

MIT Department of Architecture

4.221: Architecture Studies Colloquium, Fall 2024

Instructor: Skylar Tibbits (sjet@mit.edu)

Teaching Assistant: Simon Lesina Debiasi (slesina@mit.edu) and Hana Davis (hanamei@mit.edu)

4.221: Architecture Studies Colloquium – Overview:

The SMArchS Colloquium is a requirement for all first-year students in the postgraduate SMArchS programs: Architectural Design; Architecture and Urbanism; Building Technology; Design and Computation; History, Theory and Criticism of Architecture and Art; and the Aga Khan Program for Islamic Architecture. The course aims: 1) to create a discourse across the various SMArchS discipline groups that reflects current Institute wide initiatives, 2) to provide an introduction to help prepare SMArchS students to understand the distinct perspective of the different SMArchS discipline groups and to engage with interdisciplinary thinking, research and innovation that is characteristic of MIT's culture, and 3) to provide a forum for debate and discussion in which the SMArchS cohort can explore, develop and share ideas that can form a basis for their future work at MIT.

Outline & Schedule:

The course is designed as a series of student led discussions. The first two weeks will focus on presentations from 1st year SMArchS students, introducing your background/interests/agendas to your peers. The remainder of the class will be 2nd year SMArchS and PhD student presentations on their thesis topics and/or research conducted throughout their time at MIT. Each week, we will have different Architecture faculty join our presentations and discussions to offer their disciplinary perspective and give a chance for you to interact more substantially with faculty. Both of the two modules will help introduce you to fellow classmates, emphasize disciplinary research topics emerging across MIT including their differences and overlaps as well as some of MIT's culture and broader initiatives. Throughout the course you are expected to attend all of the classes and thoroughly participate and engage in discussion with the other presenters.

Intro Presentations:

During the first weeks of class you will be expected to give a 5-minute introductory presentation. These will be quick presentations to introduce your classmates to who you are, what your background is and what you are interested in. Everyone should create a simple presentation with visuals that presents your past work. This can be your former thesis project, something from your portfolio or something that you've done recently that you think exemplifies your background. You should also describe your interests and goals for MIT and anything else that you think is important to highlight your unique perspective.

Assignment:

The remainder of the class will be focused on 2nd year SMArchS student presentations. The first part of your assignment is to simply attend every class, listen to the presentations and give insightful comments/questions to create an engaging dialogue with your classmates. For the second part of your assignment, four of you will be selected each week to be responsible for preparing written questions/comments/constructive feedback for the presenters. You will need to submit these, and they will be shared with the 2nd year SMArchS to give them valuable feedback on their research.

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4.221 Tentative Schedule:

Week 1 (Sept. 4)

Introductions – Syllabus, Instructor & Students

Week 2 (Sept. 11)

5min. Intro Presentations – Half of the Class

Week 3 (Sept. 18)

5min. Intro Presentations – Half of the Class

Week 4 (Sept. 25)

2nd Year Presentations

Week 5 (Oct. 2)

2nd Year Presentations

Week 6 (Oct. 9)

2nd Year Presentations

Week 7 (Oct. 16)

2nd Year Presentations

Week 8 (Oct. 23)

2nd Year Presentations

Week 9 (Oct. 30)

2nd Year Presentations

Week 10 (Nov. 8)

2nd Year Presentations

Week 11 (Nov. 6)

2nd Year Presentations

Week 12 (Nov. 13)

2nd Year Presentations

Week 13 (Nov. 20)

2nd Year Presentations

Week 14 (Nov. 27)

No Class - Thanksgiving

Week 15 (Dec. 4)

2nd Year Presentations

Week 16 (Dec. 11)

Last Class

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Evaluation Criteria and Grading:

The breakdown for evaluation of the work is as follows: (25%) for student presentations, (25%) for the assignment and (50%) for class participation. The two main components of the class are: 1. Verbal and visual presentation: How clearly are students presenting visually/verbally and creating a dialogue with the rest of the class and 2. Participation in Discussions: How actively and how constructively are students involved in class discussions? Students are to attend all scheduled classes and participate fully in the discussions. Each student will stimulate an intelligent exchange around salient points based on the speaker's work via clearly articulated reflections and questions related to the theme.

Attendance:

Attendance for the full duration of each class is mandatory. This class is an exceptional learning environment that requires your presence as well as your input. You are allowed one excused absence for the semester. An excused absence is defined as one that was discussed with and approved by the professor at least 24 hours prior to the date of absence, or a family or medical emergency that is confirmed by your physician or a dean in Student Support Services. Absences beyond the three allotted will result in a decrease in your final grade.