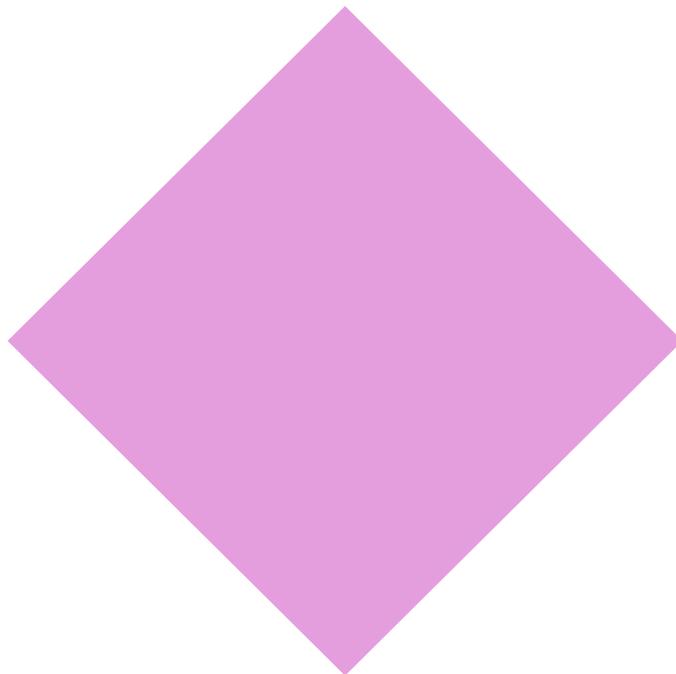


**Architectural Association  
School of Architecture**



**AA PROGRAMME GUIDE**

**TAUGHT MASTER OF PHILOSOPHY (Taught MPhil)**

**2025–2026**

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# SECTION 1: THE SCHOOL

## ARCHITECTURAL ASSOCIATION SCHOOL OF ARCHITECTURE

### 1.1 THIS GUIDE / WHERE WE ARE

The purpose of this Programme Guide is to provide information regarding the way in which the School and its programmes are organised. It also provides an introduction to terms and definitions, common principles of content and assessment, the way that the programmes are structured, how each Course is organised, credited, and regulated, and what you will be expected to do.

Other documents you will find essential in orienting yourself within the School include the following:

- [The AA School Academic Regulations](#)
- [The AA School Quality Manual](#)
- The Programme Handbook

Our principal buildings, where most of the academic programmes are based, are at 32-39 Bedford Square, 4 and 16 Morwell Street and 1 and 1A Montague Street in Bloomsbury, Central London. The Design and Make Programme is located in AA's Hooke Park, in Dorset.

### Address

AA School of Architecture  
36 Bedford Square  
London WC1B 3ES

### Telephone

+44 (0)20 7887 4000

### Contact Details

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Belinda Flaherty	School Registrar	registrar@aschool.ac.uk
Leah Seyfert	Coordinator	leah.seyfert@aschool.ac.uk

## 1.2 ACADEMIC ORGANISATION AND MANAGEMENT

### Overall Academic Organisation

The AA School of Architecture is an independent school governed by the Architectural Association (Inc.). It consists of c. 900 full-time students, who study in the Foundation, Intermediate, Diploma and Postgraduate programmes. The AA School is made-up of four distinct parts:

- A one-year Foundation Programme for students contemplating a career in architecture or related arts subjects. The Foundation Award in Architecture, Art and Design is separate to and does not form part of the 5-year full-time course in architecture.
- The Intermediate and Diploma Programmes offering the 5-year full-time course in architecture:
  - The AA Intermediate Programme leading to the Bachelor of Arts (Honours) and providing exemption from ARB/RIBA Part 1 after 3 years of full-time study (please note that students that complete the programme after June 2027 will receive RIBA Part 1 only);
  - The AA Diploma Programme leading to the Master of Architecture (MArch) and providing exemption from ARB/RIBA Part 2 after 2 years of full-time study.
- The postgraduate programmes comprising 11 distinct programmes of advanced full-time and part-time studies:
  - 10 taught Master level programmes (PGDip/MA/MSc/MArch/MFA/Taught MPhil)
  - A PhD degree. The AA is an Affiliated Research Centre (ARC) of the OU for the delivery and validation of the PhD degree.
- The AA Professional Practice and Practical Experience Examination leading to exemption from the ARB/RIBA Part 3 Examination, the entry requirement to professional registration as an architect. The course and examination are open to anyone who has successfully obtained their Part 1 and Part 2 qualifications (or equivalency from overseas schools of architecture) and also to qualified practitioners for the purpose of Continuing Professional Development.

### Enhancing Quality of Learning: Reviews and Monitoring

All programmes in the AA School are subject to systematic internal and external review on a regular basis. This includes review by the School's Academic Committee and Board (see details below), annual monitoring and periodic review for each programme, annual feedback from External Examiners, student feedback as well as annual and periodic review from the School's professional bodies and validation partners the Open University, ARB and RIBA.

### Academic Governance

The Academic Board (AB) is the sovereign academic body charged with responsibility for the academic governance of the AA School and its programmes of study. It is chaired by the Director of the AA School. The Academic Board delegates responsibilities to, and monitors the progress, effectiveness and recommendations of the AA School's Academic Committee (AC). The Academic Board demonstrates its accountability to the AA Council by submission of quarterly reports and an annual report.

## SECTION 2: DEGREE SPECIFICATION

2.1 TAUGHT MPhil DEGREE SUMMARY INFORMATION		
Awarding body	Architectural Association School of Architecture	
Partner institution(s)	N/A	
Location of Study/campus	36 Bedford Square, London WC1B 3ES	
Professional, Statutory and Regulatory Bodies	Office for Students / QAA	
<b>Award and titles</b>		
Final award	Taught Master of Philosophy (Taught MPhil)	Taught MPhil in Architecture and Urban Design (Projective Cities)
Credits	240	
Intermediate award	Postgraduate Certificate (120+ at Level 7)	
FHEQ Level	7	
	<b>Duration of study (standard)</b>	<b>Maximum registration period</b>
Full-time	18 months (5 terms)	30 months
Sandwich	N/A	N/A
Part Time	N/A	N/A
Distance	N/A	N/A
Start date for programme	September 2025	
<b>Course codes/categories</b>		
UCAS code	N/A	
CATS points for course	N/A	
QAA Subject Benchmark	Architecture 2020	
<b>Admissions agency</b>		
UCAS	N/A	
Direct to School	✓	
<b>Admissions criteria</b>		
Requirements	Refer to AA School Academic Regulations	
Language	Refer to AA School Academic Regulations	
<b>Contacts</b>		
School Registrar	Belinda Flaherty	
Programme Heads	Platon Issaias and Hamed Khosravi (Architecture and Urban Design (Projective Cities))	
<b>Examination and Assessment</b>		
External Examiners 2024-25	Charlotte von Moos, TBC	
Examination Board(s)	External Examiners, Programme Heads, School Director, Head of Teaching (Chair), Head of Learning, School Registrar (Administrator)	
<b>Approval/review dates</b>		
Programme Specification Validation	Approval date May 2020, revalidated May 2023	Review date May 2028

## 2.2 TAUGHT MPhil PROGRAMME STRUCTURE

Taught MPhil programmes are delivered over an 18-month period consisting of five terms and two phases. Phase 1 (terms 1 and 2) introduces key design and research methodologies through a comprehensive set of studio, seminar and academic writing modules. Specialised workshops and guest seminars are delivered alongside core teaching. Term 3 is dedicated to the development of an individual dissertation proposal. In Phase 2 (terms 4 and 5) candidates develop their individual dissertation dedicated to an independent research project.

The MPhil awards consist of 240 credits at FHEQ Level 7, each credit equating to approximately 10 learning hours split between different courses of varying credit values and submissions.

## 2.3 DEGREE CREDIT FRAMEWORK

<b>GENERAL TAUGHT MPHIL CREDIT FRAMEWORK</b> 18 months – 240 Credits	
Core Studio / Thesis	150 credits
Core Module 1	20 credits
Core Module 2	20 credits
Core Module 3	20 credits
Core Module 4	20 credits
Core Module 5	10 credits
	240 credits
For programme specific credit frameworks please refer to the programme pages below	

## 2.4 TEACHING, LEARNING AND ASSESSMENT

### Teaching and Learning

The required knowledge and understanding are acquired through the design studios, seminar courses, and academic writing courses. Intellectual and research skills are developed throughout the programme, in particular during the Seminar Courses and the Dissertation, while the Design Studios present opportunities to develop knowledge and understanding in an analytical design context. Individual research, presentations, written essays and, in particular, the Dissertation Proposal and Dissertation, encourage students to make critical and analytical observations and formulate hypotheses. Students are introduced to research methods and academic writing throughout the programme. Research methods, techniques, and analytical skills are developed through all coursework.

### Evaluating and Improving Quality/Quality Indicators

AA Academic Committee / Academic Board	Annual Monitoring Reports are submitted to the Academic Committee each September, reflecting on examiner reports, student and staff feedback, and student progression and achievement data. The Academic Committee then reports findings to the Academic Board. Refer to AA School Quality Manual for further detail.
Professional Accreditation and Validation	Revalidation for the Taught MPhil takes place every 5 years. Next revalidation: May 2028. Refer to AA School Quality Manual for further detail.

## Assessment

All submissions are assessed and marked by two or more members of the programme's regular academic staff and confirmed by the Internal Assessment Board. Marks and feedback are provided to students within 15 working days/3 weeks of initial submission. This timeframe is not inclusive of closure weeks. In exceptional circumstances where this timeframe is not met, students will be informed of when marks and feedback will be released at the earliest opportunity. Student work is then reviewed by the Taught MPhil External Examiners, whose role is to ensure fair and objective marking and the maintenance of high academic standards across the School's Taught MPhil programme. The Taught MPhil Examination Board has the responsibility for confirming the final marking of all submitted work and decisions on distinctions and resubmissions.

Marking of all course work is on a scale of 0–100% with a pass mark of 50% and grading as shown below:

80% or above	Distinction
70–79%	High Pass
50–69%	Pass (Low Pass = 50%)
49% or below	Fail

To qualify for the Taught MPhil, students must attain the 50% threshold mark on both the coursework average, and on the final project average mark. An overall final mark is then calculated as the weighted average of coursework and Dissertation/Design Thesis. Large differences (of more than 10 percentage points) in the marking of the assessors are moderated by the Programme Head or an appointed assessor from the Programme staff when necessary.

## Grading Outcomes and Criteria

**Distinction:** Demonstrates an exceptional level of achievement overall, significantly exceeding the assessment criteria required to attain a Pass. The submission is complete under the requirements of the brief set. Coherence of thought is expressed throughout the work, with an exhaustive appreciation of topic and a rigorous application of critical reflection and insight. Developmental and final work is documented in a highly effective manner in a well-structured and skilfully presented submission.

**High Pass:** Demonstrates a high level of achievement overall, exceeding the assessment criteria required to attain a Pass. The submission is complete under the requirements of the brief set. Coherence of thought is articulated throughout the work, with a comprehensive appreciation of topic and a thorough application of critical reflection and insight. Developmental and final work is documented clearly in a coherently structured and well-presented submission.

**Pass:** Demonstrates a good level of achievement overall, meeting all aspects of the assessment criteria required to attain a Pass. The submission is complete under the requirements of the brief set. Coherence of thought is evidenced throughout the work, with an appreciation of topic and an appropriate level of critical reflection and insight. Developmental and final work is documented clearly in a suitably presented submission.

**Low Pass:** Work attaining the standard of Pass, but which has previously been assessed as Fail and/or has been submitted after the advertised date/time. Low Pass is capped at 50%.

**Fail:** Unsatisfactory level of achievement overall, which fails to meet all aspects of the assessment criteria required to attain a Pass. The submission is incomplete under the requirements of the brief set. The work is assessed as being incoherent, demonstrating little appreciation of topic, development or effort. The submission is insufficient in quantity and demonstrates a lack of engagement. An appropriate level of critical reflection and insight is not evidenced. Developmental and final work is not documented to an appropriate level of clarity, or presented to a suitable standard. This assessment is also the automatic result of failure to meet minimum attendance requirements. A submission receiving a Fail assessment can only achieve a Low Pass outcome upon successful resubmission. Students who have no further opportunity to undertake repeat studies are asked to leave the School.

## 2.5 AWARD CLASSIFICATION

The Taught MPhil degree is awarded as either:

- A pass.
- A 'Distinction' when the overall final mark is 80% or higher.

Other grading from coursework is registered in the School's database and is available on transcripts but do not appear on certificates.

## 2.6 AA MASTERS TO PhD PATHWAY

Upon successful completion of Master's study, graduates from the MA, MSc, PG MArch, MFA and Taught MPhil programmes are given the opportunity to develop their Master's thesis into a proposal to apply for the AA PhD programme. Applications to the PhD through this pathway can be considered for commencement in the academic year immediately after the student's graduation from their Master's programme.

## 2.7 LEARNING SUPPORT

Every student has continuous access to a design studio with storage space, along with access to all of the AA School's facilities at Bedford Square in London and in Hooke Park, Dorset. Introductory sessions are provided by the relevant academic resources departments at the beginning of the academic year to all students.

On-site resources at Bedford Square include a large wood and metal workshop, a model making workshop for materials such as clay and plastics, a digital prototyping lab, an audio-visual lab, a digital photography studio, an IT lab with both Mac and PCs, a drawing materials and print shop, the AA bookshop, AA library and AA archives. The AA also has its own bar and restaurant at Bedford Square.

Hooke Park in Dorset is the AA's satellite campus that hosts short residential workshops for visiting groups of students from throughout the school. Hooke Park is a 150-hectare working forest inside that provides the primary source of timber for student-led construction projects and also has large workshops, an IT lab, catering facilities and accommodation for students visiting from London.

The AA Writing Centre supports students in the development of their written communication skills and helps to strengthen reading, critical research and creative writing capabilities across all programmes and year groups.

AA Wellbeing offers students confidential, one-to-one wellbeing support and workshops. The team is available to explore students concerns, anxieties and emotional difficulties to support their wellbeing and academic progression. Difficulties may include the effects of bereavement, loss, lack of confidence, mood regulation, relationship difficulties or managing mental health.

The AA's London based Public Programme is an extensive series of public events dedicated to contemporary architectural culture: exhibitions, members' events, lectures, seminars and conferences, along with regular book launches hosted by the AA bookshop. Evening lectures are available online to view at Hooke Park. A weekly published school events lists is published through the communications studio.

School-wide facilities and resources are described in more details on the [AA Website](#).

## SECTION 3:

# TAUGHT MPhil IN ARCHITECTURE AND URBAN DESIGN (Projective Cities)

## 3.1 PROGRAMME INTRODUCTION

The **Taught MPhil in Architecture and Urban Design (Projective Cities)** is an 18-month, research and design programme that examines questions at the intersection of architecture, urban design and planning. The programme undertakes systematic analysis, design experimentation, theoretical speculation and critical writing, all of which focus on the contemporary city. Student projects combine design with traditional forms of research, while challenging disciplinary boundaries and contributing to emerging spatial design practice and knowledge. The programme recognises the need for multidisciplinary understanding and new design research training to meet the demands of contemporary architectural and urban practice. Each cohort of students addresses a shared theme which they take as the starting point for individual research agendas. The ambition of this agenda is to use comparative analysis to investigate the different organisational, formal, programmatic and material structures that govern how we live together, and to develop new design proposals in response to these investigations. Our intention is to rethink the informal and formal relations between subjects, spaces, structural and non-structural elements, objects and protocols of use and occupation in cities; doing so will enable us to understand specific architectures and the broader political and social discourses that define them.

In 2025-26, Projective Cities is introducing a new research trajectory: New Forms of Welfare State. The ambition is to investigate, by comparative analysis, the different organizational, formal, programmatic, and material particularities that define the Architecture of Welfare State and its urban, territorial, and infrastructural manifestation. In this new research framework Projective Cities will closely collaborate with The Autonomy Institute.

Building on the work and writing of the Institute, the design studios will initiate new experimentation in designing residential spaces that explore the intersections and boundaries of autonomous work, free time, gendered, domestic and emotional labour. From appliances to apartment floor plans: all are tools in challenging and complicating the family unit and feminised work.

Additionally, in collaboration with The Autonomy Institute students will engage with an evolving landscape of welfare services, aiming to reimagine the spatial and social interfaces between citizens and state services. From housing to national food hubs and social care facilities, students will explore how these infrastructures can work with each other in a new space of unconditionality.

## Programme Statements

**Projective Cities** recognises architecture and the city as a collective form of knowledge shaped by cultural, social, political, and economic contexts.

**Projective Cities** specifically raises the question of what kind of project and research arises from architecture and architectural urbanism. It sets out to define the status and methods of design research. This is understood both as an intellectual problem, exploring the relationship between theory and design for knowledge production and the discipline, as well as a practical problem, of the way that design research can affect practice.

**Projective Cities** has been highly successful in preparing its graduates for diverse careers in academia and practice, with graduate destinations including PhD programmes, academic or research careers and joining leading design offices.

**Projective Cities** is a critical forum to engage with questions of governance and development in the context of global challenges of urbanisation. Its objective is to respond to current urban, environmental and social crises by rethinking the agency of spatial design and development within specific political, economic, social and cultural contexts.

**Projective Cities** prepares its candidates for independent research through a framework of rigorous design and research methodologies. The first year of the programme is taught, introducing students to research methods, academic writing, architectural and urban histories and theories, advanced analytical techniques and computational design in preparation for a substantial dissertation project. At the end of the first year, students submit a research proposal. This is developed in the second year, leading to an integrated design and written dissertation.

**Projective Cities** seeks candidates with a desire to develop substantial and original research. It seeks exceptional thinkers, gifted designers and critical writers with an interest in the future of our cities.

The ambitions of **Projective Cities** are framed by the following methodological and pedagogical propositions through which our research is clarified:

*That the contemporary city can be read as an architectural project and the city as a projection of the possibilities of architecture.*

*That typical and typological are complementary disciplinary frameworks and conceptual modes of thinking in which reason acquires a critical and conjectural structure.*

*That the urban plan and its cultural, social, political, historical, and economic contexts are defined by architectural design operative at different scales.*

*That architectural and urban design are intelligible as formal and theoretical products of disciplinary activity as well as the collective formal outcome of socio-political forces.*

*That design and research activities are inseparable in architecture and urbanism, and that knowledge production (theory) and formal production (practice) are methodologically linked.*

Architecture and urbanism are symbiotic modes of enquiry driven by relevance and agency within a field and not novelty for their own sake. This field is defined in terms of a series of distinct diagrams that are always social and spatial. We aim to investigate the politics, the asymmetries and power relations that define all these diagrammatic relations.

## 3.2 AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

### Aims

Projective Cities aims to develop innovative researchers capable of working across cultural, disciplinary, and sectoral boundaries. It hereby also aims to foster practice-led research and new design research methodology in spatial design disciplines.

### Objectives

The objectives of the programme are:

- to enable students to gain mastery of a complex and specialised area of knowledge and skills, employing advanced skills to conduct design research, and accepting accountability for related decision making, including the use of supervision;
- to provide students with knowledge of theory, methods, and practice of research needed to conduct and complete independent and original research projects in architecture, urban design, planning and related spatial design disciplines;
- to train students in the combination of theoretical, historical, and practical design research;
- to prepare students for diverse research careers, including doctoral level studies or research-led practice.

### 3.3 LEARNING OUTCOMES

<b>INTENDED LEARNING OUTCOMES: Taught MPhil in Architecture and Urban Design (Projective Cities); FHEQ LEVEL 7</b>	
<b>Learning Outcomes 'LO'</b>	Aligned to the Framework for Higher Education Qualifications (FHEQ) and QAA Subject Benchmark (Architecture), on successful completion of the MPhil in Architecture and Urban Design (Projective Cities) students will be able to:
<b>A</b>	<b>Knowledge and Understanding</b>
A1	Knowledge: A systematic understanding of knowledge across architecture, urban design, and planning, and a critical awareness of current problems and/or insights at the forefront of related scholarship and professional practice.
A2	Ethics: An awareness of and ability to manage the implications of ethical issues.
A3	Methodology: A comprehensive understanding of techniques and methodologies applicable to their own research and advanced scholarship (theory and practice-led design research).
<b>B</b>	<b>Cognitive and Intellectual Skills (Generic)</b>
B1	Analysis: The ability to analyse complex issues both systematically and creatively, making sound judgements in the absence of complete data or in the context of incomplete or contradictory areas of knowledge.
B2	Synthesis: The ability to apply knowledge in an original manner, together with a practical understanding of how established techniques of research and enquiry are used to create and interpret knowledge in the discipline.
B3	Evaluation: A conceptual understanding enabling the critical evaluation of current research, advanced scholarship, and methodologies, especially in the disciplines of architecture, urban design, and planning; and the ability to develop critiques of them and, where appropriate, to propose new hypotheses.
B4	Application: The capacity for self-direction and originality in tackling and solving problems.
<b>C</b>	<b>Practical and Professional Skills (Subject Specific)</b>
C1	Application of Skills: The capacity for decision-making in complex and unpredictable situations, exercising initiative and personal responsibility with an awareness of good practice.
C2	Technical Skills: The ability to develop new technical skills to a high level.
<b>D</b>	<b>Key and Transferable Skills (Generic)</b>
D1	Learning: The capacity for independent learning required for continuing professional development, using the full range of learning resources. When applicable, the ability to work effectively within a group as leader or member and the skills to manage conflict effectively.
D2	Self-evaluation: The ability to critically reflect on their own and others' learning in order to improve their practice.
D3	Management: The ability to competently and autonomously plan and undertake research.
D4	Communication: The ability to communicate research and conclusions clearly to specialist and non-specialist audiences.

### 3.4 ASSESSMENT CRITERIA

The assessment of submitted work is based on the following overall assessment, in addition to specific ones given for each module. All learning outcomes must be met in order to achieve a pass overall. Students are required to demonstrate knowledge, understanding, ability and skills in the following areas:

#### **DESIGN:**

##### **Context and analysis**

The work demonstrates a systematic understanding and critical awareness of relevant contextual factors such as site conditions, social, political, historical, economic, environmental and ethical issues. Analysis is undertaken in relation to the needs of the intended user groups and the complexities of the location. Appropriate conceptual, critical and/or technological precedents, methodologies, practices and/or tools inform the parameters of the brief, satisfying specific contextual and analytical requirements.

##### **Process and synthesis**

Research into appropriate contextual, conceptual, critical and/or technological precedents, methodologies, practices and/or tools is synthesised into the design process, allowing for creative decision-making, inventive design strategies, experimentation and originality, explored from both user and designer perspectives. Feedback is integrated into a self-directed design process that demonstrates criticality and independent learning skills, and the ability to work in a group where necessary, required for continuing professional and academic development.

##### **Resolution and communication**

Design proposals are resolved to a satisfactory standard based on the functional and aesthetic criteria and/or project themes set by the brief, with appropriate methodologies deployed in the production of appropriately ambitious propositional design work. Project work is organised, structured and communicated effectively through a range of considered representational methods and visual, verbal and written skills.

#### **HISTORY AND THEORY:**

##### **Research and knowledge acquisition**

Research into the chosen area of study is independently undertaken, demonstrating a comprehensive understanding and critical awareness of the relevant social, political, historical, theoretical, economic, environmental and/or ethical contexts, concepts, ideas and/or precedents at the forefront of the discipline, being addressed through systematic enquiry.

##### **Approach and development**

The work submitted demonstrates an inventive and original approach to the consolidation and development of research, with a consistent process of synthesising acquired knowledge is evidenced in the work. The structures, methods and/or tools utilised in the production of the work demonstrate initiative, self-directed learning, the ability to work in a group where necessary, and the skills to make complex decisions.

##### **Argument and communication**

The work demonstrates the ability to devise and sustain complex arguments, contextualised effectively in a wider field of relevant ideas with a critical position determined. Conclusions and/or reflections are well executed, with good judgement shown in the absence of complete data. Written and visual communication skills are evidenced to a high standard throughout, and the work demonstrates the abilities developed to undertake further research.

### 3.5 CREDIT FRAMEWORK

Term	Course Title	Credits
1	Core Module 1 – Studio 1: Parts, Units and Groups: Analysis of Architectural Precedents	20
2	Core Module 2 – Studio 2: Scales: From Room to the City	20
1	Core Module 3 – Seminar 1: Architectural Theories, Design and Research Methods, <i>Atlas on Welfare Architecture</i>	15
2	Core Module 4 – Seminar 2: Projects of the City, <i>London: City of Welfare</i>	15
1	Core Module 5a – Academic Writing 1	10
2	Core Module 5b – Academic Writing 2	10
	<b>Core Studio/Thesis</b>	<b>150 (as below)</b>
3	Academic Writing 3	10
3	Thesis-Studio: Representations, Investigations and Diagrams	40
4 + 5	Dissertation	100

### 3.6 TEACHING AND LEARNING METHODS

The required knowledge and understanding are acquired through the seminar courses, design studios, and academic writing courses. Intellectual and research skills are developed throughout the programme, in particular, Seminar Courses and the Dissertation, while the Design Studios present opportunities to develop knowledge and understanding in an analytical design context. Individual research, presentations, written essays and the Dissertation Proposal and Dissertation, encourages students to make critical and analytical observations and formulate hypotheses.

Students are introduced to research methods, academic writing throughout the programme. An initial comprehensive reading list is provided at the start of the course, which is supplemented by guidance on reading in the seminars and supervision as relevant. Research methods, techniques, and analytical skills are developed through all coursework.

The course requires students to take responsibility in planning their own research and provides regular opportunities to present their work through visual, written, and oral means. Through the coursework, students develop independently and systematically how to frame concepts, techniques, and ideas in creative and rigorous ways. Regular feedback is provided in the form of tutorials, submission assessments, or review reports.

Students benefit from continuous support and regular feedback sessions in individual and group tutorials throughout the programme to assist, direct, and monitor progress.

During Year 1, integrated design studios and workshops, seminars, and academic writing courses are the core modules providing students with the technical skills and knowledge of research methodologies and practices necessary to formulate and complete an independent research project. While design studios and seminars train analytical research skills and methods, students learn in complementary workshops the practical skills required for design research.

The start of Year 2 corresponds to the beginning of the next academic year at the AA. Year 2 is dedicated to the development of the designed and written Dissertation. Throughout the year, students are closely guided by their personal dissertation supervisor(s) and have access to other programme staff and external consultants for further or specialist advice as needed and agreed with the Programme Heads.

#### Seminar Courses

The pedagogical aim of the seminar courses is to provide students with a knowledge and understanding of architectural and urban histories and theories and to develop their intellectual and research skills. A particular focus is given to the fields of knowledge that define design research in architecture and urban design.

All seminars have a common structure and method, with appropriate minor variation in delivery during each term of Year 1. Each session takes up an entire morning or afternoon. A typical session consists of a lecture or seminar by the instructor, presentations by students, and group discussions. Students are asked to read preparatory or follow up material, and to make short oral or written individual presentations.

Each seminar course has a written submission (circa 4,000 words). The seminars are supported by academic writing courses as well as individual and group tutorials to aid students in their essay development. Students present an essay outline and submit a draft prior to the final submission.

All seminars are open to members of the AA.

### **Academic Writing Courses**

The aim of the academic writing courses is to teach and exercise academic writing conventions and general writing skills, preparing students for longer written submissions.

The courses are organised as seminars, writing workshops, and individual tutorials. Seminars discuss the structure and purpose of writing, as well as academic conventions, while workshops provide writing exercises and direct feedback.

Each course is assessed through several short-written pieces of up to 2,000 words, with students provided with feedback on several drafts prior to submission.

### **Design Studios and Skills Workshops**

The aim of the design studios is to provide students with a knowledge and understanding of architectural and urban design practices and to develop their analytical rigour and creativity through case study research and design exercises. The design studios are complemented by workshops to develop the technical skills to draw, model, and analyse architecture and urban design at an advanced level.

Students work in small groups or individually as assigned at the beginning of each exercise. They document their progress for individual tutorials each week and regularly present to their peers, programme staff, and external reviewers.

The work is compiled and submitted at the end of each term in a studio report for assessment. Submissions are based on graphical, visual, and physical work (diagrams, drawings, collages, models etc.) as appropriate. The studio reports include concise writing and analysis of relevant projects, theories, and histories to clearly establish the context and framing of the studies, thereby directly linking to the seminar courses.

### **Thesis-Studio**

The Thesis-Studio combines the teaching and learning strategies of the design studios and seminar courses. Its aim is to provide students with the knowledge and understanding to formulate an independent research and design agenda. Throughout the Thesis-Studio, seminars and studio tutorials aid students to define their research enquiry.

At the end of the Thesis-Studio, students present their Dissertation Proposal in a formal review with programme staff and invited external reviewers for final comments prior to submission. The submission consists of an integrated written portion (equivalent to an essay, circa 4,000 words), an illustrated research dossier (equivalent to a studio report), and preliminary design proposals as appropriate. The Dissertation Proposal is to clearly frame the planned research by providing: a problem definition, research aims, discussion of relevant literature and case studies, research methodology, a plan of execution, and preliminary design briefs and proposals.

During the Thesis-Studio, the Taught Phase and Research Phase overlap, with students beginning work on their Dissertation.

### **Dissertation**

The aim of the designed and written Dissertation is to provide students with an opportunity to conduct a substantial, original, and independent research project. The Dissertation represents more than 40% of the total credits for the MPhil degree and reflects on the programme's areas of research and a student's personal interests, background, special skills, and knowledge.

Dissertation supervision is in principle through the two Programme Heads. Other programme staff members could be assigned as supervisors by agreement with the Programme Heads. Students are able to meet their personal supervisor(s) at least once a week for advice and guidance. In addition, students can seek direction from external expert consultants as needed.

Supervision and progress monitoring of students during the Dissertation takes place through the following formats:

Once a week: Individual tutorials with supervisor(s).

Once a month: Dissertation Forum in which all students of a cohort present and discuss their research.

Once a term: Internal progress review with programme staff.

In addition, there is a Final Design Review (beginning of Term 5) and a Final Presentation (end of Term 5) with invited critics. Students receive oral feedback in all reviews and tutorials prior to submission of the Dissertation.

The minimum requirement to qualify for the MPhil degree is the submission of a designed-and-written Dissertation that consist of comprehensive design proposals at architectural and urban scales and integrated written research consisting of 15,000 words. The Dissertation is to demonstrate academic rigour and originality.

### **Tutorials**

Within all modules, the progress of students is monitored and assisted through regular weekly individual and group tutorials. The modules have appointed tutors who are available at scheduled times. However, teaching staff are available for additional tutorials if necessary.

### **Project Presentations and Reviews**

Individual and group presentations are regular events and part of all modules. Their aim is to develop presentation skills, but also serve as a means to monitor progress by staff as well as between peers.

### **Student Feedback**

Feedback is essential for the continued development, improvement, and updating of the course. Student feedback on the programme's structure, content, delivery, and methodology is welcomed at any time. A formal and minuted feedback meeting with programme staff and students takes place at the beginning of Term 2. Students are invited to take part in the AA School survey, and to a group meeting with the School Director at the end of each academic year.

### **Study Trips and Special Events**

Study trips involve visits to buildings and cities of interest, meetings with designers, experts, and researchers outside the School. Special events, such as symposia or reviews with other students, depend on the topics and interests of the on-going research agendas.

### **Additional Costs**

Students are encouraged to use AA Computer Lab and all other facilities, where multiple licenced software and applications can be used. There is no need for any specialised subscriptions or licences. The programme anticipates the following additional costs:

Study Trips: £700

Printing: £350 for the entire course + £150 for dissertation (printing / binding)

Materials: £150 (model making)

### **Use of generative Artificial Intelligence (AI)**

The programme, aligned with the AA's policies on the use of generative AI (please refer to *Guidance on the use of generative Artificial Intelligence (AI) in student work at the AA School of Architecture*, recognises its use in the production of student work across design and writing of and about architecture. Although there is an incredible potential that these new tools are offering, students must be aware of very serious issues that are emerging regarding copyright, inaccuracy, and, of course, bias. Therefore, any use of generative AI should be done with very high caution, and it is advised to be declared and discussed with Programme Heads and Module Leads in advance. Moreover, and in regard to essays and other writing submissions there should be additional care and provision in the use of these tools, since it often leads to serious violations of academic protocols, i.e. plagiarism.

### 3.7 COURSES

TITLE CORE MODULE 1 – STUDIO 1: PARTS, UNITS AND GROUPS: ANALYSIS OF ARCHITECTURAL PRECEDENTS			
Level	FHEQ Level 7	Status	Compulsory
Teaching Staff	Dor Schindler (lead), Platon Issaias, Hamed Khosravi, Roozbeh Elias Azar, Gianna Bottema (consultant) & The Autonomy Institute, led by Julian Siravo (external advisors)	Term	1
		Credits	20
Learning Methods	Tutorials Juries Self-directed learning	Workload	200 hours study, inclusive of teaching contact: 36 hours teaching/164 hours self-directed study

#### Synopsis

Each cohort of Projective Cities examines a common theme as the starting point for individual research agendas. The ambition is to investigate, by comparative analysis, the different organisational, formal, programmatic, and material particularities in a series of historic and contemporary case studies. The different political, economic, social, and cultural dimensions are reflected in a number of parameters that emerge by a series of conflictual aims and ambitions.

Different social groups and their interests, different conceptions of social, familial and gender relations, management and decision-making protocols, procurement models, public and private development strategies define the diagrammatic and formal relations of how we live together. All these points define a network of diagrammatic relations that emerge in a series of conflicts and their interrelated scales through which the city is conceptualised: the scale of architecture, its specificity and typological analysis, the urban scale, its configuration, limits, and centralities but also the political and socio-economic realities that organise it, the national scale and the establishment of a citizenry, and the regional scale and its economic and geopolitical realities. The Module therefore opens up a discussion of how the urban can be understood through specific architecture and its design, and how its effect as an urban armature is not only of spatial importance, but equally organised by larger political and social discourses.

The spatial organisation of the case studies is reflected on a series of informal and formal relations between subjects, spaces, structural and non-structural elements, objects, and protocols of use and occupation. Forms of welfare architecture are characterised by their multi-scalar network of power relations that is specific and particular to each social group and collective that lives together. A series of asymmetries and conflicts emerge that require a resolution framework or at least protocols of conduct. What architecture does is to set up some of these parameters, mainly the relations between parts and the way groups of spaces and people are organised.

Architectural typologies of welfare architecture are shaped by these distinct social diagrams but could vary spatially and formally. Typically, welfare architecture organises part of the relations that set levels of interaction between individuals: Auxiliary communal spaces to the domestic environment, state run spaces of public service, civic infrastructure such as transportation networks, and spaces that are not programmed as welfare *per se*, but definitely operate as welfare support systems. These organise the ways and the configurations welfare related interactions could occur. Revisiting welfare architecture thematically, and its politically, historically, socially, economically, and culturally specific characteristics, have the capacity to challenge the fundamental diagram of modernity. Welfare is a spatial and social diagram that sets very specific hierarchies and relations, from gender to age, class, race and more. Today, State-led welfare programs are challenged by the realities of contemporary urban environments. New subjectivities have emerged: Grassroot organisations, collective local initiatives, food banks and community centres have taken

new shapes and forms. This is mainly due to an increasingly precarious citizenry status and the erosion of public service provision in cities around the world. Often, the challenges of new forms of welfare architecture are seen as a financial problem, or an issue of density or lifestyle. The reality of the real estate market, the available design tools, planning methods and standards are not necessarily reflecting upon the above transformations. However, historically, welfare architecture and welfare infrastructure have had the capacity of opening up social and spatial imagination. Today, there is an array of incredibly interesting experimentation and research in welfare related architectural configurations, revisiting traditional histories and relationships between welfare and architectural type and program. Moreover, public administrations and private stakeholders are seeking new ideas that would allow for an imaginative transformation of how people live in cities, in urban and rural areas across the world.

Thus, one of the challenges arising from such reading is how architecture can respond to changing political, cultural, economic, and urban contexts and how to propose new effective design ideas and models. What is the agency of architecture? How do we develop a pedagogical model that allows for a more effective relation between academic institutions and practice?

## Aims

- Familiarisation with the case study method and concepts of fundamental type and formative diagrams.
- Development of descriptive and analytical diagrams.

## Content

In Studio 1: Parts, Units and Groups, students will be presented with a series of case studies, historic and contemporary. Then, they will have to define a preliminary research interest that would allow them to select other relevant examples of welfare architecture. A number of related analytical studies and comparative analyses of architectural precedents frame individual student's preliminary research interests, i.e. the way they would approach the design and research questions of welfare architecture.

### 1. Field of Interest and Enquiry

- Define an area of interest and find relevant documents or objects in an archive or collection.
- Decide which specific group of building types to study and a socio-cultural or political context for the research.
- Compile a list of at least 6 architectural built or unbuilt case studies that are chosen from the selected group of building types.

The archival material and its study should help to better define the field of interest and research enquiry. Identify a number of documents or objects from an archive or collection and consider: What is the significance of the chosen material to your research? How does the material relate to or raise a design research problem? How is the material selected, curated and accessed in the archive and in your presentation? Provide a bibliography relevant to the material.

### 2. Architecture's Formative Diagrams

The chosen case studies are to be described and analysed through drawings. The analysis of building types and their formative diagrams requires the study of common shared traits by recognising organisational and structural repetitions or exceptions that define their typicality both in a formal sense and their socio-cultural meaning. The commonalities and transformations evident in a particular group of building types are compared as a series of descriptive and analytical diagrams that convey a building type's collective form, structure, organisation, and construction (often only clearly recognisable through their development over time). In architecture, typology is closely connected to the functions of the diagram, and this is explored in the following.

For the abstraction of formative diagrams, students will first redraw the projects. Consideration should be given to the typical unit, e.g. a single room for an individual, a modular unit, a flat or a house, and their interior definition by furniture, relations between individuals that share a number of spaces, dwelling regimes and protocols of sharing, but also the relevance of outdoor spaces, shared and common spaces, and spaces other than the typical units.

The drawings should clearly convey the following characteristics and details (as applicable):

### Description of Architecture:

- Project descriptions (name, location, year, architect, project brief)
- Location plan, plan(s), section(s), and elevation(s)

### Analysis of Architecture:

- Figure-ground plan/section
- Orientation
- Massing [+ axonometric]
- Structural organisation [+ axonometric]
- Programme
- Circulation-to-use (hierarchy and procession)
- Part-to-whole [+ axonometric]
- Repetitive-to-unique (modularity) [+ axonometric]
- Geometrical order
- Parti

[Note: For drawing conventions and examples see Sam Jacoby, *Drawing Architecture and the Urban* (Chichester: Wiley, 2016).]

### **3. Comparative Analysis**

Following the abstraction of the formative diagrams, matrices comparing the precedents can be drawn to define shared traits and structures that characterised the studied group of building types. This analysis should include (as applicable):

- Disposition: single-room building, multi-room building, and building complex; square, radial, and triangular.
- Distribution: linear, parallel, axial, radial, centralised, and clustered; rooms, corridor (single and double loaded), passages, and enfilade (single and double).
- Hierarchy and Layering (Comparison of hierarchy and relational shifts evident in different layers).
- Modularity or Difference (Comparison of repetitive parts in relation to the structure of the whole or comparison of formal, structural, and organisational differences).
- Growth and Limits (Comparison of growth patterns and their limit in relation to specific formative elements, repetitive or modular elements, programme, and structure).

### **4. Conclusion 1: Historical and Structural Analysis**

Although precedents are often understood as historical, the studio considers the inevitable transformation of current typological models within its context and in relation to the contemporary city. The previously derived comparative matrices are meant to assist in drawing these analytical and in parts speculative conclusions in order to raise and answer a number of questions:

- What are their idea diagrams?  
(What are the commonalities and inter-dependencies between relative formal, structural, cultural, and performative types within a group?)
- What are their transformative matrices?  
(What generates or limits the emergence of a particular type and what is the historical transformation of this type in response to its possible redundancy and expiry?)
- What are potential typological transformations?  
(How can historical or existing types be defined as having a sustained relevance?)

The analysed case studies, representing certain moments in the transformation of building types, should be contextualised by framing them within a comparative history. This history, a very brief survey made up of diagrams, photographs, drawings, and text, maps out the emergence and development of the chosen building type and should be part of the conclusions. Questions to be considered, for example, are the definition of generic room sizes, and how the social diagram of housing and collective living change (e.g. from forms of pre-modern, multigenerational dwellings, or early models of non-familial housing types, to typical flats and nuclear family housing examples). At the same time, although being a general history, ideas of what kind of urban question this potentially raises should be outlined. This analysis requires:

- A list of exemplary and typical precedents that represents the chosen building type and significant transformations.
- A written and illustrated description and review of these precedents, outlining their commonalities and differences, while providing a coherent argument and criteria for the inclusion or exclusion of specific precedents.

- A historical timeline that charts the case studies and their typological transformations.

Through the comparative history and matrices, an argument and assessment of the historical transformations of building types can be attempted, providing the grounds for a preliminary projection of an anticipated or necessary (future) typological transformation. Altogether, the aim is to understand typology less as a classification of building types, or for that matter as contained by building types itself, but to seek typological diagrams that transcend classificatory restraints.

### **5. Conclusion 2: Design Exercise**

Based on the studied type, the identified formative diagrams, and typological transformations, a short design exercise is to be proposed by each student. Learning from the case studies, each will experiment with a series of physical models. The ambition is that through the art and process of making, students will be able to challenge and re-formulate relevant research and design questions. The synthesis of historical analyses, their embedded social and familial relations, modes of production, and forms of association, in relation to specific sociopolitical context of the chosen site, will generate a frame of relations, an organizational diagram that would eventually be translated, through a model making workshop, into series of objects in varying scales, fragmentations and materials. Based on the above, term one will culminate into an atlas on welfare which will be presented in the form of an exhibition and individual presentations at the end of Term 1. The atlas will be used as a testing ground for documentation, analysis and projection through translation.

### **Learning Outcomes**

- B1: Be able to analyse complex issues both systematically and creatively, making sound judgements in the absence of complete data or in the context of incomplete or contradictory areas of knowledge.
- B2: Be able to apply knowledge in an original manner, together with a practical understanding of how established techniques of research and enquiry are used to create and interpret knowledge in the discipline.
- B4: Demonstrate self-direction and originality in tackling and solving problems.
- C2: Be able to develop new technical skills to a high level.
- D1: Have the capacity for independent learning required for continuing professional development.

### **Submission**

- Studio report (illustrations, drawings and writing, circa 3,000 words)

### **Assessment Criteria**

All learning outcomes must be met in order to achieve a pass overall. Students are required to demonstrate knowledge, understanding, ability and skills in the following areas:

#### **Context and analysis**

- The ability to critically analyse, interpret, compare, and generalise case studies.
- The depth of understanding disciplinary knowledge and design research techniques in architecture.

#### **Process and synthesis**

- Originality and rigour in developing a design brief and proposal.

#### **Resolution and communication**

- Competence in architectural modes of representations and productions.
- The ability to clearly communicate concepts and work.

TITLE CORE MODULE 2 – STUDIO 2: SCALES: FROM THE ROOM TO THE CITY			
Level	FHEQ Level 7	Status	Compulsory
Teaching Staff	Dor Schindler (lead), Platon Issaias, Hamed Khosravi, Roozbeh Elias Azar, Gianna Bottema (consultant) & The Autonomy Institute, led by Julian Siravo (external advisors)	Term	2
		Credits	20
Learning Methods	Tutorials Juries Self-directed learning	Workload	200 hours study, inclusive of teaching contact: 36 hours teaching/164 hours self-directed study

## Synopsis

The assumption underlying architectural urbanism is that an interdisciplinary relation between architecture, urban design, and urban planning can be understood through multi-scalar reasoning. Furthermore, the analysis of architecture's formative diagrams in Studio 1 is seen as a prerequisite to an operative understanding of built forms within the city through a typal and typological analysis. Thereby questions emerging from the conclusions of Term 1 provide a typological and intellectual framework to study this relationship in Term 2. Consequently, Studio 2 builds on the previously introduced concept of formative diagrams in relation to fundamental types as the basis to analyse models of welfare architecture and welfare infrastructure, while the idea of type and typology is expanded to the study of the city. Studio 2 also introduces students to the conventions of urban planning, its parameters, processes, and limits.

Understanding *fundamental types* as providing basic organisational, structural, and tectonic elements of the city, and by drawing a deliberate relationship between the scales of building types and city, architectural design becomes operative at different scales. This means that the hierarchies, limits, and differentiations of building types and their structural and organisational diagrams can be seen to partially control urban development. In this sense, architectural and urban plans are intelligible as formal and theoretical products of disciplinary activity as much as the collective outcome of socio-political forces. The city, in other words, is defined by typological *conflicts* and *transformations* that arise when types encounter a specific context, and become materially realised. By uncovering these conflicts and transformations of built form and the necessary scalar negotiations and translations, a specific *idea of the city* emerges that has intrinsic formal, spatial, and social relationships.

## Aims

- Familiarisation with the concepts typological conflict and transformation, and introduction to urban design and urban planning methodologies.
- Understanding of the socio-political, economic, ecological, spatial, and physical parameters or processes informing the development and formation of an urban plan.

## Content

### 1. Urban Plan Analysis

The studio begins with the selection and analysis of existing or proposed urban plans for a contemporary for London. It is advised this site will be analysed and investigated in a way in which the building types chosen in Studio 1 play a significant and formative role. The aim is for the students to initiate an active engagement with the selected case study, to contact local authorities, collective architects, planners and researchers, potentially formulating a 'live project'. As in Studio 1, relevant archival material should be identified and archives visited to study, analyse, represent the found material. Following this, the first analysis is that of

common urban design and planning criteria, which should include the following common elements of an urban plan:

Description of Urban Plan:

- Master plan
- Land use (among others, zoning, coverage, massing, and density)

Analysis of Urban Plan:

- Context and strategic analysis
- Planning goals and policies
- Economic development
- Landform (and landscape)
- Implementation and phasing

Spatial and programmatic analysis:

- Figure-ground plan
- Circulation and transportation
- Services, facilities, and infrastructures
- Natural resources, open space, recreation, and landscape
- Hierarchy and organisation (structure, route, connection, and view)
- Part-to-whole and repetitive-to-unique
- Geometry, grids, and symmetry

## **2. Typological Conflict and Transformation**

Following the basic analysis of the urban plan, the relationship of types to its conceptualisation, organisation, and formation is studied. How does the generality of type adapt to socio-cultural, economic, and political contexts? Within this study, the question whether a typological transformation results from a typological conflict, created by an insertion into a context, or a strategic argument and its possibilities within a context is emphasised. This expands the conclusions of Studio 1 and requires a good knowledge of the physical, social, and cultural context of the urban plan.

The identified conflicts and transformation are diagrammed and develop the preceding analysis. To begin with, the urban plan is compared to other plans and/or its architecture, considering or developing:

- Architecture's relationships to the urban plan; scalar comparison
- Distribution: linear, parallel, axial, radial, centralised, and clustered
- Hierarchy and layering
- Modularity, difference, and flexibility
- Comparative matrix
- Timelines

Subsequently the transformation of the urban plan and its relation to formative types is studied by studying:

- Growth and limits
- Idea and strategy diagrams
- Transformation diagrams

This should be concluded in a set of speculative transformative matrices for the architectural building type and urban plan.

To conclude the analysis and speculations, a first attempt should be made to define:

- How do the relationships between type and urban plan raise a larger disciplinary question, a discursive research problem that not only relates to the specific city and plan studied but to a general discussion and the contemporary city?
- What is a clearly defined urban research question dealing with a design problem that emerges from the analysis?
- What is a related yet distinct typological and architectural design research question?

While this is a first attempt to formulate questions important for the Dissertation Proposal, it is also a conclusion to Studio 2, potentially questioning some earlier conclusions from Studio 1.

### 3. Design Exercise

A short design brief, written by each student, will be explored over six to seven weeks. The design exercise aims to explore cross-scalar relationships between welfare space, urban compound (block), neighbourhood, and the city. The context for 2025-26 will be the city of London. Examining their past, present and future expressions of welfare, responding to which the formative diagram of the design exercise would be generated. The design would not only respond to the limitations, and constraints, but also informs a project; addressing inherent conflicts, power-relations, social challenges, and environmental issues. The brief should be positioned within the historical and contemporary case studies thoroughly researched by the students.

The brief for the exercise is to specify:

- A typological transformation
- A specific area, location, neighbourhood of a selected city
- A specific collective, group (the subject(s) should be defined)
- A number of urban constraints (structural, physical, material, and programmatic)

### Learning Outcomes

- B1: Ability to analyse complex issues both systematically and creatively, making sound judgements in the absence of complete data or in the context of incomplete or contradictory areas of knowledge.
- B2: Ability to apply knowledge in an original manner, together with a practical understanding of how established techniques of research and enquiry are used to create and interpret knowledge in the discipline.
- B4: Demonstration of self-direction and originality in tackling and solving problems.
- C2: Ability to develop new technical skills to a high level.
- D1: Ability of independent learning required for continuing professional development, using full range of learning resources. When applicable, ability to work effectively within a group as leader or member and skill to manage conflict effectively.

### Submission

- Studio report (illustrations, drawings and writing, circa 3,000 words)

### Assessment Criteria

All learning outcomes must be met in order to achieve a pass overall. Students are required to demonstrate knowledge, understanding, ability and skills in the following areas:

#### Context and analysis

- The ability to critically analyse, interpret, compare, and generalise urban plans.
- The depth of understanding disciplinary knowledge and design research techniques in urbanism.

#### Process and synthesis

- Originality and rigour in developing a design brief and proposal.

#### Resolution and communication

- Competence in modes of representations and productions in urban design and master planning.
- The ability to clearly communicate concepts and work.

TITLE			
<b>CORE MODULE 3 – SEMINAR 1: ARCHITECTURAL THEORIES, DESIGN AND RESEARCH METHODS</b>			
Level	FHEQ Level 7	Status	Compulsory
Teaching Staff	Georgia Hablützel (lead), Hamed Khosravi, Platon Issaias, and guest lecturers	Term	1
Learning Methods	Lectures Seminars Tutorials Juries Self-directed learning	Credits	15
		Workload	150 hours study, inclusive of teaching contact: 36 hours teaching/114 hours self-directed study

## Synopsis

The seminar course is focused on the architectural scale and introduces a number of research and design methodologies, as well as theories or themes critical to the programme, such as type, typology, drawing, and diagram. The seminar explores questions of a systematic understanding of disciplinary knowledge and methodical design in architecture, thereby examining a historiography of a modern reasoning of form.

All seminars are structured as follows:

- Discussion of student summaries of previous seminar;
- Students are asked to write a few paragraphs following each seminar to summarise the main discussion and in addition formulate a number of questions that were examined and/or raised by the last seminar;
- Presentation/lecture by seminar tutor;
- Presentation of a text and/or project by a student;
- A student will present a selected text or project. This should include a short background to the text/author, and a review and discussion of the text/project. This is to be submitted as a written text of 2-3 pages;
- Discussion;
- Optional reading and discussion of selected texts.

## Aims

- Familiarisation of students with architectural theories and theories of design methods.
- To provide a critical survey of the historiography and history of ideas framed by typological and typal reasoning, including the clarification of type as a form of reasoning that is traditionally distinguished as relating either to a design method or critical theory.

## Content

Seminar 1 consists of a series of seminar presentations by programme staff and guests.

### Session 1

#### Introduction to Archival Research and design research methods

This seminar has a twofold purpose. First, it consists of an introduction to archival work in a research context, while referring to different form of disciplinary knowledge and practice. Secondly, it introduces key references of architectural design scholarship and research methodologies.

## **Session 2**

### **Politics of Urban Form**

Since the beginning of the Renaissance, we can trace a paradigm shift in the idea of urban form; the image of the good city, which was once bound firmly to its military strength and fortification, was replaced by the abstract notion of 'production'. The idea of a good urban form was therefore developed in the same line; 'circulation' and 'distribution' became the driving force of urban development. What has changed was not only the form of the city, but also its subjects. The seminar discusses the rather long history through case studies from Cerdà Urbanización to Hilberseimer's Hochhausstadt.

## **Session 3**

### **Autonomy Institute: Histories of Welfare**

This seminar will discuss the historical and speculative dimensions of welfare in architecture and urbanism. Drawing on Autonomy's research into post-work futures, commons-based economies, and public service infrastructures, we will trace a genealogy of the city, from 20th-century state provision to contemporary experiments in shared, cooperative, and non-proprietary forms of urban life. The session will explore histories of state welfare provision including housing, legal aid, food, healthcare, education, transportation, and public amenities and the utopian and post-work imaginaries that have envisioned the city beyond wage labour.

## **Session 4**

### **Inhabitable Walls: On Architecture, Power, and Territory**

For early nomadic societies, this spiritual dimension was of great importance. In the struggle to survive in harsh conditions, each aspect of life was a rite, watched over by a spirit or god, and the house was the spatial manifestation of those rites, safeguarding and regulating every action. Daily existence was carefully choreographed within the 'sacred enclosure', a sequence of inhabitable walls that protected life and allowed it to proliferate. The seminar investigates the specific historical typologies emerged as a result of the performance of nomadic subjects over a territory. The architecture of these typologies embeds the power relations as well as spatial apparatuses to tame the territory.

## **Session 5**

### **The Birth of Modern Town Planning**

The seminar examines the emergence of modern town planning as an integral continuation of the process of the industrialisation of the city, where technocratic issues such as sanitation, decency and access became the drivers of a new urban order. The seminar will analyse examples such as Haussmann's office for public works, as well as the infrastructural reorganisation of London's slums, to allow a reading of town planning as a technology of multi scalar control, of body, family and production. In particular, the seminar will examine the historiography of the garden city model as a reformist case study, contrasting its common-held utopian aspirations with speculative suburbanisation.

## **Session 6**

### **Infrastructures of Legitimacy in Dhaka, Bangladesh**

Exploring Dhaka's Korail Bosti settlement, the seminar rethinks welfare as a spatial practice embedded within everyday urban negotiations and collective infrastructures. In this context, mobility, labour, and incrementality shape infrastructure, contemporary urbanism, and shared architectures. By tracing the settlement's multi-scalar, entangled relationship with the wider city, the case study reveals dynamics of interdependency between disparate locations and communities. It shifts the analytical lens from fixed places to spatial processes and socio-material flows, focusing on community infrastructures such as networks of public buildings and essential services, including rickshaw garages, schools, nurseries, clinics, and libraries.

## **Session 7**

### **Landscape as Laboratory, Part 1: Enclosure to Hinterland**

The hinterland has historically operated as an engine, linking landscape and city through flows of labour, resources, and infrastructure. The session examines the evolving nexus between welfare and landscape through the enclosure of the common land in Britain. Historical processes of land enclosure, commodification, and exchanges within the hinterland are examined to highlight how spatial scales, from city to metropolitan region, interact within multi-directional socio-spatial networks transforming the city from a "distance".

## **Sessions 8, 9, and 10**

### **Tutorials**

Each Seminar Module will have 2 or 3 guest lectures per Term.

Previous guest seminars were delivered by: Víctor Muñoz Sanz, Nora Akawi, Chris Lee, Felipe De Ferrari, Traumnovelle, Lacol, Alejandra Celedón, among others.

## **Learning Outcomes**

- B1: Ability to analyse complex issues both systematically and creatively, making sound judgements in the absence of complete data or in the context of incomplete or contradictory areas of knowledge.
- B2: Ability to apply knowledge in an original manner, together with a practical understanding of how established techniques of research and enquiry are used to create and interpret knowledge in the discipline.
- B4: Demonstration of self-direction and originality in tackling and solving problems.
- D1: Ability of independent learning required for continuing professional development, using the full range of learning resources. When applicable, ability to work effectively within a group as leader or member and skill to manage conflict effectively.

## **Submission**

- Essay (circa 4,000 words)

## **Assessment Criteria**

All learning outcomes must be met in order to achieve a pass overall. Students are required to demonstrate knowledge, understanding, ability and skills in the following areas:

### **Research and knowledge acquirement**

- A critical knowledge and understanding of the principles and concepts introduced in the seminars.

### **Approach and development**

- The rigour and originality in developing arguments and providing supportive evidence.
- The ability to demonstrate clear methodology and structure in the planning and execution of a research inquiry.

### **Argument and communication**

- The ability to clearly and persuasively present and debate arguments.
- The ability to reference sources of information using agreed conventions.

TITLE CORE MODULE 4 – SEMINAR 2: PROJECTS OF THE CITY, LONDON: CITY OF WELFARE			
Level	FHEQ Level 7	Status	Compulsory
Teaching Staff	Georgia Hablützel (lead), Hamed Khosravi, Platon Issaias, and guest lecturers)	Term	2
Learning Methods	Lectures Seminars/tutorials Self-directed learning	Credits	15
		Workload	150 hours study, inclusive of teaching contact: 36 hours teaching/114 hours self-directed study

## Synopsis

The phenomenon of the city has been continuously theorised through a number of critical writings and projects that reformulate, and object to, its established history. At the same time, modern urban planning only emerged with scientific urbanism in the late-nineteenth century and was formalised by the Modern Movement. The course positions the modernist theories of a new contemporary city, which developed with an increased fascination with the city, in the wider context. The course proposes that the city has increasingly become a critical field of theory driven by practitioners in an attempt to reconnect architecture with the challenges and questions raised by the contemporary city and prolific urbanisation. Seminar 2 is divided into two distinctive parts. The first, explores the development of disciplinary knowledge about architecture and urbanism from the 19th century until today. The second part presents scholarly research in a series of important contemporary case studies. This would allow students to formulate their individual research propositions for Thesis – Studio in Term 3.

## Aims

- To provide students with a survey of theories that conceptualise the city, in particular the contemporary city, through its architecture and architectural projects.
- The seminar discusses theories of the city in relationship to critical architectural practice.

## Content

Seminar 2 consists of a series of seminar presentations by programme staff and guests.

### Session 1

#### Part 1) London, An Urban Laboratory

A cross-disciplinary lens will be used to investigate London's urban environment through a series of case studies ranging from housing estates, public spaces, and urban infrastructures. With the main focus on the welfare objectives of the architectural and urban projects following World War Two, we will also look beyond this period and follow some of the housing projects of the early 20th century, and the urban infrastructure projects of the late 19th century, into the present day. We will try to understand life and times of some of the city's buildings by introducing the governing bodies and political forces that planned and influenced how the built environment was imagined and realized, and by studying the social relations and spatial practices affecting how they were lived and re-lived. Schools, hospitals, leisure centres, housing estates, through to urban green spaces, roads, canals, and rivers will be the materials through which we will explore how possible futures are being imagined by different actors.

## **Part 2) Autonomy Institute: Policies of Welfare**

The session will explore policies, infrastructures, and governance models that shape collective welfare and public access in London. Exemplary commons-based initiatives such as, co-operative laundries to London's youth centres and community kitchens will be unpacked alongside the challenges of sustaining such infrastructures under market and climate pressures. The seminar will consider how design for public good can reframe architecture's role in enabling access over ownership, fostering new forms of collective care, and positioning public luxury as both a spatial and political ambition.

### **Session 2**

#### **Landscape as Laboratory, Part 2: Planetary Urbanism**

Urbanization cannot be contained within the city alone; it unfolds across extended territories, revealing the uneven fabric of the landscape. The session situates architecture and the city within a planetary scale, interrogating the relationships between urban fabric, infrastructure, settlement, and the movement of people, resources, and labour. By dissolving the traditional divide between town and countryside, the session examines the ways urbanism emerges as a process spanning city, region, and planetary networks. This lens will allow us to trace the socio-spatial and material mechanisms through which the landscape functions as a laboratory for experimentation, production, and governance.

### **Session 3**

#### **Case Study I. Athens, a project of crisis**

The seminar presents research on the history of the Greek city and its distinct domestic architecture. The seminar aims to critique the popular category of 'informal urbanism' by interrogating the underlying relation between urban management and architectural form. What is at stake is to establish and theorize the strategic link between domestic space, production, conflict and debt. How forms of domestic ethos, habits and practices of domestic life could be related with administrative and managerial projects? How this way of thinking about the city could be used to confront the distinction between 'formal' and 'informal'? What makes a diagram of space and social relations, such as the Greek apartment building, a successful territorial, biopolitical machine? The second lecture will present a series of projects done in Athens during the last decade, mainly reflecting to a condition of acute economic and spatial crisis.

### **Session 4**

#### **Case Study II. Tehran: Life within Walls**

Life in Tehran proliferates and thrives in its interiors. When public space is policed and controlled, domestic interiors become art galleries, clubs, cultural centres, workshops, and offices. Interiors cease to be the exclusive domain for individual life and family matters; homes become the spaces in which new forms of collective life are experimented and nurtured, and the battleground for social conflicts and political constituencies. Through its extensive apparatus of drawings, the seminar presents an archaeological inquiry into the politics and the ecologies of the interior spaces of the Iranian metropolis, from its foundation as the Iranian capital until today.

### **Session 5**

#### **Case Study III. Beer Sheba: Ottoman Urbanism in Palestine**

The seminar traces the origins of the Ottoman project of Beer Sheba (1877–1917), the only new town established in Palestine during four centuries of Ottoman rule. Conceived as part of the Tanzimat reforms, the settlement was deployed as a juridical and territorial node in the Naqab desert, designed to extend imperial sovereignty over Bedouin tribes. Its grid technology prescribed four-dunam plots, aligning the recently enlightened Ottoman notions of property and administration with the social structure of the Bedouin family. The seminar enquires how this hybrid form, simultaneously a diagram of control and a framework for autonomy, expands on the Eurocentric historiography of modern town planning as a colonial apparatus.

### **Session 6**

#### **Case Study IV. Hong Kong**

This seminar examines how architecture, urban planning, and public health shaped the development of colonial Hong Kong. Through this case, the session will trace how health considerations informed the design of settlements and guided policy decisions, highlighting the ways spatial interventions structured everyday life, inhabitation, and urban planning. It will also consider how these historical precedents illuminate the politics of welfare, the role of infrastructure, housing, healthcare, and broader social provision.

## **Session 7**

### **Case Study V. Red Vienna**

This seminar examined the history of city design and architecture during the years of the social-democratic control of Vienna's municipality, from the late 1910's until the fall of the city and the collapse of the first Austrian Republic. From 1918 to 1934, the city of Vienna becomes a paradigmatic case, where a series of experimental programmes regarding housing, education, healthcare, and labour relations have been developed and tested. In that sense, Red Vienna is an exemplar of how and what a welfare city is and could become.

## **Sessions 8, 9, and 10**

### **Tutorials**

## **Learning Outcomes**

- B1: Ability to analyse complex issues both systematically and creatively, making sound judgements in the absence of complete data or in the context of incomplete or contradictory areas of knowledge.
- B2: Ability to apply knowledge in an original manner, together with a practical understanding of how established techniques of research and enquiry are used to create and interpret knowledge in the discipline.
- B4: Demonstration of self-direction and originality in tackling and solving problems.
- D1: Ability of independent learning required for continuing professional development, using full range of learning resources. When applicable, ability to work effectively within a group as leader or member and skill to manage conflict effectively.

## **Submission**

- Essay (circa 4,000 words)

## **Assessment Criteria**

All learning outcomes must be met in order to achieve a pass overall. Students are required to demonstrate knowledge, understanding, ability and skills in the following areas:

### **Research and knowledge acquisition**

- A critical knowledge and understanding of the principles and concepts introduced in the seminars.

### **Approach and development**

- The rigour and originality in developing arguments and providing supportive evidence.
- The ability to demonstrate clear methodology and structure in the planning and execution of a research inquiry.

### **Argument and communication**

- The ability to clearly and persuasively present and debate arguments.
- The ability to reference sources of information using agreed conventions.

TITLE CORE MODULE 5a – ACADEMIC WRITING 1			
Level	FHEQ Level 7	Status	Compulsory
Teaching Staff	Amelia Stevens	Term	1
Learning Methods	Lectures Seminars/tutorials Self-directed learning	Credits	10
		Workload	100 hours study, inclusive of teaching contact: 24 hours teaching/76 hours self-directed study

## Synopsis

Complementary to Seminar 1, students are introduced to academic writing towards the writing of an abstract. The course is scheduled once a week during the term. On days when no seminars or group sessions take place, individual tutorials are available to discuss any writing in progress (also available to Year 2 students).

## Aims

- To familiarise students with academic writing conventions and the importance of writing to formulate a research argument.
- To Understand the differences in writing when examining a case study or text source.

## Content

Week 1: Overview

### Week 2: 01 **Materials: Objects of Investigation**

This session examines the role of critical reading, collecting notes, and identifying differences of opinions in the preliminary collection of information for the purpose of scholarly writing.

Week 3: tutorials for exercise 01 materials

### Week 4: 02 **Debate: Evidence and Hypotheses**

This session examines how the format and structure of written material can frame existing discourses, contextualise hypotheses, construct debates, in leading to an original, intellectual proposition in writing.

Week 5: tutorials for exercise 02 debate

Week 6: **draft submissions** / 01 materials and 02 debate

### Week 6: 03 **Method: Models and Modalities**

This session examines the varied and multivalent modalities and tools of research that can be employed to inform a scholarly project.

Week 7-8: tutorials for exercise 03 method and Seminar essay proposal

Week 9: draft submissions / 03 method and Seminar essay proposal

### Week 9: 04 **Abstract: Arguments and Propositions**

This session focuses on the formulation of a critical argument for the Seminar essay. An abstract will be drafted based on the research, case studies and other collected supporting materials gathered so far by each student.

Week 10-11: tutorials for Seminar essay

Week 1 of term 2: **all final submissions due**

Summary of submissions:

**Academic Writing Submissions for term 1:**

- 01 materials exercise: ~500 words (a draft due in week 6)
- 02 debate exercise: ~500 words (a draft due in week 6)
- 03 method exercise: ~500 words (a draft due in week 9)
- Finals of all three exercises due in first week of term 2

**Seminar Essay Submission for term 1:**

- Essay proposition: ~500 words (a draft due in week 9)
- Final seminar essay term 1 due in first week of term 2
- Academic writing exercises support the development of your seminar essay (circa 4000 words) which should relate to themes, issues, and readings of at least two seminars in term 1. And it also must include at least two case/precedent study from studio 1 exercises.

**Learning Outcomes**

- C2: Ability to develop new technical skills to a high level.
- D1: Ability of independent learning required for continuing professional development, using the full range of learning resources.

**Submission**

- Short text/literature review (ca 1,200 words)

**Assessment Criteria**

All learning outcomes must be met in order to achieve a pass overall. Students are required to demonstrate knowledge, understanding, ability and skills in the following areas:

**Research and knowledge acquirement**

- Clarity, intelligence, and rigour in summarising texts and case studies

**Argument and communication**

- Compliance with academic referencing standards

TITLE CORE MODULE 5b – ACADEMIC WRITING 2			
Level	FHEQ Level 7	Status	Compulsory
Teaching Staff	Amelia Stevens	Term	2
Learning Methods	Seminars Tutorials Self-directed learning	Credits	10
		Workload	100 hours study, inclusive of teaching contact: 24 hours teaching/76 hours self-directed study

## Synopsis

Complementary to Seminar 2, students are introduced to the configuration of their own infrastructure of work. The course is scheduled once a week during the term. On days when no seminars or group sessions take place, individual tutorials are available to discuss any writing in progress (also available to Year 2 students).

## Aims

- To familiarise students with the writing of literature reviews, to assess acquired knowledge, and to position their own writing within the context of study.

## Content

Week 1: Overview

### Week 2: **01 Archive: Generative Research**

This session guides the formulation of the student's own research archive, with the drive to question and subvert naturalised categories in the fields of research of every proposal.

Week 3: tutorials for exercise 01 archive

### Week 4: **02 Mediums: Multiscalar Writing**

This session investigates how to textually discuss and analyse material from different media (journalistic, audio-visual, or other) to reveal multiscalar understandings of cities and urban situations.

Week 5: tutorials for exercise 02 mediums

Week 6: **draft submissions** / 01 archive and 02 mediums

### Week 7: **03 Paradigm: Synthesising a Case**

This session presents strategies of how to organise a pool of research cases to trigger the construction of a larger 'case'. The development of short pieces of writing will become the basis for the development of a longer document to articulate research process and critical writing.

Week 8: tutorials for exercise 03 paradigm and Seminar essay proposal

Week 9: **draft submissions** / 03 paradigm and Seminar essay proposal

Week 10: **04 Thesis: Introduction**

This session examines the notion of an academic thesis and begins to discuss how to approach the writing of an extended piece. Forms of academic writing and time managing to produce a thesis will be presented.

Week 11: tutorials for Seminar essay

Week 1 of term 3: **all final submissions due**

Summary of submissions:

**Academic Writing Submissions for term 2:**

- 01 archive exercise: ~500 words (a draft due in week 6)
- 02 mediums exercise: ~500 words (a draft due in week 6)
- 03 paradigm exercise: ~500 words (a draft due in week 9)
- Finals of all three exercises due in first week of term 3

Seminar Essay Submission for term 2:

- Essay proposition: ~500 words (a draft due in week 9)
- Final seminar essay term 2 due in first week of term 3
- Academic writing exercises support the development of your seminar essay (3000-4000 words) which should relate to themes, issues, and readings of at least two seminars in term 2. And it also must include at least two case/precedent study from studio 2 exercises.

**Learning Outcomes**

- C2: Ability to develop new technical skills to a high level.
- D1: Ability of independent learning required for continuing professional development, using the full range of learning resources.

**Submission**

- Literature review of source texts (circa 2,000 words)

**Assessment Criteria**

All learning outcomes must be met in order to achieve a pass overall. Students are required to demonstrate knowledge, understanding, ability and skills in the following areas:

**Research and knowledge acquirement**

- Intelligence, structure, and clarity of the literature review

**Approach and development**

- Ability to synthesise arguments between several texts

**Argument and communication**

- Compliance with academic referencing standards

TITLE CORE STUDIO/THESIS – ACADEMIC WRITING 3			
Level	FHEQ Level 7	Status	Compulsory
Teaching Staff	Amelia Stevens	Term	3
Learning Methods	Seminars Tutorials Self-directed learning	Credits	10
		Workload	100 hours study, inclusive of teaching contact: 24 hours teaching/76 hours self-directed study

## Synopsis

Complementary to Thesis-Studio, students are supported while starting to write their dissertations. The course is scheduled once a week during the term. On days when no seminars or group sessions take place, individual tutorials are available to discuss any writing in progress (also available to Year 2 students).

## Aims

- To familiarise students with the academic writing for a research thesis and the invisible processes necessary to support its accomplishment.

## Content

Week 1: Overview

### Week 2: **01 Research Question: Relevance and Scope**

This session consists of the analysis of a selection of thesis precedents to generate a nuanced understanding of the role of research questions in the formulation of the scope and relevance of a thesis proposal.

Analysis exercise 01: analysis of your own essay

### Week 3: **02 Cultural Position: Structure of the Discussion**

This session consists of the analysis of a selection of thesis precedents to discern the clarity, poignancy, and opportunity for novelty embedded in the structuring of a thesis cultural position.

Analysis exercise 02: analysis of a Projective Cities dissertation from the past

### Week 4: **03 Synthesis: Abstract and Introduction**

This session consists of the analysis of the student's own dissertation proposals in a format of collective discussion and brainstorming.

Analysis exercise 03: synthesis of research question, relevance, scope, polemics, and structure of your dissertation proposal.

Week 5: tutorials for dissertation proposal development

Week 6: **draft submission** / dissertation proposal draft 1 (will be commented but not marked)

### Week 7: **04 Thesis as Assemblage**

This session consists of the dissection and autopsy of a thesis, to discern all its constituent parts and their internal relationships towards the achievement of consistency.

Critical relations between main texts, visual materials, foot/endnotes, captions, and appendixes  
Assemblage exercise

Week 8: tutorials for dissertation proposal development

Week 9: **marked submission** / dissertation proposal draft 2 (marked as AW T3 final submission)

Week 10: tutorials for dissertation proposal draft feedback

Week 11: **Thesis Studio ‘Dissertation Proposal’ final submission**

Summary of Submissions:

**Academic Writing ‘Dissertation Proposal Development’ submissions for term 3:**

- Analysis exercises 1, 2, 3: 3 short presentations completed during weeks 2 to 4
- Dissertation proposal draft 1: ~1200 words (a draft due in week 6)
- Assemblage exercise (week 7 incorporated into proposal draft)
- Dissertation proposal draft 2: ~1200 words (due in week 9 - marked as AW T3 final submission)

**Thesis Studio ‘Dissertation Proposal’ final submission due in week 11**

## Learning Outcomes

- B2: Ability to apply knowledge in an original manner, together with a practical understanding of how established techniques of research and enquiry are used to create and interpret knowledge in the discipline.
- C2: Ability to develop new technical skills to a high level.
- D1: Ability of independent learning required for continuing professional development, using the full range of learning resources.

## Submission

- Literature review of source texts (circa 2,000 words)

## Assessment Criteria

All learning outcomes must be met in order to achieve a pass overall. Students are required to demonstrate knowledge, understanding, ability and skills in the following areas:

### Research and knowledge acquirement

- Intelligence, structure, and clarity of the literature review

### Approach and development

- Ability to synthesise arguments between several texts

### Argument and communication

- Compliance with academic referencing standards

TITLE CORE STUDIO/THESIS – THESIS-STUDIO: REPRESENTATIONS, INVESTIGATIONS AND DIAGRAMS			
Level	FHEQ Level 7	Status	Compulsory
Teaching Staff	Platon Issaias, Hamed Khosravi All PC staff attending reviews and feedback sessions	Term	3
		Credits	40
Learning Methods	Lectures Seminars Tutorials Juries Self-directed learning	Workload	400 hours study, inclusive of teaching contact: 120 hours teaching/ 280 hours self-directed study

## Synopsis

The Thesis-Studio is a combined design studio and seminar course in which students develop their Dissertation Proposal and start the Dissertation. Underlying the Thesis-Studio is the hypothesis that critical and speculative projects on the city, whether practice and/or theory oriented, manifest an ‘idea of the city’ that can be understood through corresponding typological and social diagrams.

Some of these ideas and different historical, theoretical, and epistemological perspectives of the city will be discussed in seminars through critical projects of the recent past: exemplary proposals, representations, theories, and reflections of and on the city. The seminar examines how diverse readings of the city promulgate specific ideas and define aspects of the city that are formative and fundamental. Most of these readings share a medium-specificity and have a clear methodological approach through which a critical urban thesis is related to its processes of conceptualisation and representation. Often speculative—un-built or unbuildable—many critical urban projects have remained in the realm of speculation and imagination, but with an enduring effect on our (disciplinary) understanding and knowledge of the city. Representations, Investigations and Diagrams in that sense are speculative, projective and open-ended in their possibilities, but consistent in their construction.

## Aims

- Familiarisation with the idea of the City and the relationships of spatial and social diagrams.
- Developing of a clear research inquiry and definition of the theoretical or physical context.
- Formulation of a Dissertation Proposal.

## Content

During the Thesis-Studio, students will finalise their research interest and confirm a theoretical and physical context in which this is situated. They develop their initial research enquiry into a proposal for the Dissertation. Students are asked to formulate a research problem with relevance to a larger disciplinary discourse, and research questions that are architecturally specific and examine a distinct urban problem. A clear relationship but also distinction must be established between the typological and urban research questions. The research questions defining the typological and urban problems must be further located within the larger discourse of the Architecture of Collective Living.

The collective living building type(s) and the city and urban plan(s) examined in Term 1 and 2 will constitute the specific site and context for the Dissertation Proposal and later the Dissertation, unless there are good arguments presented for changing this. Both building types and sites should not be simply defined as physical and material contexts but also be considered geographically, socio-politically, culturally, economically, and ecologically. This defines the limits of the research investigation.

The Dissertation Proposal is to formulate a coherent research thesis and enquiry that structures the intellectual and disciplinary research project, the research problem, but also creates a rigorous framework for design and research speculations at an architectural and urban scale, the research questions. This requires a problem definition, methodological clarity and coherence, the demarcation of a site and context (physical, historical, theoretical, and speculative), and the writing of a preliminary design and research brief (draft to be submitted end of Term 2). It further has to formulate speculative and operative idea(s) of the city through written and visual manifestoes that outline the object of research. The Dissertation Proposal will be judged on the ability to:

- Posit a clear and rigorous research problem that is original and contributes new disciplinary knowledge;
- define a specific typological design-research question that is both analytical and projective, while having relevance to the condition of the contemporary city;
- articulate an urban design-research question that is complementary to but also distinct from the typological question and challenges the scale of architecture.

The Dissertation Proposal should demonstrate that the proposed enquiry is within the student's grasp, capabilities, and time schedule. In addition, students are expected to clarify how their research project relates and makes use of theoretical and design research by stating how they intend to synthesise their designed and written research in the Dissertation, to which equal weighting is given in the Thesis-Studio.

To start developing the Dissertation Proposal, start by formulating:

- a series of observations that are based on evidence (textual, material, visual, etc. sources);
- and a series of hypothesis or statements how the observations raise or relate to certain disputes that are linked to the area of interest that has been identified.

## 2. Design Proposal: Idea of the City

To clarify the object of research of the Dissertation Proposal and start the Dissertation, a number of questions and problems should be explored through writing and drawings:

- The relation of architecture's disciplinary knowledge to the city and its discourse.  
(What is the relevance of types and their transformation to the contemporary city? Clarification of the research problem)
- Diagramming of typological transformations  
(Matrices that contextualise incremental or abrupt variation and transformation of types deriving from speculations on their deep structures. What structural and organisational elements of type are transformed?)
- Concluding typological transformation diagrams  
(Derived from the matrices of typal transformation. What are the criteria and objectives of transformation and speculation? Clarification of the typological research question.)
- The urban plan  
(Programmatic and organisational analysis, but also socio-cultural, political, economic, ecologic etc studies of the city and its plans.)
- Concluding urban organisational and programmatic change diagrams  
(How does the urban scale differs from and provides resistance to the typological approach? What are the urban conflicts and transformations in relation to those of architecture? Clarification of the urban research question.)

The above is as much an analysis of, as it is a speculation on, the formation of the city and its organisation, diagrams, and (re)presentation by providing well-argued observations and hypotheses of relationships between a fundamental type, its formative diagrams, and an urban plan. These idea(s) of the city are therefore a means to clarify the object of research through drawings and graphical manifestoes. They are further the basis to write a preliminary design brief and start the design work, which are essential parts of the dissertation framework.

Design briefs typically include:

- descriptions of the project background and context;
- a problem description with definition of constraints and needs, including guidelines on approach;
- methodology and planning criteria;
- and a statement of the project or research objectives with a list of deliverables and time schedules.

Based on the design brief, a first design proposal must be developed that elaborates the object of research through a series of design speculations. This explores another means to clarify the research problem and research questions.

## **B. Seminar Descriptions:**

The seminar course is an integral part of the Thesis-Studio and explores research methodologies as well as ideas of the city from a historical, theoretical, and epistemological perspective, but also through the representations available to and defined by different media. The seminar discusses how diverse (ideological, technique-based, or representational) readings of the city in exemplary projects, ideas, representations, and writings, produce specific ideas that are either graphic-, design-, and process-oriented, or are expressed through alternative forms of representation (painting, writing, film, etc).

### **Session 1**

#### **Research Methodologies and Writing a Research Proposal (Workshop)**

This two-day workshop provides an overview of research methodologies and methods, especially in architecture, in preparation of students defining their own methodology for the dissertation

### **Session 2**

#### **Architecture Assembled: Exquisite Corpse**

The tools of assemblage, originally developed by Dada, were also at the centre of the production of architectural images. The montage was not only the tool through which the new architecture was made reacting with the old city as a polemical device. The idea of assembling ready-made objects was also at the core of an idea of architecture made of prefabricated elements, making architecture an industry and no longer an art as it was taught in the beaux-arts academies. The seminar discusses the evolution of the concept and technique of assemblage in architecture through examples from Renaissance, to Post-digital architecture.

### **Session 3**

#### **Oblique Drawing**

The lecture will present a close reading of Massimo Scolari's book *Oblique Drawing* on the history of anti-perspectival visual representation and parallel projection. Following Scolari but also expanding to the history of 20th century architectural avant-garde, the lecture will explore the way knowledge and especially technologies of representation obtain meaning from the social and political contexts that have been developed from and are embedded to. Apart from a history of optics and scientific or artistic development, what is presented here is a quick overview of ideological, cultural and cosmological perceptions and beliefs, caught always within diagrams of power relations and struggle.

### **Session 4**

#### **The Genesis of a Hopeful Monster: Architecture and the City, 1966–2016**

The seminar presents a selection of key texts, books, and projects that construct an alternative history of the last 50 years of architecture theory, practice and education. It consists of a “constructed genealogy” of how the problem of architecture and its relation to the city has been formalized by different scholars and practitioners.

### **Session 5**

#### **Architecture Narrated: Writing, Drawing, and Making**

The seminar investigates the roll of writing and scripting in architectural design. It evaluates narration techniques not only in form of representation and description of the projects but also as research and design tool. The seminar goes through examples from writers, artists and architects. It particularly reviews few famous projects by OMA, “Exodus”, “The story of the pool”, “The City of the Captive Glob”, and “The Egg of Columbus Centre”.

### **Session 6**

#### **The Autonomy Institute: The Report**

The form of the report intermingles text, image, and infographics as a means to formally record research procedures and results. The session will reflect on the history of its development in order to conceptualise the public as part of its function and performance. It considers the report within the trajectory of visual culture, as well as bureaucratic negotiation and administration, recontextualising it as a representation of Welfare.

**Sessions 7 and 8. TBC** (guest seminars, decided and discussed with the cohort, relevant to dissertation proposals)

## Learning Outcomes

- A1: A systematic understanding of knowledge across architecture, urban design, and planning, and a critical awareness of current problems and/or insights at the forefront of related scholarship and professional practice.
- A3: A comprehensive understanding of techniques and methodologies applicable to their own research and advanced scholarship (theory and practice-led design research).
- B1: Ability to analyse complex issues both systematically and creatively, making sound judgements in the absence of complete data or in the context of incomplete or contradictory areas of knowledge.
- B2: Ability to apply knowledge in an original manner, together with a practical understanding of how established techniques of research and enquiry are used to create and interpret knowledge in the discipline.
- B3: A conceptual understanding enabling the critical evaluation of current research, advanced scholarship, and methodologies, especially in the disciplines of architecture, urban design, and planning; and ability to develop critiques of them and, where appropriate, to propose new hypotheses.
- B4: Demonstration of self-direction and originality in tackling and solving problems.
- C2: Ability to develop new technical skills to a high level.
- D1: Ability of independent learning required for continuing professional development, using full range of learning resources.
- D2: Ability to critically reflect on own and others' learning in order to improve their practice.
- D3: Ability to competently and autonomously plan and undertake research.
- D4: Ability to communicate research and conclusions clearly to specialist and non-specialist audiences.

## Submission

Dissertation Proposal consisting of integrated:

- Essay of 5,000 words defining object of research
- Outline design proposal defining object of research
- Research dossier (illustrations, drawings, and writing)

## Assessment Criteria

All learning outcomes must be met in order to achieve a pass overall. Students are required to demonstrate knowledge, understanding, ability and skills in the following areas:

### Context, analysis, research and knowledge acquirement

- Depth of understanding of disciplinary knowledge and design research questions.

### Process, synthesis, approach and development

- The rigour and originality in developing design brief and proposals, as well as theoretical arguments and providing supportive evidence.
- The ability to demonstrate clear methodology and structure in the planning and execution of a research inquiry.
- The ability to synthesise written and design research.

### Argument, resolution and communication

- The ability to clearly and appropriately formulate research questions, hypotheses and arguments.
- The ability to clearly and persuasively present and debate arguments.

TITLE CORE STUDIO/THESIS – DISSERTATION			
Level	FHEQ Level 7	Status	Compulsory
Teaching Staff	Platon Issaias, Hamed Khosravi, Guest thesis advisors (if appropriate) All PC staff attending reviews and feedback sessions	Terms	4 and 5
Learning Methods	Tutorials Juries Self-directed learning	Credits	100
		Workload	1,000 hours study, inclusive of teaching contact: 200 hours teaching/ 800 hours self-directed study

## Synopsis

The Dissertation has to demonstrate proficiency and rigour in research, design methods, and techniques, as well as knowledge of the subject context, literature, and precedents. The Dissertation is the final and most substantial piece of work in the programme that is started at the end of Year 1 and developed throughout Year 2.

While students conduct their independent research under the close guidance of their supervisor(s), they have access to other programme staff and specialist consultants as needed. The supervisor(s) role is to aid developing ideas and encourage critical and independent thinking.

## Aims

- The Dissertation is the demonstration of a significant and comprehensive piece of independent research, including its planning and execution.
- The Dissertation consists of the development of a critical theoretical argument and a series of comprehensive design proposals.

## Content

### A. The Projective Cities Framework

The research enquiry and object of research of the Dissertation is to be concurrently developed through writing and design. Theory-driven and practice-driven research are complementary and define different aspects of knowledge production and disciplinary discourses. Hereby both the theoretical and design research should be considered within a general and specific context, and discuss the histories, theories, instruments, and practices underlying the dissertation project. The methodological emphasis on intersections of design theory and practice is reflected in the assessment of the Dissertation as one coherent piece of work. The Dissertation must include a comprehensive design proposal based on a clearly defined design methodology, and an integrated theoretical proposition based on a clearly defined research method. This requires students to reason and define the overlaps and limits of writing and design in their Dissertation. Part of the dissertation challenge is therefore to clarify how a written dissertation can effectively utilise design methodologies and outcomes, and how a design proposal benefits from and is enriched by written research. Writing should not just become a description of the design work and Dissertations should carefully consider how the final submission is structured and presented.

The Dissertation must demonstrate a clear research problem that is of disciplinary relevance and contributes to knowledge. Based on it, the Dissertation will articulate a specific research agenda dealing with the relationships between architecture and the city. This should be formulated as research questions and research hypotheses that advances clear disciplinary, territorial, urban, and typological problems.

If required, each thesis could expand and formulate further questions that deal with material, technological, and formal questions.

## **B. Research and Design**

Working concurrently on design and research, activities mainly during Term 3 of Phase I include:

Collecting supporting sources and information;

- reviewing literature;
- analysing case studies;
- synthesising the research agenda;
- studying and analysing site and context;
- studying the theories, practices, and instruments of design and production relevant to the research enquiry;
- designing and research development.

The Dissertation is documented, written, and refined throughout Year 2 and will be presented during regular supervision tutorials and reviews.

### **1. Review of Dissertation Proposal (2 Weeks)**

The research problem and research questions defined by the Dissertation Proposal should be reviewed at the beginning of Year 2. In preparation of this, students over the summer break between Year 1 and 2 are asked to produce about 8,000 words, equivalent to 2-3 essays, based on the proposed research object and content.

The Dissertation Proposal needs to be analysed, interpreted, developed, and synthesised in order to update the design and research brief. This brief defines the dissertation framework and research agenda. Strategic design decisions and research arguments will be made within and judged against this framework. Thus, it should clearly restate hypotheses and objectives of the research project.

### **2. Emphasis Design-Research (14 Weeks)**

Once the Dissertation Proposal has been revisited and the dissertation agenda clarified by the design and research brief, the main work on the Dissertation starts.

The Dissertation is to demonstrate an evident process of analysing, interpreting, and generating meaningful types and urban plans. This should be done by studying relevant types, urban plans, and typological transformations or conflicts, and by researching a specific context defined by an idea of the city. Deriving from the design and research brief, the Dissertation is thus to consider questions of typal reasoning, typological design, and architectural urbanism as discussed and prepared for in Year 1:

- the effects and/or conflicts of typal transformation;
- the generative potential of typological differentiation, evolution, and invention;
- the organisational and/or structural levels/elements of architecture;
- the effects and/or conflicts of architecture at different scales. In particular, the relation of architecture to the scale and formation of the city;
- the specificity of context and design;
- the idea of the city.

The above needs to be developed into a comprehensive and detailed design proposal and at the beginning of Term 5, a Final Design Review will take place. Students are expected to have completed all their primary design research at this point.

### **3. Emphasis Theoretical-Research (12 Weeks)**

All Dissertations should address how typal reasoning and typological design contributes to the conceptualisation and realisation of the contemporary city—and ultimately to disciplinary discourses and knowledge. The Dissertation serves as a projective proposition and its speculations should be re-assessed in terms of its potentials and limits at the end of the research project.

Following the Final Design Review, the research so far completed needs to be evaluated, analysed, and developed, including speculations on the possible enactment, regulation, and administration of the proposal/research at the various scales from the building to the city. This is another opportunity to clarify the relations between theoretical or design research.

Design proposals should not be understood as conventional final master plans but as evidence to support the arguments of the larger thesis and design research exploration. The results of the primary design-research should be considered as typological guidelines, opening up a discursive debate on the role of design and urban plans to the discipline and knowledge of architecture and urbanism. Typological guidelines define a framework of spatial and material organisation, policy-making, and implementation, rather than a literal design or proposal.

Finally, the research conclusions should reiterate how the research problem and the research questions at an urban and typological scale have been defined and developed throughout all research and what their projective outcome and potential are for architecture, urban design, and planning. Therefore, the dissertation should include a written section that critically reflects on the typological aspects, arguments, transformations, and discourses, as well as the agency of designing and drawing to clearly summarise the value of typological analysis to the research. This should be discussed at different architectural and urban scales and relate directly to the design work. The conclusion should also provide a clarification of the contribution to knowledge that the dissertation makes in terms of theory, typological discourse, and design research practice.

### C. Written Content of Dissertation

Although students are asked to rethink conventional formatting, the following contents should be included (please also refer to contents section for the Dissertation Proposal):

- **Abstract:** Summary of the dissertation aims and key findings (ca. 500 words).
- **Table of contents:** A numbered list of the main headings and subheadings of the paper and the page number of the start of each section.
- **Acknowledgements:** Individuals who have helped or provided resources, advice and information (including acknowledgment of sponsorships, bursaries or scholarships towards your studies).
- **Preface:** Polemic statement, images, and context.
- **Introduction:** The issues, problems and questions which led you to the chosen topic with reference to the relevant literature and projects; what is the dissertation setting out to do and what methodology is used to explore this; identify and characterise problems with which you will engage in the dissertation; the research questions and hypotheses; summary of conclusions; how is the dissertation structured and how is the contents organised and presented.
- **Main body:** Subdivided into chapters as needed.
- **Conclusions:** How can the research be contextualised at different scales and generalised? What are the findings in regards to typological and social diagrams? What is the original contribution of your designed-and-written Dissertation to the field and knowledge of architecture and urban design?
- **Bibliography:** published and unpublished sources consulted including internet sources.
- **Appendices** (if any): Complementary information, illustration or data.

### Learning Outcomes

- A1: A systematic understanding of knowledge across architecture, urban design, and planning, and a critical awareness of current problems and/or insights at the forefront of related scholarship and professional practice.
- A2: Awareness of and ability to manage the implications of ethical issues.
- A3: A comprehensive understanding of techniques and methodologies applicable to their own research and advanced scholarship (theory and practice-led design research).
- B1: Ability to analyse complex issues both systematically and creatively, making sound judgements in the absence of complete data or in the context of incomplete or contradictory areas of knowledge.
- B2: Ability to apply knowledge in an original manner, together with a practical understanding of how established techniques of research and enquiry are used to create and interpret knowledge in the discipline.
- B3: A conceptual understanding enabling the critical evaluation of current research, advanced scholarship, and methodologies, especially in the disciplines of architecture, urban design, and planning; and ability to develop critiques of them and, where appropriate, to propose new hypotheses.
- B4: Demonstration of self-direction and originality in tackling and solving problems.
- C1: Ability of decision-making in complex and unpredictable situations, exercising initiative and personal responsibility with an awareness of good practice.
- C2: Ability to develop new technical skills to a high level.

- D1: Ability of independent learning required for continuing professional development, using full range of learning resources.
- D2: Ability to critically reflect on own and others' learning in order to improve their practice.
- D3: Ability to competently and autonomously plan and undertake research.
- D4: Ability to communicate research and conclusions clearly to specialist and non-specialist audiences.

## **Submission**

- Dissertation (to include a comprehensive design proposal and integrated written research of 15,000 words)

## **Assessment Criteria**

All learning outcomes must be met in order to achieve a pass overall. Students are required to demonstrate knowledge, understanding, ability and skills in the following areas:

### **Context, analysis, research and knowledge acquirement**

- The depth of understanding disciplinary knowledge and design research questions.

### **Process, synthesis, approach and development**

- The rigour and originality in developing design brief and proposals, as well as theoretical arguments and providing supportive evidence.
- The ability to demonstrate clear methodology and structure in the planning and execution of a research inquiry.
- The ability to synthesise written and design research.

### **Argument, resolution and communication**

- The ability to clearly and appropriately formulate research questions, hypotheses and arguments.
- The ability to clearly and persuasively present and debate arguments.