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**Instructor Information:**

[Hilary Mary Sample-Meredith](#)

Columbia University  
Graduate School of Architecture, Planning and Preservation  
A4006: Advanced Studio VI, Spring 2013  
Instructor: Hilary Sample, Associate Professor, hms2155@columbia.edu  
Guest Critic: Jay Siebenmorgen, Design Principal, NBBJ NYC, jsiebenmorgen@nbbj.com  
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# Stress and Wellness

## In the Architecture and Cities of Soweto, Johannesburg, and New York City

### Studio Statement

This semester students will participate in an experimental research and design studio focused on the complex intersection between urban health and architecture in the settings of New York City, Soweto and Johannesburg, South Africa. Each of these cities has experienced modern and contemporary health crises that have shaped their urban development and social and political landscape. As a studio, students will research typological and physiological forms within each of these cities. How has urban health both historically and through the contemporary shaped these cities? And similarly, how has the form of the city shaped the health of its population? This studio is as much a record of a search as it is a forum for creating design proposals. The themes of stress and wellness represent the content of the studio. With the aim of better understanding situations of stress and wellness in relation to design, the studio will be structured through reading two scales; students will focus on Soweto's, Johannesburg's, and New York City's urban context, infrastructures, and building types in the first part of the term, and then focus on programmatic development in addition to environmental and material properties in designing a new health typology for the future.

The studio begins with an intensive 4 week exercise into comparative research about urban and architectural typologies associated with health and the cities of Soweto, Johannesburg, and New York City. As a departure point, students, working in pairs, will compare and contrast the cities of Soweto and the Chris Hani Baragwanath Hospital; Johannesburg and the Hillbrow District; and New York City, Harlem Hospital and St. Vincent's Hospital Districts. Each of these cities has a specific history that has shaped their form, and continues to evolve through contemporary urban plans. CHB Hospital, Hillbrow, and Harlem and the St. Vincent Hospital Districts are all undergoing redevelopment. Part of the studio is to examine both the history of these sites and the contemporary urban plans and development proposals. Students will gain knowledge in the intersection between urban development strategies and architectural proposals and techniques. Based on the subjects of stress and wellness, each student pair will produce research through drawing and model making that presents forms associated with health and architecture. Students will be required to produce two models, one of the city at an infrastructural scale, and one at a building scale. The second assignment within the research phase will be to analyze and make a detailed model at the building scale of a particular architectural project that exemplifies subjects of health and wellness. This precedent list will be given in the second week of the studio.

The second and main project for the studio will focus on an experimental project that explores wellness within stressed urban environments. This project seeks for students to question urban living and dwelling as both an infrastructural and architectural problem. Specific questions should be framed around issues related to health of seniors and teens. Working individually, students will make proposals for either Soweto or Johannesburg. The projects will develop around three assignments: program, structure, and the building envelop/facade. The tower typology will serve as a departure point, in part because the tower is both iconic in these cities, and recently has become over-scaled. As a studio, we will examine the evolution of the tower typology, rethink its organization and structure to promote wellness, and speculate on its representation as a critical image to a healthy urban environment.

The studio will travel to Soweto, Johannesburg, and Geneva\*.