

ART 387: Impossible Architecture

The unbuilt is the fantasy that underlies everything.
— Rem Koolhaas, “Exploring the Unmaterial World”

M, W 1:30 - 3:20

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Office Hours

M 9:00 - 11:00
3:30 - 5:00 (Doane Hall A104/106)
W 9:00 - 11:00;
3:30 - 5:00 (Doane Hall A104/106)
R 9:00 - 12:00
F 9:00 - 11:00; 1:30 - 3:00

To schedule an appointment, visit:
<http://cs.allegheny.edu/sites/dluman>

Should none of the above times work for your schedule, let me know: we can work out a better time.

Readings & Course Materials

All readings and course materials will be made available using a GitHub repository. This course does not require students to purchase any texts.

Course Description

A studio course deconstructing historic and contemporary notions of built space through creation of architectural models and structures that push the boundaries of physical reproducibility and possibility. We will inform our work through readings considering the roles of built space, bodies within them, and how space, free of general practical concerns, can be designed to advantage common social needs instead of working against them. Projects significant work with three-dimensional model-making and construction methods in the pursuit of building a course-long expansive city model. Coursework relies upon significant oral and written presentation to demonstrate projects.

Learning Objectives

By the end of this course, you will be able to say:

- “I’ll never get this project done!”
- long architectural words like “fenestration”
- “I built that!”
- “It’s an attempt at subverting the Corbusian dynamic”
- “Of course *you* would build that; it’s just (how shall I put it) *so Miesian*”

More practically, you will:

- Learn to plan and produce material projects using digital design tools (including, but not limited to CAD or modeling software, fabrication machinery, and computational methods)
- Develop an awareness of built space and its relationship to its environment
- Gain significant experience working in three-dimensional design
- Deepen your understanding of various materials and their applications

Description of ART 387

An examination of artistic responses to specific emerging technologies in the biological and computer sciences, investigating how humans can reconcile their biological imperative with technological flux. Students focus on ideas, conduct relevant research and work independently to produce a body of conceptually-linked works that are informed by materiality, context, theory, and contemporary practice. Coursework integrates effective oral and written communication to explore contemporary and historical practices within the medium and the role of art in human experience.

Prerequisite(s) ART 187
Distribution Requirements HE, PD

Evaluation

Work this semester will be evaluated using a number of different assignment types. Each of these assignments will detail particular constraints or opportunities when assigned.

Realized Projects

Your work this semester will be evaluated largely using a “specifications grading” system. For those unfamiliar with such a system, assignments will contain checklists of minimum requirements. Those assignments which meet these requirements (and, for 3D projects, *stand without significant physical intervention*) will receive full points.

Realized Projects have features such as (but not limited to) a **material budget**, **duration**, an **“R&D”** requirement, and **space limitation**. Each assignments “Guidelines” section will contain specifications specific to a given assignment. These rules serve as definitions for a “minimum viable product” (MVP) for a given structure.

These assignments will come in both individual and group format. When participating in group work, group members will receive evaluative surveys whose responses will inform 25% of an individual’s final grade in group work.

Architectural Writing

While part of the practice of architecture is certainly the building of it, three (3) writing assignments will be given throughout the semester. These assignments may include short presentation or workshop components which will take place during Monday class sessions.

The “Charette”

Originally conceived as part of the *Beaux-Arts* model of architecture instruction, these are typically short, informal, “on-the-spot” design assignments. These may be assigned to individuals or groups, but will always take place during Monday class sessions. More often than not, these assignments will depend on either recent or current reading assignments or discussions.

Presentations

Presentations will take various forms throughout the semester, some being group-based, others individual. Rules and strategies for each presentation will be specified in the assignment requesting a given presentation.

Critique (“Crit”)

Two (2) times during the semester, students’ work will be subject to course critique. One (1) of these sessions will be individual and one (1) will be a group project. The schedule for these critiques will be determined by the instructor.

Final Presentation

Our final exam period will be a presentation period during which individuals will present their work in a quasi-formal setting. These presentations will be a mixture of direct audience address and informal

Q&A. More guidelines will be distributed nearer to the end of the semester.

Participation

In this course, “participation” takes on a multi-faceted definition.

Primarily, participation contemplates the concept of “attendance.” Historically, students who do well in these kinds of classes attend class, read any assigned reading material with a pencil, pen, highlighter, or open digital document for notes. This kind of preparation enables insightful, usefully, productive discussion without which this course could not properly survive.

Monday class sessions

Our sessions on Mondays will feature a mixture of discussions, short in-class assignments (of both individual and collaborative nature), activities, presentations, local field trips, and/or instruction on various technical or material topics. While your instructor cannot say that attendance is mandatory, students who regularly do not attend these courses will see their course grade lowered by 1 letter grade for each five (5) sessions missed.

Wednesday class sessions

At least half of the time during Wednesday sessions will be general work or experimentation time, with little or no formal schedule. During this time, your instructor may present or review topics for students who have questions. Presentations scheduled during this time will always take place during the first half of the allotted period.

Deadlines

Assignment deadlines for this course are *hard deadlines*. Your instructor expects work to be *complete* and *turned in* on dates specified by assignments. Late work is accepted up to one (1) week from the original date with an 11% penalty attached.

Evaluation scale

Realized Projects	500 pts.	(50%)
Architectural Writing	150 pts	(15%)
“Charettes”	100 pts.	(10%)
Presentations	100 pts.	(10%)
Final Presentation	150 pts.	(15%)

		1000 pts.

Classroom Ethics

The structure of this course relies on students to conduct themselves in a respectful, constructive, and collegial manner. This statement is especially true due to the fact many subjects in this course revolve great deal around personal preference, subjective judgment, and (in some cases) an unfortunate cultural hauteur.

Our work relies on a community of support to enable our best creative selves. Consider the Allegheny College “Statement of Community” as a baseline for our classroom community standards.

Seeking Assistance

Students who struggle to understand knowledge and skills defined in this course are encouraged to seek assistance from the course instructor. To meet with me, consult my available office hours (above) and make an appointment.

Those who are successful in courses like this visit their instructors to discuss questions and concerns about course concepts with the instructor early and often.

If you find yourself in difficult circumstances which affect your ability to participate in or complete

course work, let me know immediately.

Full stop.

Do not wait until the end of the semester. Part of my role as a course instructor is to make sure that students receive the assistance they need.

Do not hesitate to let me know if there is anything I can do with respect to your ability to handle your work.

In some situations, it may be helpful to consider the following resources:

The Maytum Learning Commons

+1 814-332-2898

<http://sites.allegheny.edu/learningcommons/tutoring/>

Allegheny College Counseling Center

+1 814-332-4368

The Winslow Health Center

+1 814-332-4355

Student Life

+1 814-332-2800

Special Needs and Disability

Students with disabilities who need accommodations in this course are encouraged to contact Disability Services at +1 814-334-2898. Disability Services is part of the Learning Commons, located in Pelletier Library. Should you need accommodations, contact this office as soon as possible to ensure that approved accommodations are communicated and implemented as quickly as possible.

This serves both you and I in providing the best environment for learning and support.

The Honor Code

All students and faculty at Allegheny College are bound by the Honor Code. Everyone expects that your behavior reflects this commitment. Given the eminently shareable and reproduceable nature of digital objects, your instructor humbly asks you to consider the difference between “plagiarism” and “fair use.”

As the nature of “plagiarism” and constituents of “fair use” change often, your instructor encourages you to periodically review the specific tenets of the general college Honor Code provided in the latest course catalog and in the *Compass* and discuss these topics freely in class or during office hours.

The “Rules” Rule

The instructor reserves the right to make changes or issue errata to the following course materials:

- Assignments
- The Syllabus
 - “Syllabus” includes this statement
- The course terrain
- The course schedule

These changes will be communicated to you in writing with at least one (1) week’s notice. If, for any reason, a change to any of the named documents creates issues for course timelines (including assignment due dates), dates will be adjusted to reflect and allow time for the complexity of the rule change to be realized.

The goal of this statement is not to indicate that your instructor will issue arbitrary rules, but that you will be both challenged and advantaged by the way that the course might evolve.