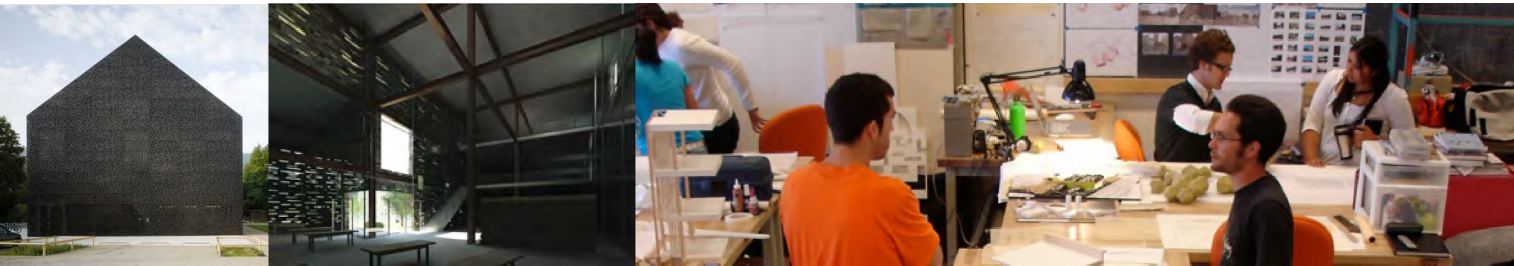


# Prospectus



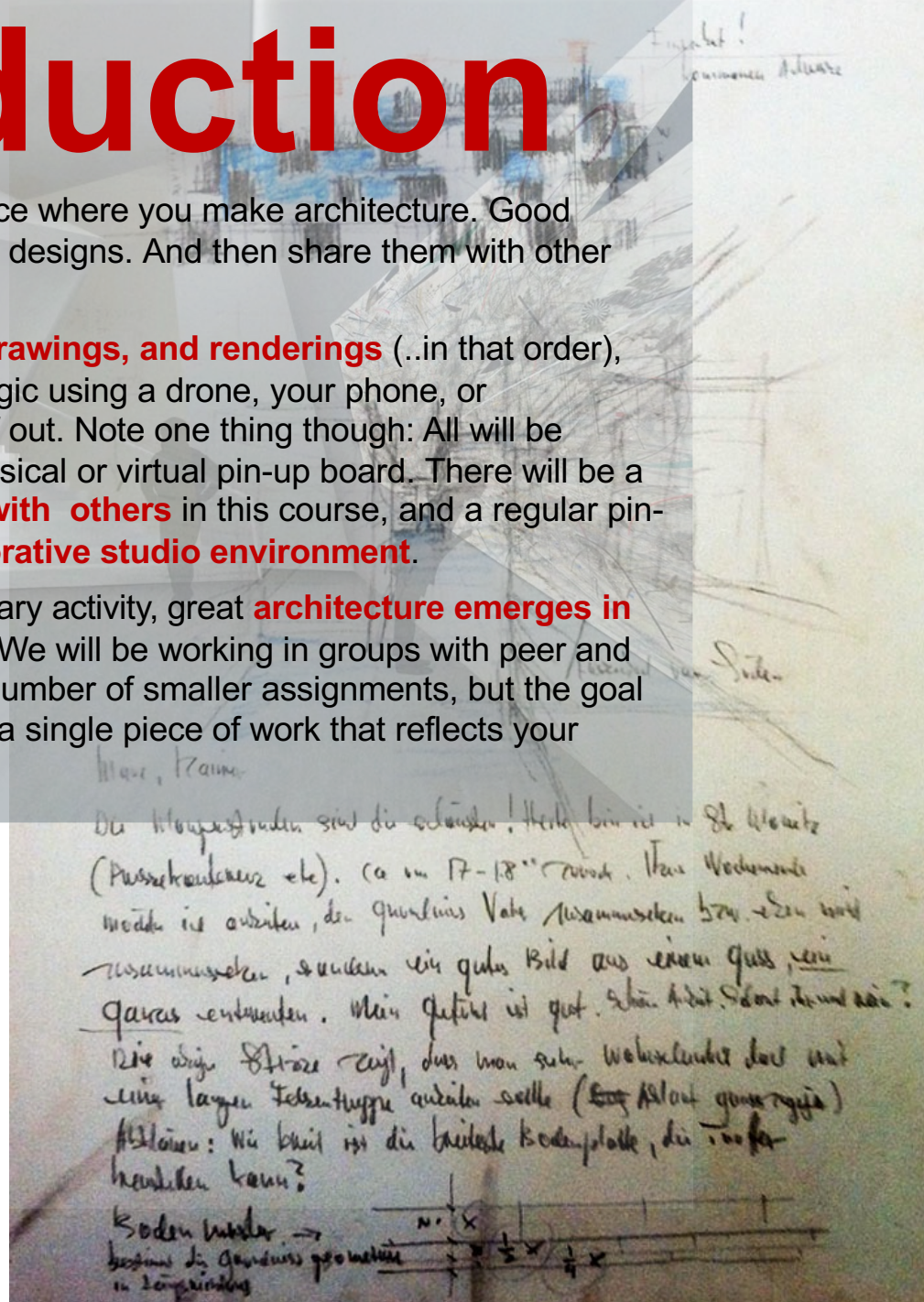
**Thesis Studio 2023 – 2024**  
**Instructor Ansgar Killing**

# Introduction

This course intends to be a place where you make architecture. Good projects. Smart solutions. Cool designs. And then share them with other people.

Much of it will be in **models, drawings, and renderings** (..in that order), but if you want to do more magic using a drone, your phone, or 'Grasshopper', knock yourself out. Note one thing though: All will be displayed and edited on a physical or virtual pin-up board. There will be a strong emphasis on **working with others** in this course, and a regular pin-up routine is key for a **collaborative studio environment**.

While designing is often a solitary activity, great **architecture emerges in the spaces between people**. We will be working in groups with peer and teacher edits. There will be a number of smaller assignments, but the goal is that you will leave here with a single piece of work that reflects your capabilities as a maker.



# Overview



Maybe this is a good moment to talk about the structure of the thesis year. Here is my view:

**Fall Quarter** enables you to engage in your thesis project: You explore topics, acquire skills, produce, get acquainted with your studio, and formulate your thesis through basic artifacts. You will also design and build a fixture for the annual Vellum furniture competition. Did I mention travel...

**Winter Quarter** is rigorous design: No need to hang out at the beach, it is raining or too cold anyway. Various 5<sup>th</sup> year shows and critiques will keep you busy.

**Spring Quarter** is pure production: The best design is worthless if it is not refined and finally communicated in an effective manner.



# Fall

**Vellum:** As a studio, we will explore how design and fabrication connect.

**General Research:** A series of selected readings will inform your quest for a suitable thesis project. Please expect a fair amount of reading, writing, and fast-paced TED talks that distill your passion into a tangible submission to the ...

**5<sup>th</sup> Year Abstract Show:** ...happening some time in Fall

**Thesis Research:** To hit the ground running in Winter, you need to finalize a briefing that defines all needed requirements for your thesis project: Whether you design a house, make a movie, or write a book: Without this roadmap you will get lost.

**Travel Preparation:** Traveling as part of your fifth year experience is a privilege and an opportunity. It is expected that you actively participate in preparing for the trip through research and organization.



# Winter

**Step Assignments:** Throughout the quarter, you will work on weekly assignments that are due at the beginning of class on Friday. The assignments are accessible on Canvas and can - to some extent - be sequenced based on your individual project and preference. Milestone presentations ensure that you stay on track for your project.

**Section Show:** At some point, you will participate in another 5<sup>th</sup>-year show case, exploring a cross-sectional aspect of your design proposal. This is a great opportunity to examine where your project stands in comparison to your peer group.

**Thesis Book** is great way to explore, document, and trace your thesis progress.

**Qualifying Review:** At the end of Winter Quarter, there is a qualifying review where to entire fifth year faculty review all 160 students. What can I say? It is demanding. You better deliver...



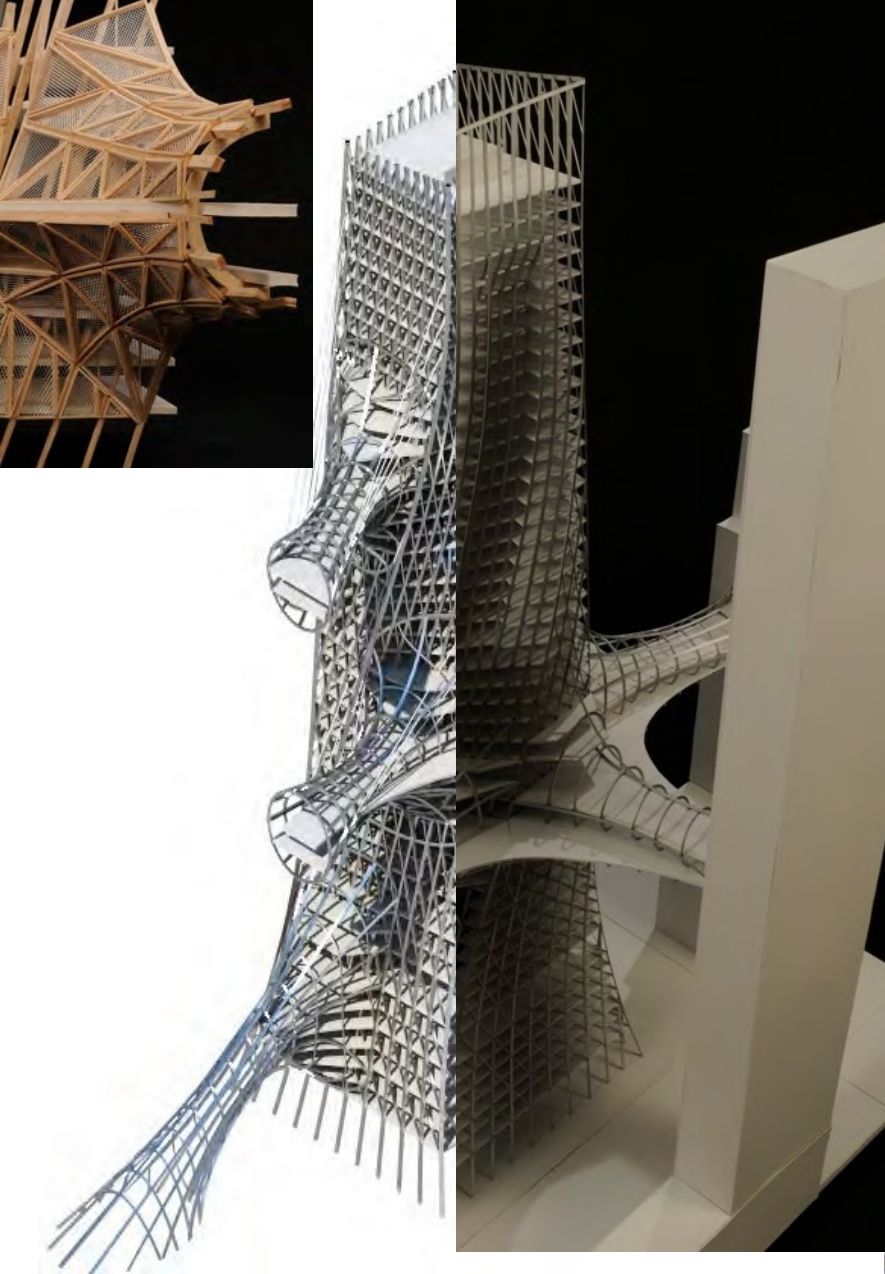
# Spring

**Detail Show:** You will focus on key element of your design. That one thing in your design, the success of which make your project fail or prevail. Rubber to road type of thing.

**Studio Show Preparation:** Each studio does a show. As a studio we will brainstorm, design, build, and install the show.

**Thesis Book:** Finalize and print your book in time for ...

**Formal Review:** In final week of Spring Quarter, formal reviews will be held over multiple days. Expect that each project get the undivided attention of external and internal critics.



# Showtime

Presenting your work is essential. It is expected that you participate in selecting, designing, and producing and show concept that supports both end-of-the-year show events in an **attractive, creative, and yet sustainable** way. Usually, you will spend around \$75 for your display and prints.



**Studio Show:** Around 8<sup>th</sup> week of Spring Quarter, there is a studio show, usually in a gallery space on Campus or – if you are up for it – at a downtown venue. Good time to reflect on both, your work and the group that you spent most of your time with over the past 9 months.

**Chumash Show:** Memorial Day weekend brings all 5<sup>th</sup> year projects together in a remarkable show case in the University's largest exhibition space – the Chumash Auditorium. The logistics of this event are daunting, but well worth the pride that your parents will sense when they see your projects.





# Studio

I prefer an interactive studio environment, and will encourage (...and **enforce**) **discussions about your projects**. Through the pandemic we learned that virtual work can be an alternative if needed, but it is not a substitute for studio. “I am working from home, because that works better for me” is not going to fly. Are you going to tell this your employer down the road?

Throughout the week, you and the instructor will map out the way forward in **individual desk critiques**. On Fridays, the class will review each project in a timed **power critique**. Pinky-promise: Takes only 2 minutes per project.

At three **milestones** throughout each quarter, you will present and defend your design choices to a greater audience. Usually, this is the time where you receive some sort of evaluation that later compiles into your grade.

Respective assignments, rubrics, and resulting grades are accessible on **Canvas**, so there won't be any surprises at the end of the quarter or year.



# More Info on Studio

For this section, we are using the words of a great writer and teacher, David Carr:

**“Grading:** 30% project | 30% collaboration, based on assessment of your comments on others’ work | 20% class participation and demonstrated familiarity with the assigned reading | 20% smaller assignments. I grade based on where you start and where you end. Don’t work on me for a better grade — work on your work and making the work of those around you better. Show industriousness and seriousness and produce surpassing work if you want an exceptional grade.

**Personal Standards:** Don’t raise your hand in class. This isn’t Montessori, I expect people to speak up when they like, but don’t speak over anyone. Respect the opinions of others.

This is an intense immersion on the waterfront of Architecture. If you don’t show up for class, you will flounder. If you show up late or unprepared, you will stick out in unpleasant ways. If you aren’t putting effort into your work, I will suggest that you might be more comfortable elsewhere. If you text or email during class, I will ignore you as you ignore me. It won’t go well. I expect you to behave as an adult and will treat you like one. I don’t want to parent you — I want to teach you.

**Excuses:** Don’t make them—while a spoken-word performance might explain everything, it will excuse nothing. The assignments for each week are due by start of class without exception unless specific arrangements have been made based on an exceptional circumstance.

If you truly have a personal or family emergency, your welfare comes first. But nothing short of that will have any traction with me. If you are having trouble understanding expectations or assignments or instruction, please speak up. I care a lot about not leaving anybody behind.”



# Field trips

...are an important way to perceive and explore architecture and its cultural context. You cannot see this in magazines or on Google. We will walk about 20,000 steps a day and use public transportation on site.

If you want to prepare, find a job for the summer break, earn lots of money (trip cost will be somewhere around **\$1,800 and \$1,900**) and **get a passport**. If you are an international student, please confirm visa requirements by contacting the consulates of the trip destination countries (see below).

The international office at Cal Poly requires that any application for an international field trip is submitted 150 to 180 days prior to the start of the filed trip. At this point, I make a proposal for a **one-week field trip to Northern Italy in Fall Quarter**. I and will submit a respective application to meet international office timelines.

A **short, in-State trip in Spring** could keep your excitement up when your motivation hits 'recession'. If you want that, you need to help prepare it.



# So this is me... Ansgar

I am the guy who holds his head. This picture tells you a lot about me:

The picture was taken when I was principal in an architectural firm back in Germany with a lot of responsibility and a lot to worry about, but also with exciting projects.

What does this picture tell you about me?

(1) I don't have a lot of hair and I like to wear white T-shirts.

(2) Look at the wall behind me: I really like (...and demand) **physical models**.

(3) Look again: See the material sample? You need to **get specific**. Just call it a 'Screen' won't do.

(4) Noticed the binder in the front? This binder contains **detailing** for a single project. You need to prove that what you design is actually doable.

(5) Finally: Imagine how desperate I would appear if there wouldn't be a second person in the picture: **Exchange, Teamwork, and Feedback** are crucial.





Questions? Don't hesitate:  
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