practice that is of the greatest interest to them. The analysis will be a minimum of 10 pages (1,250 words) and will include photos of projects completed by the firm and other, relevant

graphics. Additionally, students will prepare a Power Point presentation and present their findings to the class at the end of the semester.

This analysis may be done in teams of two persons per team. If you elect to form a team, each member of the team will have the primary responsibility for writing specific sections of the team's report. The heading or sub-heading of the section should be followed by the name of the student who was primarily responsible for that section. However, both team members must peer review each other's work and jointly decide on the organization of the paper. The instructor will review these papers. If students decide to form a team for analyzing a firm, the grade on the paper will be typically the same grade for each unless it becomes obvious that this would not be a reasonable option. In this case, grades will be based on the sections written by each member.

Information about this final assignment will be available in two parts. Part A, a list of project tasks for this assignment is in Appendix A in this syllabus. Part B, rubrics for evaluation, will be provided during the first part of the semester and will be similar but more comprehensive, especially regarding content, than the rubrics for the case analyses. For those students electing to work as a team, readings and discussions will be incorporated into the course regarding collaborative writing under the "teams and leadership" section of the course.

OTHER WRITING EXERCISES

A variety of activities will be used to help you to improve your analysis and writing of cases. These activities will include:

- a) Provide models and/or possible outlines for analyzing cases and the final analysis paper.
- b) In-class peer review of papers, with a focus on content, organization and argument. A peer response review sheet will be provided for the peer review of case analyses and for the final firm analysis.
- c) Student written self-critique of assignments.
- d) Instructor written comments on drafts of assignments.
- e) Mini in-class writing assignments often followed by peer review or class discussion.
- f) Anonymous in-class surveys to determine what students find difficult in their writing.
- g) Mini lectures on specific aspects of writing as determined by in-class surveys and issues identified on drafts of student papers.
- h) References to appropriate writing web sites.

OTHER PRESENTATION FORMATS

- a) Invited presentations by professionals.
- b) Field trips to architectural firms.

CLASS PARTICIPATION

Class preparation, attendance, and participation are particularly important in this class. Absences will be excused only for valid reasons - see next section for the university definition of excused absences. *At some time during the semester, students will be called on to orally present their individual analysis and recommendations.* Therefore, preparation prior to each class is essential.

In communicating analyses and recommendations, quality is more important than quantity. Meaningful content that extends beyond mere factual recall, brevity and persuasiveness are positive attributes. Grades for class participation will be a function of both attendance *and* substantive contribution to class discussion.

A FINAL NOTE

As stated by noted architect Charles B. Thomsen, FAIA, FCMAA, “Our clients are busy, so brevity is golden. Take time to make your writing short. Good writing, like good design, has no unnecessary parts. Look for wordiness everywhere. Question the need for every paragraph, every sentence, every word. The more words you use, the more you risk blurring important ideas. Get lean.” (Thomsen, no date, p. 4)

REQUIRED READING AND EMAIL

Required reading will be either handed out in class or available on-line. See Appendix C for a preliminary list of reading references.

All email communications will be through the NEO system. Please check this regularly.

STUDENT RESPONSIBILITIES AND GRADING

Class Participation	15%
Three Short-Papers (Case Analysis: 2,250 words total)	45%
Firm Analysis (Term Paper: 1,250 words+PowerPoint)	40%
	100%

IMPORTANT: Rubrics that outline grading criteria will be provided for both the case analysis short papers and the final analysis paper. Papers that are handed in late without a valid, university excused absence will be marked down by one full grade each week or part of a week they are late. Any papers that are not turned in at all will receive zero credit. Each assignment will receive a numerical grade that will then be weighted using the weights (above) to arrive at the final score. This final score will be converted into a letter grade as follows: A (≤ 100 and ≥ 90), B (< 90 and ≥ 80), C (< 80 and ≥ 70), D (< 70 and ≥ 60), F (< 60).

EXCUSED ABSENCES

Rules concerning excused absences may be found at <http://student-rules.tamu.edu/rule07>. In particular, except for absences due to religious obligations, the student must notify his or her instructor in writing (acknowledged e-mail message is acceptable) prior to the date of absence if such notification is feasible. In cases where advance notification is not feasible (e.g., accident, or emergency) the student must provide notification by the end of the second working day after the absence. This notification should include an explanation of why notice could not be sent prior to the class. If the absence is excused, the instructor must either provide the student with an opportunity to make up any quiz, exam or other graded activities or provide a satisfactory alternative to be completed within 30 calendar days from the last day of the absence.

AMERICANS WITH DISABILITIES ACT (ADA)

The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) is a federal anti-discrimination statute that provides comprehensive civil rights protection for persons with disabilities. Among other things, this legislation requires that all students with disabilities be guaranteed a learning environment that provides for reasonable accommodation of their disabilities. If you believe you have a disability

requiring an accommodation, please contact the Department of Student Life, Services for Students with Disabilities in Room 126 of the Koldus Building, or call 845-1637.

ACADEMIC INTEGRITY STATEMENT AND PLAGIARISM

“An Aggie does not lie, cheat, or steal or tolerate those who do.”

Much of the grade for this course is determined by writing assignments. Plagiarism has occasionally been a problem in some of these assignments. Plagiarism is defined by Texas A&M University as: “Failing to credit sources used in a work product in an attempt to pass off the work as one’s own; Attempting to receive credit for work performed by another, including papers obtained in whole or in part from individuals or other sources.” Plagiarism is a serious offense, and students who plagiarize will be dealt with according to university rules.

For more information on the Aggie Honor Code please see the Honor Council Rules and Procedures on the web <http://www.tamu.edu/aggiehonor>.

TOPIC OVERVIEW (PRELIMINARY, DATES TO BE PROVIDED PRIOR TO START OF CLASS)

Sess	Date	Day	Topic	Due
1	1/19/10	Tue	INTRODUCTION	
2	1/21/10	Thu	TRENDS-CHANGING PRACTICE	Select 2 cases (3 pages each-min 750 words)
3	1/26/10	Tue	PEER REVIEW WORKSHOP (by Writing Center)	CASE 1 draft (<i>required for all students</i>)
4	1/28/10	Thu	Internships-Guest: Gary Dunn (confirmed)	
5	2/2/10	Tue	ORGANIZATIONAL CULTURE	Instructor returns CASE 1 draft
6	2/4/10	Thu	CAREER FAIR, Feb 4-5	
7	2/9/10	Tue	CASE 1: INTERNING AND ETHICS	Students hand in CASE 1 final; send instructor digital copy
8	2/11/10	Thu	CASE 2: PRACTICING	
9	2/16/10	Tue	CASE 3: ORGANIZING	
10	2/18/10	Thu	CASE 4: DELIVERING PROJECTS	
11	2/23/10	Tue	CASE 5: BALANCING	
12	2/25/10	Thu	CASE 6: STRATEGIC PLANNING	
13	3/2/10	Tue	CASE 7: MARKETING CONCEPTS	Schedule interview now
14	3/4/10	Thu	Visit to local architectural firm	
15	3/9/10	Tue	CASE 8: THE EVOLUTION OF FIRMS	
16	3/11/10	Thu	INTERVIEWING & WRITING YOUR ANALYSIS	
17	3/15/10	Mon	<i>SPRING BREAK (March 16-20)</i>	Firm interviews here?
18	3/23/10	Tue	PROJECT BUDGETING WORKSHOP	
19	3/25/10	Thu	DESIGN NEGOTIATING	
20	3/30/10	Tue	CASE 9: MANAGING PROJECTS	
21	4/1/10	Thu	PROFIT PLANNING WORKSHOP	DRAFT of Firm Analysis
22	4/6/10	Tue	In-class peer review of Firm Analysis	DRAFT of firm Power Point
23	4/8/10	Thu	In-class peer review of Firm PowerPoints	
24	4/13/10	Tue	CASE 10: SERVICING CLIENTS	
25	4/15/10	Thu	CASE 11: DESIGN TEAMS & LEADERSHIP	Instructor returns DRAFT of FINAL analysis + Power Point
26	4/20/10	Tue	Legal Issues: Guest Speaker	
27	4/22/10	Thu	CASE 12: COMMUNICATING	FINAL firm analysis paper + Power Point due
	4/23/10	Fri	ROWLETT LECTURE	Required
28	4/27/10	Tue	<i>PRESENTATION OF PROJECTS</i>	
29	4/29/10	Thu	<i>PRESENTATION OF PROJECTS</i>	Last day of this class

Note: Two CASES will be scheduled as short papers after decided by the class.

APPENDIX A: PROJECT TASKS

The following is Part A of the final firm analysis assignment. This describes the tasks that are part of the project to analyze a firm. Part B, minimum content requirements, will be distributed approximately mid-semester.

1. Identification of the Design Organization

Select a firm that you think you might be interested in learning more about. This might be a firm that you have worked for in the past (summer job?) or one that you might be interested in working for in the future. Think about your own personal values and the type of firm that might have similar values. You are not limited to "traditional" design firms. Exploration of innovative or non-traditional design organizations is perfectly acceptable. In the past, students have selected firms from around the country and, in some cases, the world.

If there is duplication in the firms that have been selected, students may be asked to choose another firm. In addition, a very few firms sometimes decline to participate after being contacted. *So have a back-up firm ready.*

2. Identification of Team

At the same time that you identify the design organization you will be asked to determine whether or not you wish to do this project as part of a team. If you are forming a team for this project, let me know the names of all team members. Teams should have not more than two persons.

3. Write a Letter of Introduction

You are to write a letter that introduces yourself (your team) to one of the principals of the firm, outlines the purpose of the project, and requests an interview (see example in Appendix C). Plan to contact this firm not later than three weeks before your interview.

4. Pre-Interview Research and Evaluation

Collect as much information as you can about the firm prior to your interview.

- a) Make use of reference sources in the Technical Reference Center and the Library. Check the Internet to see if the firm has a web site. See also the Architect Finder in <http://www.aia.org>.
- b) Locate stories or news articles that may have been published about projects done by the firm. Some of the larger, well-known firms have had books published about them.
- c) If possible, visit several projects that seem to be representative of the work of the firm. What values do they seem to reflect? Consider taking project photos for the poster. Maybe you can talk to a few of the people that use the building to get their views about the effectiveness of the design.
- d) Informally discuss the firm with other knowledgeable persons (faculty, other students, or employees of the firm).

5. Contact Firm; Establish Interview Date

Telephone the principal of the firm about one week after you send your letter in order to schedule your interview.

6. On-Site Visit (Interview)

Complete your interview with the design organization. Your first contact should be with either *the principal of the firm or a knowledgeable associate of the firm*. You should have already formed

some opinions about the design firm before the interview. The interview will give you an opportunity to test those opinions and to develop additional insights about the firm.

A two-person team is sometimes helpful during the interview, since one person can be asking a question while the other can be taking notes or thinking about the next question to ask. Be sure that you cover the key, most important issues in no more than one hour. You can fill in details later by telephone, if necessary. It might also be possible for you to ask to talk with others in the firm. In addition to the principal, it might be useful to ask permission to talk with someone who is an intern or a relatively recent graduate. We will have a mock interview in class to help you develop your interviewing skills.

7. Post-Interview

Write-up the results of your interview as soon as possible after the interview. If you wait too long you may forget important information that may not have made it into your notes. This write-up of the interview will serve as raw material for your paper. You must hand in a typed transcript of your interview.

8. Draft Report and Review Process

You must hand in a marked-up, peer-reviewed (by a fellow student) draft of your firm analysis. If you are doing this as part of a team, you may peer-review sections that were written by your team mate (see section 9, below). This will be reviewed and returned to you by the instructor.

9. Final Report

The final report must be in an 8-1/2 by 11" format. If you are doing this as part of the team each section must be identified with the name of a team member that was the principal author of that section. The

10. Student Presentations

Each student (or student team) will be expected to give a short presentation summarizing the essential elements of their report and conclusions about the firm that was analyzed.

11. Grading

All firm analysis papers will be given a numerical grade between 0 and 1.00. They will be reviewed by the instructor and comments written as needed.

APPENDIX B: EXAMPLE OF LETTER TO DESIGN FIRM

February 16, 2008
800 University Drive
College Station, TX 77840

Ms. I. M. Professional
G B & Best, Architects and Planners
1234 Construction Ave.
New York, NY 12202

Dear Ms. Professional:

Body of letter goes here. Use this format or something very similar. If your address is going to be on the right-top of the page as shown above, use the tab key to make sure the text is properly lined up. Do not "space" over with the space key. Try to keep the letter brief -- business letters are generally limited to not more than one page. If you wish, I will review the letter before you send it. Consider the following outline for the body of the letter:

1. Introduce yourself (your team).
2. Indicate why you are writing the letter.
3. Elaborate briefly on the purpose of the project.
4. Request an interview of about one hour with a knowledgeable person in order to learn about the firm.
Include a brief outline of topics that you wish to discuss.
5. Indicate that you will call in about one week to schedule the interview.
6. (Optional) Ask in the letter if it would be OK to tape record the interview. Then ask again when you call to schedule the interview.
7. (Optional) Say that you would be willing to provide a copy of the completed project.

Sincerely,

John/Jane E. Student