

# ARCH 489 Special Topics in Design Methods

## How To Improve Your Abilities As A Designer

Professor Tom Regan

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### **COURSE DESCRIPTION: ARCH 498: Special Topics in Design Methods**

**How To Improve Your Abilities As A Designer** (3-0). Credit 3.

Importance of rational and intuitive methods in design; understanding the visual/structural language of design; meaning, symbolism and creativity in art and architecture; techniques to develop creative approaches to problem solving.

### **INTRODUCTION:**

Special Topics In Design Methods: Arch 489 focuses on improving individual design abilities for students enrolled in ARCH 406, 305, 207, or 206. The course is a supplement to design studio instruction in design methods, designed to increase the understanding of the multiple design strategies employed by different studio faculty members, and to stabilize a student's individual design process. Design strategies utilized by filmmakers, artists, authors, and musicians are translated to design process applications for architects.

The course meets once each week on Tuesdays; half of each session is devoted to seminar presentations on visual language, translation design processes, transformation design processes, new design media, and the 21<sup>st</sup> century design processes used by practicing architects. The second half of each session is devoted to design exercises and tutorials based on the design projects assigned in the studios taken along with ARCH 489. Each student uses on-going design project she/he is developing in the design studio as the vehicle for improving the individual design process that is being applied. Specific design process methods for improving creativity, complexity, speed, and competency are integrated into course instruction.

Students taking the course must be enrolled in ARCH 406, 305, 207, or 206 in the spring 2010 semester. Enrollment is limited to insure attention to each student taking the course. The meeting location is to be determined. Professor Regan has taught design methods at six schools of architecture to both graduate and undergraduate students.

The primary components of DESIGN METHODS: ARCH 498 are:

#### THE BASIS FOR THE PROCESS OF DESIGNING

- How Design Processes Work
- Comparative Design Processes Used by Studio Faculty Members
- The Use Of The Site As A Driver In Designing A Building
- The Three Scales Of All Things Designed
- Communication Theory For Designers
- The Only Two Processes Designers Need
- The Three Basic Plan Types As Perceived By Building Users

#### HOW TO IMPROVE YOUR ABILITIES AS A DESIGNER

- How To Determine What Kind Of Designer You Are
- How To Generate and Use Design Concepts
- The Designer's Conceptual Tool Kit
- Making Your Designs More Meaningful
- Making Your Designs More Practical
- Using The Site To Make Your Design Different
- How To Develop Creative and Innovative Design Solutions
- How to Increase Your Competency as a Designer
- How To Never Be "Stuck" Again
- Programming Your Building With Coded Field Theory and Semantic Geometry
- How To Design Faster and Stop Wasting Time

### **EVALUATION**

The grading system for this course is unique. One goal of the education of a designer is to develop the ability for self-critique and self-evaluation. The grading system is an opportunity to assist the student in attaining that goal. During the semester, each student develops her/his own criteria set for evaluating a designer. At the end of the semester, each student will produce a written evaluation of her/himself based on that criteria set, then recommend a letter grade for her/his performance for the term. Professor Regan will make his own separate evaluation of the student's semester performance without knowledge of the student's evaluation. Professor Regan will then compare the student's recommended grade and his own evaluation. If the two evaluations match, that grade is

awarded. If the two differ, Professor Regan schedules a private meeting with the student to discuss the differing evaluations, and a final grade is decided through consultation at the meeting.

## **CLASS ATTENDANCE**

Attendance is required. Students learn from their peers as well as the instruction provided by faculty members. If a student is absent, it is her/his responsibility to note the absence, in writing, and to notify Professor Regan. It is each student's obligation to routinely check her/his TAMU e-mail for communication about the course.

## **COURSE SCHEDULE**

- MEETING ONE: Introduction to the Course  
Evaluation of Individual Learning Styles  
Design Exercises
- MEETING TWO: Alternative Design Processes  
Design Process Exercises and Student Presentations
- MEETING THREE: Studio Teaching Method: Design Processes Taught in Studios  
Design Process Exercises and Student Presentations
- MEETING FOUR: The Two Fundamental Design Processes  
Design Translation Exercises and Student Presentations
- MEETING FIVE: The Translation Process in Art, Music, Literature, Mathematics, and Cinema  
Design Translation Exercises and Student Presentations
- MEETING SIX: The Translation Process and How to Improve Your Design Products  
Design Translation Exercises and Student Presentations
- MEETING SEVEN: The Transformation Process in Art, Music, Literature, Mathematics, and Cinema  
Design Transformation Exercises and Student Presentations
- MEETING EIGHT: The Transformation Process and How to Improve Your Design Products  
Design Transformation Exercises and Student Presentations
- MEETING NINE: New Digital Media: How New Programs Can Be Incorporated in the Design Process  
Building Design Exercises and Student Presentations
- MEETING TEN: Designing the Site, the Structure System, and the Enclosure System  
Building Design Exercises and Student Presentations
- MEETING ELEVEN: The Design Processes of Great Architects  
Building Design Exercises and Student Presentations
- MEETING TWELVE: The Importance of Design Scale  
Building Design Exercises and Student Presentations
- MEETING THIRTEEN: Designer's Tool Kit  
Building Design Exercises and Student Presentations
- MEETING FOURTEEN: Student Presentations

## **ASSIGNMENTS**

The course assignments use each student's project or projects from her/his design studio as the vehicle for testing theoretical constructs and improving individual design abilities. This process of engaging in critical design discussions and producing focused design exercises separate from a design studio allows the student to clearly comprehend her/his design strengths and weaknesses, and the intentions of the various types of design studio instruction in graduate architecture programs.

## **REFERENCES**

- + Aristotle and Plato  
(*History of Western Philosophy* by Bertrand Russell)
- + Information / Communication Theory  
(*Towards a Theory of Communication* by Claude Shannon and Warren Weaver)

- + Structuralism / General Systems Theory  
(*Structuralism* by Jean Piaget)  
(*General Systems Theory* by Ludwig von Bertalanffy)
- + Linguistics  
(*Signification and Significance* by Charles Pierce)
- + Anthropology  
(*Structural Anthropology* by Claude Levi-Strauss)

## **POLICIES**

### The Americans with Disabilities Act.

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 Office of Support Services for Students with Disabilities in Room 126 of the Student Services Building. The phone number is (979) 845-1637.

### Copyrights.

The handouts used in this course are copyrighted. By "handouts," we mean all materials generated for this class, which include but are not limited to syllabi, lab problems, in-class materials, review sheets, and additional problem sets. Because these materials are copyrighted, you do not have the right to copy the handouts, unless the author expressly grants permission.

### Scholastic Dishonesty.

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

As commonly definition plagiarism consists of passing off, as one's own the ideas, work, writings, etc., which belong to another. In accordance with this definition, you are committing plagiarism if you copy the work of another person and turn it in as your own, even if you should have the permission of that person. Plagiarism is one of the worst academic sins, for the plagiarist destroys the trust among colleagues without which research cannot be safely communicated. If you have question regarding plagiarism, please consult the latest issue of the Texas A&M University Student rules, under the section "Scholastic Dishonesty." The Aggie Honor Code has been re-introduced with newly formed Honor Council. You are advised to consult the Honor council rules and Procedures on the web <http://www.tamu.edu/aggiehonor>.