PROFESSIONING ARCHITECTURE

General Premises

The goal of architectural education is to transform lay people into architectural professionals. This is done by offering a series of structured experiences that eventually lead an individual into being able to profess architecture.

As Freidson \(^1\) argues, the term “profession” suggests two kinds of interpretations. “First, consonant with the Latin origin of its use in English, it represents a more than ordinary commitment to performing a particular kind of activity--an avowal of a special sort of devotion or dedication.” In the context of architecture, this interpretation suggests that the professional should be concerned with the well-being of the people and environment one serves. The second interpretation deals with “the productive labor by which one makes a living, a full-time occupation that entails the use of some sort of specialized skill.” Paraphrasing Freidson, we could say that each of these different understandings can stand by itself. One can care for architecture deeply and provide architectural services without having to possess and exercise any particularly specialized knowledge and skill. And one can perform the task of providing architectural services to people without caring. Of course, the ideal professional would combine conviction and care with skill and knowledge.

So, true professing really demands holding a position, standing for something, making a vow in the name of a deep seeded passion for architecture and our fellow beings and earth. Professing wants belief and care. But that is not enough. Professing also requires being able to successfully, technically, and competently respond to architectural challenges. Professing wants knowledge and skill. Hence, professing is where belief and knowledge come together in the here and now. Where caring and skill encounter their expression by addressing a present need.

Professing architecture is no light matter. Do you want to profess architecture? Do you? Really?

This year we will address the matter of professing architecture. It will demand us to become very aware and responsible of our intentions, beliefs, caring and biases, even if they are well meant. For our contemporary world is a large place with diverse customs and needs that are undergoing fast and radical change. We need to become open and familiar with other ways of looking at reality, other ways of life. At the same time, we will need to develop the toolbox with which we can profess skillfully, for as we have said, it is not good enough to care. Without the proper knowledge, we will fail or at the very least provide a poor service.

The first project will provide you with the vast horizon of human reality at the beginning of this millennium. It will allow you to scan the panorama of our civilization and try to make sense out of it so you can take a position. The perspective of where we are and where we may be going will kick off your professional education and, we believe, prove extraordinarily valuable.

The second project will develop your professional discipline by requesting your continuous clarity in terms of position (parti) and skillfulness. You will need to respond to profound existential matters through simple and intentional acts of making.

The third project will deal with craftsmanship, skill, and architecturally specific knowledge. It will provide you with a series of essential tools to profess architecture.

Finally, the fourth project will ask you to address a real problem that will demand true professing. Its urban context, socio-cultural expectations, marketing demands, economic implications, and architectural nature will require you to develop a kin professional sensibility.

In order to properly facilitate your path towards professing architecture, we will offer you the opportunity to develop a conceptual and working understanding of how to explore (methodology, design process) and respond (product) to programmatic requirements by means of architectural design. We will ask your:

1. suspension of pre-conceived beliefs about architecture;
2. study of the basic elements and principles behind architectural place making;
3. investigation of the role of the program/function as a source of architectural insight;
4. exploration of the relationship between tectonics and architecture;
5. learning how to develop conceptual schemes or "partis" to organize, develop, and criticize your design work;
6. use of analog (drawing, physical modeling) and digital depictions as representation tools;

---

**Logistics**

Students are required to attend the studio on Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays (2:30 to 5:30 PM). They are also expected to attend all lectures and activities scheduled by the School and/or this class.

---

2 Digital representations may or may not be emphasized depending on the particular pedagogic intentions of each assignment. However, any use of electronic media will need to demonstrate its impact as a *thinking and making tool* in architectural design. Drafting is a very poor and superficial use of digital depictions.
The studio will be broken down into 4 groups of about 15 students. Each group will be led by one faculty critic. Faculty will have teaching responsibilities to their group first and then to the rest of the studio. The critics will rotate groups during the semester to expose students to different teaching styles, backgrounds and design ideologies. The group critic will be responsible for 50% of the evaluation of each student in his/her group. The other 50% will depend on the evaluation of the other 3 instructors.

Incomplete and late projects will not be accepted unless due to documented illness or other justifiable reasons. All projects must be the work of each student without any help from other individuals.

There will be two personal interviews with each student to discuss her/his overall performance in the studio. The first one will occur at midterm and the second at the end of the semester.

Projects will be evaluated using different types of juries. Depending on the assignment, the work will be reviewed using a (1) closed jury, (2) mixed open jury (faculty with guest jurors), and (3) faculty open jury (all 4 critics present).

A field trip to Antelope Island is scheduled for Monday 10 September. Students are expected to come along as we will be addressing topics directly relevant to the studio. More information about this trip will be made available later. Please, also note that we will have class on Saturday 20 October to accommodate the grant funded ADLV workshop taught by University of Colorado Professor Bennett Neiman and CalPoly (SLO) professor Thomas Fowler. There will be no class on Monday 22 October to compensate for this situation.

A sketchbook will be kept throughout the semester and periodically evaluated. Its content will comprise drawings related to the issues under exploration in the studio.

**Evaluation**

The grading will be broken down as follows:

- First Design Project: **futuring** (team) 10%
- Second Design Project: **concept architecture** (individual) 30%
- Third Design Project: **ADLV workshop** (team) 10%
- Four Design Project: **fashion place** (individual) 40%
- Other Considerations (Student Development, Attitude, Class Participation, Sketch Book) 10%