

The New University

[NOTE: This studio is formally linked to the Seminar A6459 taught by Jonathan R. Cole and Reinhold Martin. Studio participants will be required to enroll in the seminar.]

Introduction

In this studio we will design a new university.

Jonathan Cole argues in *The Great American University*, "...the American research university is considered by many to be the world's more powerful engine of innovation and discovery; yet at the same time it is widely misunderstood and even in danger of losing its preeminence."

And **if**, in fact, "...universities **are** at the center of dramatic societal/global changes; (then perhaps) architecture can help us think concretely about, envision, or even guide those changes."

This studio and seminar could be thought of as two sides of a coin, (and that the issue on the table is quite fundamental,) This studio will speculate on ways in which the new university will possess a new "architecture" in every sense of the term. Together with the seminar, the intention is to explore and reimagine that architecture, and its role in shaping knowledge now and in the future.

Both studio and seminar are primarily aimed at informed speculation and conceptual risk-taking at a moment in history that has already witnessed vast changes in the educational, institutional, and intellectual landscape. This will be a unique form of integrated teaching and learning that will use the frame of architecture to both re-conceptualize and re-invent The New University.

Given this urgency, students might be tempted to forego the travel studios that will be offered, and choose to think and work much closer to home.

The New University

This New University with its new concepts for programs and departments assumes new forms of learning, new technologies, new cross-disciplinary forms of knowledge, learning and research.

Some key questions for the studio are:

What would be the form of this new university?

What would be housed in the buildings / building?

How would these buildings perform to suit the new endeavors?

Architecture and the campus plan are thought of as leading the organization of key universities; could architecture galvanize new programs of knowledge into new configurations?

The architecture of the university from, "Thomas Jefferson's University of Virginia to McKim Mead and White's Columbia, the land grant universities of the late 1800's to the new frontiers of "big science" after World War II, belongs to a discursive field in which knowledge interacts with technology, religion, capital and the state." How will this new university centered on specific areas of research and technology continue to be an "open source" device, and how does public space figure into it's overall plan? Is the notion of public space different from these previous models?

Will the "parts to the whole"; the default campus university model, still apply?

Or

Would these new alliances and relationships of cross-disciplinary working form new configurations and form a completely new modality?

Would this new university produce architecture of alternative concepts and spatial configurations?

What are the spatial implications of new ways of working, learning, and knowledge-production.

What is the effect in considering new technologies, the data campus, dispersed small incubators, “start-ups” and “creative capital” on the components of the new university and building scale?

Site and Program

The studio will travel to Harlem where Columbia University’s Manhattanville Campus at 125th Street will be the site of study.

The program for The New University will be an addition to a preeminent research university.

Understanding that many fields require a specific physical format, spatial or geo-physical configurations in order to conduct research; the new building/buildings will form a new university to facilitate a sciences liberal arts campus geared toward collaboration, innovation, and cross-disciplinary pollination.

A main provocation of this studio is that architecture must respond to the immediate needs of the developing fields in creating space for research and work to be done; while at the same time allow for the flexibility to retool, recombine, merge, and stretch accommodating developing uses, research and processes.

The design, configuration and position of public space have been a main tenant of the physical plan of the university and thus a forum for collaboration, social expression and exhibition. This new university must include a strategy for it’s public space.

Studio Format

Design work will progress concurrently with the seminar. Teams will research critical campus planning examples with their different spatial configurations and other types of specific formal spaces for teaching, learning and working.

Parallel to this research will be a series of short formal modeling exercises investigating possible formal concepts and their physical attributes.

The studio will use the format of a design competition to organize the design process. The semester will be structured around specific concept and design deliverables.

For the Final Review, students will present their concept strategy along with a detailed development at the site using drawings, models, mock-ups, and large-scale sections. Physical models will be the preferred form of representation throughout the semester.

The studio will meet Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays 2-6 PM.

The linked seminar will meet Wednesdays 12-2 PM led by Jonathan R. Cole and Reinhold Martin. (See syllabus for Seminar A6459)

The first studio and seminar meeting will be Friday, September 6, 2-6 PM in Ware Lounge.