Two Proposals- Studio Culture and Course Cost

November 17, 2021

Context

Through the on-going efforts of many students, staff and faculty, the Department is addressing structural issues that limit diversity, equity, inclusion and belonging in our community, our pedagogy, and our profession. More about department efforts can be found at this link on the CED website.

The Fall 2022 Equity Steering Committee has unanimously endorsed the following white paper on design studio culture and course cost template for immediate distribution among faculty and students.

"**Design Studio Culture**" is intended to be a living document, serving as a source of discussion between faculty and students, and continually modified to reflect discussions. This document was drafted by two graduate students during the summer of 2021 with funding from Graduate Division Diversity Pilot Program.

As surprising as it may seem, understanding the nature of design as well as a history of how design has been taught can still be mysteries for some students. For some, this part of the white paper is the most revealing, helping them to understand the development of their practice and the being "stuck" is part of the process. For others, the dynamic ways in which we interact and set expectations, particularly in the design studio, were the most important. Imbalances in power, finances, and individual backgrounds often come into conflict and need to be discussed within the department.

"**Course Costs**" were also recommend that the faculty add to their in syllabi, as soon as this spring. This addition allows several things: 1- for instructors to reflect on the how to ensure equal access to resources and products for their students, 2- for students to be able to budget for the semester, and 3- for students to apply for financial aid to cover course costs. Thanks to the B.A committee, we have found add that this simple addition is all that is needed. A template is added at the end of this document and can be found at this link.

As always, all suggestions welcome. We ask you to read what follows with an open mind -- to look for ways that we can advance both lecture and seminar formats of teaching as well as design teaching.

Department of Architecture
University of California Berkeley
August 16, 2021

Design Studio Culture

This rights and definitions policy has been written by students and faculty as a living document to foster an architectural culture that supports creativity and invention, respect and collaboration, health and safety, an ecology of materials, and optimism about the role of design in the larger departmental framework. This policy considers previous studies on studio culture and proposes ways to support inclusive design collaboration and to avoid unnecessary stressors.

Background

Berkeley Architecture is dedicated to programs that ensure supportive and respectful environments among its students, faculty, administration, and staff. It is part of our shared values to nurture positive learning and teaching cultures. This written policy begins with design, its instruction, and extends to the studio space. The document stems from this [2002 AIAS report](#) and in depth research concerning student's health and alternative pedagogical strategies. Beyond outlining the role of design in our programs, this document describes the rights and responsibilities of students, faculty, administration, and staff within the department.

Philosophy + Objectives

The College of Environmental Design believes each individual brings a unique set of experiences that are valuable to the environmental and design challenges our world faces today. We believe that social justice, climate equity, as well as universal accessibility should shape the pedagogies of design studios. These objectives will be complex and interwoven and as such we value design pedagogies that value open dialogues, collaboration, and inclusive frameworks. We believe that the design studio culture must be one of mutual respect and learning. Equity in architectural pedagogy not only incorporates the different disciplines the field interacts with, but also the different levels of experience throughout the school. As such, we believe that collaboration trumps competition when students and faculty maintain an atmosphere of mutual respect and learning.

Design / Studio / Culture: Definitions

Design in architecture school too often uses jargon that is difficult for new and prospective students to understand. We recommend increased accessibility through the adoption of more broadly understood language. Nonetheless, there are terms that are architecture specific, and we define the use of three terms here: *design studio*, *studio*, and *culture*.

- *Design Studio* refers to courses instructed.
- *Studio* refers to the physical space of work.

- *Studio Culture* refers to the interactions and atmosphere cultivated in both the physical space and courses, which we hope to guide with this document.

Design Studio- Pedagogy

The origin of many architectural design instruction practices is the Ecole des Beaux-Arts in Paris in the 1600s (Drexler & Chafee, 1975). The school's teaching model utilized knowledgeable teachers who proposed a "design problem" to students who learned by doing. This included the development of drawings and models, which would eventually be critiqued by a jury of professors and guest designers. This tradition of master-mystery instruction has been replicated for hundreds of years and possesses both strengths and weaknesses. While some of architecture's instruction method is based upon this, we also understand the inevitable necessity for change and welcome experimentation.

Design has real implications. Architects are responsible to their clients, the public, the future, and history. The challenges as well as opportunities that result from these responsibilities must be understood by those who undertake the pursuit of this discipline (Cuff,1995).

Architecture design based education intends to cultivate lifelong behaviours of curiosity, critical thinking, self discipline, careful making skills, and respect in its students. These tools enable students to become strong designers and design thinkers. It is along these characteristics that design work should be judged rather than any particular visual style or conceptual ideology.

Design is an iterative process, and it is through the repeated exploration of a prompt or concept that designers may develop their work. The process of this in studio often involves the definition of a problem, research of relevant information, and continues on via testing and evolutions of design solutions (Kimbell, 2011). Traditionally instruction of design reflects the Beaux-Arts "learn-by-doing" process. Especially in the beginning, this format of teaching is often unfamiliar to students. Students and instructors should recognize that confusion and discomfort is a reasonable response in the early stages of adapting to design learning (Sachs,1999). Instructors should facilitate the learning of their students through clear and direct feedback and assignment objectives. Honesty and open communication between the instructor and students on the progression of the course is the best way for students to understand the course content and for instructors to recognize effective and ineffective teaching practices.

How a design course is taught is equally important as what content is introduced. Those seeking possibilities for different instruction methods can refer to this document on alternative instruction and assessment methods. Design can be thought of as both problem defining and as problem solving (Salama, 1999). The iterative nature of design has the ability to give solutions at multiple stages of the process, and at times can also be difficult to let go of certain initial ideas. This gives opportunity for ideas to be applied to later projects in turn. Students should also be aware of the phenomena of 'stuckness' where ideas come at a halt at points in the design process, but is something that can be mediated through instructor guidance and also communication amongst peers in studio (Sachs,1999).

Studio - Physical characteristics

Unlike most lectures and seminars, design instruction requires space -- for making, for collaborating, and for sharing analog explorations -- to develop individual and shared design practices. The *studio* is a laboratory for new interactions where foundational respect and collaboration is key. Although often thought of as the spaces within the Bauer-Wurster Hall, studio culture bleeds into any space used by students, faculty, staff, and administration towards the progression of the school's philosophy. While a remote year has expanded out digital capacities, lateral learning is best reinforced in

the studio. Collaboration among different studio levels has been observed to be conducive to better understanding and innovation (B.Sidawi, 2012).

Utilizing the studio space will allow students to gather more feedback and progress through the design phase. By keeping work out on their desk, students promote better communication among instructors and peers (Lodson & Ogbeda, 2020), giving the opportunity for evaluation (El-Latif, Al-Hagla, & Hasan, 2020). Because studio is a shared space, noise levels and regard for personal spaces must be taken into consideration in respect of all those utilizing the space.

While hours of work inside the studio space is a time honored tradition, pushing students to think beyond the realm and interests of Architecture is a great way to encourage interdisciplinary thinking. In this paper by N.A.G. Abdullah, it can be seen how working in a diversity of spaces can encourage diversity of thinking from students. As a result, we would like to encourage the consideration of bringing students to new locations so they might find new ways of thinking about the built environment.

Studio Culture

Time Management

While the studio can be a den of creativity, late hours in the studio should not be romanticized nor equated with better work. Careful consideration by instructors is made in order to prevent all night sessions in the studio. This is to enable students to have adequate time for rest and life outside of schoolwork. Quality, rather than quantity of work is valued (B.Sidawi, 2012). Instructors can facilitate this by outlining clear deliverables. Another beneficial conversation is one of acknowledgement of how time consuming design can be (Sachs,1999). Time management is a skill designers hone over their years so it is both the responsibility of instructors to encourage healthy work habits and students to practice them. This should be taken as a way to also appreciate and reserve time for other courses, equally as important in the pedagogy as studio.

Finances

The architecture department is conscious of the expenses brought on by design work and every design studio should ensure that plotting and materials in the design instruction can be equitably afforded by students. In order for the program to reach its goal of promoting equitable design to a wider audience, Berkeley Architecture is focused on reducing the costs of supplies and printing. Availability of materials directly from the school will allow students to reduce the costs incurred. A holistic ecology where sustainable materials are used, recycled when possible for reuse by others, and an exchange of information within the studio about material issues will make material costs more manageable. Once again, the College of Environmental Design is a place of collaboration including in terms of materials.

Assessment

It should be acknowledged, both in this document and by studio instructors, that there is no singular objective criteria by which design solutions can be quantified. Inherently, evaluations of design projects will have a subjective characteristic. As a result, it is beneficial for instructors to be consistent and clear in their feedback, providing specific input and references rather than generalized statements about value or quality. Feedback should allow students to recognize their project's perceived strengths and weaknesses, and process how they may improve.To achieve this clarity of grading and assessment,

students should receive regular feedback throughout the semester. Instructors should highlight what learning objectives have been achieved and which still need attention by the student. In these meetings, there should be opportunity for the student to voice their own concerns or confusions.

Reviews are, above all else, learning opportunities. Through these interactions students should be able to practice the skill of presentation and communication of their work (Dannels, Gaffney & Martin, 2008). Like all learning opportunities, students should be prepared by instructors. This involves practice presentations, discussions of presentation structure, and audience questions to consider. It may also be valuable to restructure courses so that reviews occur before the end of term, this will allow time for the class to discuss review proceedings, common critiques, and how reviewer feedback might impact future work (El-Latif, Al-Hagla, & Hasan, 2020). The formal review is another tradition inherited from the Ecole des-beaux Arts. However, we encourage instructors to test new forms of feedback for students. This may take on many forms. Those looking for inspiration on methods of feedback to try can review this document on alternative methods of assessment and instruction.

It is essential that the position of the review as a medium for feedback and learning be emphasized above all else and that it maintains an optimistic attitude about the field and opportunities of the students. Responsibility falls to the instructor to intervene if a critique becomes unproductive. The review is not an opportunity for cruelty or abuse towards students. Feedback must be directed toward the work. Comments about the student's personal character, intelligence, race, ethnicity, gender or sexual preference, personal appearance, or remarks that are belligerent or demeaning will not be tolerated at any CED review.

Collaboration

A key aspect of architectural education is collaboration. The design studio culture should foster interaction and the exchange of ideas between various parties. All have a right to engage and this means listening and working to understand studio mates' perspectives. Although it is often assumed that everyone is working toward a similar goal, this is not inherently true. Individuals will define success in a studio setting differently, and disconnects in these definitions can only be appreciated through communication. Everyone in the studio is both a catalyst and participant in the studio culture.

One common form of collaboration is mentorship. Many schools institute formalized peer mentorship programs which can be read about here and here. GASU offers a buddy program to facilitate inter-program engagement, to get involved, reach out to GASU at ced.gasu@berkeley.edu. Mentorship between students and instructors can also be a very helpful tool for guiding students through the dense realm of design. CED Architecture also offers dinners with faculty to enable students more opportunities to engage with instructors, these can be inquired about through _____.

Interdisciplinary Work

As the world's issues become increasingly complex and multifaceted, so too must the designers we train. A studio based education is most successful when balanced by other forms of learning beyond architecture- both inside and outside the classroom. Architects are full fledged individuals who pursue fulfilling lives as well as fulfilling careers (Gutman, 1985).

The following are some ways to encourage interdisciplinary students:

- **Inter-departmental collaboration on assignments and projects**

While difficult to coordinate, this format of work provides an enriching experience for students and provides them with knowledge that will be essential in their future work. Interdisciplinary courses that already exist include:
- Classes in the ENVDES series, such as ENVDES100, ENVDES104.
- There are some interdisciplinary ARCH202 studios offered
- There is also the Global Urban Humanities Initiative the Future Histories Lab which offers interdepartmental courses
  - The CED alone hosts a multitude of programs to collaborate with including
    - Architecture, Landscape Architecture, City and Regional Planning, Real Estate Development + Design, Center for Environmental Design Research
  - Other programs that could be fruitful to collaborate with include (but are not limited to):
    - Anthropology, Art History, Business, Engineering, Development Practice, Disability Studies, Gender and Women's Studies
- **Engagement outside of the classroom**
  UC Berkeley offers a plethora of student organizations to become involved in. These can be found through this directory.

Bill of Rights

Student Responsibilities

- Come to studio eager to learn, pinned up by agreed upon times, and attend the entirety of scheduled class time
- Attend class and contribute to the collaborative environment of the studio by sharing ideas, thoughts, and experiences.
- Contribute to a positive studio experience
- Value peer student's contributions to the studio through equal concern and attention, irregardless of educational, cultural, financial, or religious backgrounds and beliefs
- Do their part to maintain the cleanliness, safety and security of the physical studio space and work
- Willingness to take risks in their work

Student Rights

- Authorship + credit for their work
- Class is ended in a timely manner
- Receive timely and comprehensive feedback on work
- Clearly stated expectations from instructors
- Notice of resources in aid of students
- Clear communication with all people involved, including instructors, advisors, and administration
- Have their unique cultural perspective and personal history respected and taken into account
- Accommodation of any accessibility needs

Faculty Responsibilities

- Arrive to studio at agreed upon time and attend the entirety of scheduled class time
- Provide each student's work with equal attention and consideration

- Share their knowledge and resources with students to aid in their development
- Give student's ideas room for growth and expansion
- Provide timely feedback on assignments
- Coordinate due dates with all required courses
- Create a positive learning environment and promote a sense of optimism about the students and the field
- Do their part to maintain a safe environment that respects and protects the property and work of students

Faculty Rights

- Students will attend studio prepared and be fully engaged
- Their feedback will be respected by students and other faculty
- Students will turn in work in a timely and efficient manner
- Be supported in their endeavors in instruction by the department
- Clear communication from department, students, and other faculty about instructional concerns

At reviews the rights of the guest reviewers should be recognized. These include:

- Reviews will start and end in a timely manner, and they will be provided a break
- The instructors are responsible for providing the studio project prompt to reviewers.
- The instructor will outline the goals of the review session, as well as what aspects of student work should be the primary focus
- Their feedback will be respectfully considered by all involved in the review
- Review proceedings will be explained by the instructor promptly
- Students will be courteous and engaged in the review proceedings

Similarly, guest reviewers share responsibilities including:

- Arrive to the review as scheduled
- Share their input and perspectives with students as to advance their overall knowledge
- Careful consideration of the student's limitations of work over a single semester
- Provide each project and student equal attention and consideration
- Be respectful in discussion with both students and peer reviewers
- Give room to students to partake in said discussion

Communication + Point of Contacts

The Design Studio Culture is a living document. It is recommended that it be revisited each year by both students and faculty to be amended to reflect changes in the department and profession. Communication between the student body, administration, and faculty are key in the continued strengthening of the CED as an academic institution. At the end of the semester, students should submit course evaluations to appraise the performance of the faculty members; additionally mid-semester surveys should be distributed, and exit surveys should be provided to graduating students. The exit surveys ought to be thoroughly reviewed, distilled, and distributed to the entire academic body.

Individuals looking to amend these definitions and rights or who believe the policy may have been violated should reach out to their program director:

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Student Orgs:
CEDSOC (College of Environmental Design Students of Color)
GASU (Graduate Architecture Student Union)
NOMAS (National Organization of Minority Architects Students)
UC Berkeley GA (Graduate Assembly)
UgSC (Undergraduate Student Council of the College of Environmental Design)

This document was developed in reference to studio culture statements at the following schools:
California College of the Arts, Cornell, Harvard, Illinois Institute of Technology, Iowa State University, Montana State University, Pratt Institute, Princeton, the University of Utah, and the University of Kansas

References:

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Kimbell, L. (2011). Rethinking design thinking: Part i. Design and Culture, 3(3), 285–306. https://doi.org/10.2752/175470811x13071166525216

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Sachs, A. (1999). `Stuckness' in the design studio. Design Studies, 20(2), 195–209. https://doi.org/10.1016/s0142-694x(98)00034-9

Sidawi, B. (2012). The impact of social interaction and communications on innovation in the architectural design studio. Buildings, 2(3), 203–217. https://doi.org/10.3390/buildings2030203

Miller, S., & Devora, M. (2021) [Alternative Practice in Design Instruction Handbook](#)

Course Cost Template link

Category	Item	unit cost	number needed	sub-total	totals by category
Books + Readings			0	$0.00	$0.00
Hardware (not including computer set up)			0	$0.00	$0.00
Software (not available in computer lab)			0	$0.00	$0.00
Field Trips/Site Visits					
Tech Use Fees					
Fab shop		$150.00	0	$0.00	
DFL		$250.00	0	$0.00	
Computer Lab		$98.00	0	$0.00	$0.00
Equipment					
Cutting Pad		$25	0	$0.00	
Knives and blades		$20	0	$0.00	
Bits and Blades		$20	0	$0.00	
Journals		$20	0	$0.00	
Other			0	$0.00	$0.00
Materials					
Lumber		$20	0	$0.00	
Plywood		$20	0	$0.00	
Plastic		$20	0	$0.00	
Metal		$20	0	$0.00	
Paper		$20	0	$0.00	
Other			0	$0.00	$0.00
Plots	color	1.55/sq ft	0	$0.00	
	photo realistic	3.97/sq ft	0	$0.00	$0.00
Prints	letter B&W	.08/pg	0	$0.00	
	letter Color	0.38/pg	0	$0.00	
	11 x 17 B&W	0.15/pg	0	$0.00	
	11x17 Color	0.74/pg	0	$0.00	$0.00

Total Estimated Course Expenses	$0.00