

Design in the Anthropocene

FALL 2018—ARC 350R / 386M

Instructor: Coleman Coker

Course Description: Borrowing heavily from Heraclitus' famous quote, "nature loves to hide", this seminar will focus on how *things* love to hide. We're going to look at meaning and poetics in things—specifically, buildings and places—and through that gain a deeper insight into the things we design. *Poiesis* has been described as *revealing that which is already present but otherwise unseen*. A poetic work has the potential to show something not seen until that work itself brings it forth. Yet, what that *not-seen* is, is hiddenness itself. While, at first that sounds like a contradiction, it describes the sense we have when, no matter how much we think we know about a thing, we still feel we don't quite have it all. There's a slipperiness to things; while right in front of us, they hide (withdraw, conceal) themselves, never fully revealed. This insight is significant for designers, since we claim to have authority over what it is we design.

Through readings, lectures and student-led presentations students will explore *poiesis*, what is seen / not-seen. When considering what things are this way, how do we respond to them, and they to us? This line questioning considers how *poiesis* shapes, not only the student as a caring designer, but as a concerned member of the world's community. As such, the seminar considers the designer's responsibilities in what has recently come to be called the Anthropocene, our current geological age, the period during which human activity has been the dominant influence on climate and the environment. Finding ways to culturally express ourselves in this time of dynamic change may be best served by considering the seemingly contradictory relationship we have with the myriad things of this world. The lens of the poetic (art and design) are uniquely qualified to address this relationship.

Methodology: As typical in seminars, there will be informal discussions and presentations based on weekly readings and instructor lectures. Discussions in seminar will spill over and impact the work of the associated studio (see prerequisites below) Each week, you will participate in a series of wide-ranging topics that look at *poiesis* in the Anthropocene. These will be coupled with inquiries into everyday objects, built architectural work, artworks, landscape design and literature.. Along with those, you'll be asked to give several presentations throughout the semester accompanied by a written synopsis summarizing the content of what was presented. There will also be two short research-based written assignments that will advance your seminar explorations.

Thinkers we will be considering are Jane Bennett, Graham Harman, Martin Heidegger, Timothy Morton, the poetry of Maya Angelou, Emily Dickenson and Wallace Stevens.

Prerequisites: *This seminar is required for those taking the Gulf Coast DesignLab's Advanced Design Studio ARC 561R/ ARC 696. Please refer to the Spring 2018 advanced design studio listing for a more thorough description.* Consequently, this seminar is open primarily to students taking that studio. However, there will be limited space available for interested students outside the studio. Students wishing to take this seminar, will be selected on a first-come basis as ranked by their advancement. Those students should have an equivalent standing similar to students who are at the advanced design studio level.

Required Texts: Provided by instructor through an electronic reader and as coordinated through the course.

Office hours: 11am -1pm T, W, F and by appointment, room GOL 2.202 / ccoker@austin.utexas.edu

Student Evaluation / Grading: Grades will be based on class participation, writing exercises and a thorough understanding of the readings as shown through contributing to seminar discussions.

Student evaluation will be judged on:

- 1) Participation in class discussions and assigned tasks: 50%;
- 2) Quality of class assignments: 50%

Grade Descriptions:

A/A- Excellent: Project surpasses expectations in terms of inventiveness, appropriateness, visual language, conceptual rigor, craft, and personal development. Student pursues concepts and techniques above and beyond what is discussed in class. Project is complete on all levels.

B+/B/B- Above Average: Project is thorough, well presented, diligently pursued, and successfully completed. Student pursues ideas and suggestions presented in class and puts in effort to resolve required projects. Project is complete on all levels and demonstrates potential for excellence.

C+/C Average: Project meets the minimum requirements. Suggestions made in class and not pursued with dedication and rigor. Project is incomplete in one or more areas.

C-/D+/D/D- Poor: Project is incomplete. Basic grasp of skill is lacking, visual clarity or logic of presentation are not level-appropriate. Student does not demonstrate the required competence and knowledge base.

F Fail Project is unresolved. Minimum objectives are not met. Performance is not acceptable. Note that this grade will be assigned when you have excessive unexcused absences.

X Excused Incomplete: Can be given only for legitimate reasons of illness or family emergency. Simply not completing work on time is not an adequate cause for assigning this evaluation. It may only be used after consultation with the Associate Deans' offices and with an agreement as to a new completion date. Work must be completed before the second week of the next semester in which you are enrolling, according to School of Architecture policy.

Attendance: Regular attendance for all classes is expected. Most of our class meetings will be devoted to discussions, exercises, and hands-on workshops, so regular attendance and active participation is essential. If you've notified your instructor in advance of a planned absence, you may miss three (3) classes— for any reason—without penalty. Each additional unexcused absence (for any reason) will lower your course grade by 5%, and six (6) or more unexcused absences will result in a failing grade for the course. For an absence to be counted as excused, the student must notify instructor of the planned or unplanned absence. **The student must contact the instructor directly.** Having a classmate inform you of the student's absence is not acceptable.

Because our time in class is limited, promptness is important. Instances of habitually arriving late or leaving early may be considered an absence. Once the instructor warns you of your regular lateness or leaving early each instance of arriving late or leaving early afterward will count as 1/2 of an absence.

Religious Observances: A student shall be excused from attending classes or other required activities, including examinations, for the observance of a religious holy day, including travel for the purpose. A student whose absence is excused under this subsection may not be penalized for that absence and shall be allowed to take an examination or complete an assignment from which the student is excused within a reasonable time after the absence. University policy requires students to notify each of their instructors as far in advance of the absence as possible so that arrangements can be made.

By UT Austin policy, you must notify the instructor of the pending absence at least fourteen days prior to the date of a religious holy day. If you must miss a class, an examination, an assignment, or a project in order to observe a religious holy day, you will be given an opportunity to complete the missed work within a reasonable time after the absence.

Academic Integrity: Students who violate University policy on academic integrity are subject to disciplinary penalties, including the possibility of failure in the course and/or dismissal from the University. Since such dishonesty harms the individual, all students, and the integrity of the University, policies on academic integrity will be strictly

enforced. Refer to the Student Conduct and Academic Integrity website for official University policies and procedures on academic integrity: <http://deanofstudents.utexas.edu/conduct/academicintegrity.php>. University Code of Conduct: <http://catalog.utexas.edu/general-information/the-university/#universitycodeofconduct>

Care Program: Counselors in Academic Residence (CARE) Program places licensed mental health professionals within the colleges or schools they serve in order to provide better access to mental health support for students who are struggling emotionally and/or academically.

Laura Dannenmaier (LCSW) is the CARE Program Director and is the assigned CARE counselor for the School of Architecture. Faculty and staff may refer students to the CARE counselor or students may directly reach out to her.

Laura Dannenmaier | BTL 114B | (512) 471-3115 https://cmhc.utexas.edu/CARE_dannenmaier.html

Students with Disabilities: Students with disabilities who require special accommodations must obtain a letter that documents the disability from the Services for Students with Disabilities area of the Office of the Dean of Students (471-6259 voice or 471-4641 TTY for users who are deaf or hard of hearing). This letter should be presented to the instructor in each course at the beginning of the semester and accommodations needed should be discussed at that time. <http://diversity.utexas.edu/disability/>

Campus Carry: Texas law permits individuals who have obtained a concealed handgun license (CHL) to carry their loaded, concealed weapon in university buildings on campus. The university has determined certain sensitive areas and buildings where concealed weapons will be prohibited. All students are to be familiar with and abide by the publically displayed campus policies on the school's official website.

Security, Safety and the Studio: The studio is an exceptional learning environment. Since it is a place for all, it necessitates the careful attention to the needs of everyone. All spraying of fixative, spray paint, or any other substance should be done in the shop. Security is a necessary component for a studio that is accessible to you and your colleagues 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. Do not leave your studio without your studio key and do not leave your studio unlocked. Hold yourself and your studiomates accountable for the security of your shared space.

BCAL: Concerns regarding the safety or behavior of fellow students, Teaching Assistants (TA), or Professors can be reported to the Behavior Concerns Advice Line (BCAL): 512-232-5050. Calls can be made anonymously. If something doesn't feel right, it probably isn't. Trust your instincts and share your concerns.

Emergency Evacuation: In the case of emergency evacuation:

- Occupants of buildings on The University of Texas at Austin campus are required to evacuate buildings when a fire alarm is activated. Alarm activation or announcement requires exiting and assembling outside.
- Students should familiarize themselves with all exit doors of each classroom and building they may occupy. Remember that the nearest exit door may not be the one used when entering the building.
- Students requiring assistance in evacuation shall inform their instructor in writing during the first week of class. In the event of an evacuation, follow the instruction of faculty or class instructors.
- Reentry into a building is prohibited unless given instructions by the following: Austin Fire Department, The University of Texas at Austin Police Department, or Fire Prevention Services offices.

Information regarding emergency evacuation routes and emergency procedures can be found at:

www.utexas.edu/emergency.

Absence for Military Service: In accordance with section 51.9111 of the Texas Education Code, a student is excused from attending classes or engaging in other required activities, including exams, if he or she is called to active military service of a reasonably brief duration. The maximum time for which the student may be excused has been defined by the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board as “**no more than 25 percent of the total number of class meetings or the contact hour equivalent (not including the final examination period)** for the specific course or courses in which the student is currently enrolled at the beginning of the period of active military service.” The student will be allowed a reasonable time after the absence to complete assignments and take exams. Policies affecting students who withdraw from the University for military service are given in the withdrawal section.