

Studio Culture Policy
Graduate School of Architecture & Urban Design
Sam Fox School of Design & Visual Arts
Washington University in St. Louis
As approved by tenured and tenure-track faculty, October 6, 2011
Effective date: January 1, 2012

Introduction

The College and Graduate School of Architecture and Urban Design at Washington University in St. Louis is a design institution; as such, the design studio is fundamental to the curriculum in architecture, landscape architecture and urban design. The design studio offers an education marked by integration and cooperation among myriad disciplines, international cultures, and the infinite trajectories of contemporary design. The design studio provides and encourages many avenues for creative thought, ensuring that the studio is a place of continued innovation, experimentation, and professional preparation. To support this integrated curricular nature in the design studio, the students, faculty, and staff of the College and Graduate School of Architecture and Urban Design will engender a studio culture marked by exploration, production, and critique.

The students and faculty work together to create a studio culture conducive to quality studio output consistent with the standards of the College and Graduate School of Architecture and Urban Design. This quality of work is attained through thorough diligence for the studio requirements, sustained effort, and valuable design engagement with faculty and peers, ultimately yielding clear visual and verbal articulation of studio and project principles. The School strives to create a studio culture that values risk taking and encourages deliberate and compelling questioning of prescribed design and studio beliefs.

Health and Wellness

To cultivate successful projects and efficient design production, the Graduate School promotes a design environment accommodating of healthy living habits. As architecture, landscape architecture, and urban design are social disciplines, healthy living includes not only individual habits with regard to sleep, mental health, and physical well being, but also the promotion of social aspects of community.

Although healthy living refers directly to individual habits of wellness and nutrition, the studio culture benefits from and promotes a community of sustainable stewardship of the studio environment. These communal habits include keeping personal and public work spaces at a reasonable level of cleanliness, sustainable material practices through the use of provided recycling and reuse programs, and a respect for others' property, products, work spaces, and work habits. Individual work habits, methods, and production should not inhibit other student's design process, encroach on their production, or interfere

with the use of studio space for dialogue and critique. The school continues to support sustainable material use and ideas for extending those practices.

Time Management

Acknowledging that the students and faculty of the Graduate School wish to attain a level of design achievement consistent with or above comparable institutions, the work load assigned by the faculty, given appropriate diligence and time management, will allow for a balance of quality studio output and healthy living habits. Schedules for studio reviews will be communicated in reasonable advance to allow students sufficient preparation while maintaining a healthy lifestyle.

The Graduate School is fortunate to have faculty that is dedicated to offering additional instructional time with students; however, it is also understood that these hours are not required for the students or faculty. Additional instructional time outside of studio should be agreed upon between students and faculty. A student's absence from additional instruction hours has no direct detriment to that student's project or evaluation.

Critical Discourse and Communication

In response to sustained effort and continued design and process development, students can expect ongoing, iterative, and timely dialogue, critique, and evaluation of their work, including written final evaluations. The Graduate School encourages supportive peer engagement and critique in supplement to formal and informal evaluation and dialogue with studio instructors, visiting critics, and professionals. The studio should be an arena for the sharing and exploration of ideas and methods which are tempered and guided with dialogue amongst instructors, students, and critics. The nature of all critique and dialogue will focus on student's work and process and never on the character of the students themselves. Only respectful language and communication in all situations amongst students, faculty, and staff is acceptable.

Integrity

The School emphatically seeks to foster an environment for community and creative work and demands this work be generated with the highest level of integrity. The University's policies and commonly understood principles with regard to academic integrity are in application in all design studio work. Although the studio encourages sharing and collaboration for the exploration of ideas or methods, any work produced by another is a breach of academic integrity. Students must complete all elements of their project individually except when designated as a group project by the instructor.

Integrity is not limited to academic honesty and is demanded in all areas of studio culture. The University's grievances procedures for circumstances of discrimination and harassment are published

along with each semester's course listings. The Sam Fox School has an Ombudsman for students to approach in situations in which such circumstances occur. Associate Dean of the Sam Fox School serves in this role for all undergraduate and graduate professional students. The Administration and faculty strive to achieve high levels of accessibility and to provide an administrative model of optimism, attentiveness, fairness, and consistency.

Diversity

The Graduate School is an open and supportive place for students, faculty, and staff of diverse backgrounds. Promotion of cultural understanding and respect with regard to an individual's race, ethnic background, national origin, religious beliefs, political preference, and sexual orientation is not only proper, respectful and University policy, but is in the interest of the global understanding the design studio provides.

Although diversity in the design studio environment includes commonly held aforementioned definitions, it also incorporates diversity in thought and viewpoint. The College and Graduate School, comprised of its faculty, staff, and students, provides a studio culture in which this diversity is celebrated, allowing exposure to the broad spectrum of ideas which are embodied in contemporary design.

Leadership

Personal examples of leadership are necessary to meet the goals of the shared attitudes and values in all areas of the studio culture. The maintenance of studio culture requires efficacy through:

- Activism for informed participation in peer critique and thorough, compelling work
- Maturity in studio discourse and interactions as well as personal choices that effect the quality of the studio product and an one's project
- Integrity in one's personal work and the treatment of others
- Stewardship of communal enterprise and one's personal environment

Rights and Responsibilities

Quality studio work is produced with creativity, iterative response to critique, appropriate time management, and thorough attention to the studio agenda. In response to appropriate studio engagement, students can expect constructive dialogue and critique, promotion of risk taking, and support for compelling questioning of prescribed design and studio beliefs. To ensure an ethical studio environment for all members, respect for individuals and community is expected.

Design studio culture is essential to the production of thorough projects with imaginative vision. Studio is the arena in which a student will coalesce the multiple strands of their professional education.

Stewardship of studio culture, ultimately for the success of a design project, is imperative for a replete education that is the cornerstone of successful professional pursuits.