Architecture, N.T.S.

“And when I hold the ruler against the table, do I always measure the table, might I not sometimes be checking the ruler?”
– Ludwig Wittgenstein

Studio Position

Few topics seem more basic than the use and deployment of scale in architecture. Scale implies a translation between things and in architecture scale compares a building and its representation, a part and a whole, a figure and a boundary, a person and an object, or a system of measurement and a real distance. There are some scales that are common in

architecture, such as the use of standard drawing scales or standard building stock, but any specified scale is arbitrary; its usefulness occurs through the ability to compare things through a measured system. This studio begins from the idea that scale is inherent to architecture, yet its practice is arbitrary and can therefore be reconsidered.

Our work exists to scale, meaning that a drawing or a model is an abstraction of something that comes later, most often at a bigger size. Architectural representations like plans and sections require this clear relationship, otherwise they don’t make sense and therefore can’t be considered a plan or a section. Going further, architecture has developed a set of standards when it comes to drawing. We might consider these standards to be shared practices in the field.

Scaled relationships are also central to architectural composition. It is thought that proportions, ratios, and grids are scaling techniques that tie an architect’s composition to a broader disciplinary discourse. The part to whole relationship of form can suggest harmony with, distance from, or even indifference to the world at large. We will consider scaling techniques as the central site of an architect’s intention.

This studio will form a contingent understanding of scale as both a shared practice and as a site of intention. It takes as its premise architecture’s stable relationship to its size. Although architecture cannot escape the physical dimensions that it inhabits, it can undermine the stable reading usually provided by its actual size. That will be our goal. Each student will determine a technique for confusing the scale of architecture, essentially creating an architecture that is not to scale.

We will propose four architectural domains in which scale marks architecture: its representations, its form, its construction, and its ornamentation. In other words, we will ask “How is it described?”, “How is it organized?”, “How is it made?”, and “What does it look like?”. Each question will preface how a part is related to a whole to understand the governing rules that determine scale, until a mastery of all four synthesize towards a productive misreading of scale.

**Studio Organization**

The studio will be organized around three parts: precedent analysis, design technique, and implementation, and will be complemented by a series of readings written on the topic of scale in architecture. The studio will work through the projects one issue at a time, developing a specific research agenda common to all students.

**Analysis**

Our semester will begin by analyzing a set of architectural precedents for their scaled relationships. We will focus on four domains of scale: representation, form, construction, and ornamentation through the practice of diagramming. Our diagrams will be the basis for creating a scaled instrument.

**Design Technique: Same Rooms**

We will apply our research on the four domains of scale with the introduction of the first project. Students will design a pair of rooms that describe a contrasting set of
scaled relationships. The coherence and meeting of the two rooms will be of utmost importance. Students will develop a set of design techniques through precise drawings and modeling, including 1:1 scaled representations of a detail.

**Implementation: Same Types**

The latter half of the semester will propose the idea that architecture doesn’t need to be scaled to program, site, or use, but instead should be scaled to its representation: to images that float around. Each student will develop three buildings, at different sizes, with the same form and aesthetic marks of scale. Their representations will be drawn at the same size, focusing a discussion on the sameness of all three buildings, and therefore, the inherent differences that their sizes cause. By making things more and more similar, we can then tell them apart.

**A Reading List**


**Deadlines and Attendance**

Students who miss deadlines due to valid and documented extenuating
circumstances may submit the required work at a date agreed upon with the instructor. There are five situations which constitute an “excused absence” from the class meeting time. They are:

1. **Personal illness**: Students who are too ill or injured to participate in class must provide written documentation from a physician stating that the student cannot participate in class.

2. **Death of a member of the student’s immediate family**: Students who have missed class due to a death in the family must provide documentation of the death (death certificate, obituary, etc.).

3. **Military of government duty**: Please notify the instructor prior to service.

4. **University/KSA sanctioned events**: Students who will be participating in University/KSA sanctioned events must provide the instructor with a copy of the scheduled events and those classes of which will be missed.

5. **Major religious holiday**: Students who will be observing a religious holiday must provide date/event written notification to the instructor within the first two weeks of the semester.

It is expected that work will be finished and pinned up by the beginning of every studio. Any work not ready to be discussed at the beginning of class will be considered late. Unexcused late projects will not be accepted, incomplete projects will be evaluated in relation to their degree of completion, and a student is present only if he or she displays sufficient preparation for the course to the instructor. A student’s grade will drop one letter grade after the second and third unexcused absences; and a student with four unexcused absences can be immediately dismissed and given an “E”.

**Studio Format**

Studio meetings will generally be of two types: collective pin-ups and smaller group discussions. Individual desk critiques may happen occasionally; when they do they will typically be at the end of a project. Students should be prepared to be in studio for the entirety of class time and must be ready to present at the beginning of class. Studios are based upon ongoing research. Successful completion of assignments and requirements are subject to the discoveries of previous work. All communication with the studio instructor should be carefully considered, as it will be critical to evolving directions and assignments. Students must check their university email daily.

**Studio Evaluation**

Studio work is both individual and collective. Criteria of evaluation include not only individual design excellence, but also a student’s contributions to the studio through collective research, documentation and discussions. Grading is based on a comparison with other students in the course, with students who have taken the course previously, and
with the instructors' expectations relative to the objectives of the course. Projects are reviewed by a jury including instructors from other courses, other academic institutions, and architectural firms. For an "A", the student must satisfy the course objectives excellently; for a "B", in an above average manner; for a "C" in an average manner; for a "D" in the lowest acceptable manner; and an "F" denotes that the student has not satisfied the course objectives.

**Studio Behavior**

Students must work in the studio because of the collaborative nature of research and the shared development of techniques. Students are responsible for keeping their areas clean, their floors free from obstructions, and all studio furniture in good condition and original location. All presentation materials must be removed from review spaces following reviews and all studio materials must be removed from the building at the close of every semester. Students may, however, store material in their credenzas over winter break. Studios are inspected on the last day of final exams – negligent students are subject to grade withholding and maintenance costs.

Knowlton School Lecture Series:
Students are required to attend the Lecture Series. The Series is an invaluable source of information that contributes to a well-rounded education.

Documentation
Students must provide project documentation as requested by the instructors of the course. Failure to provide this information by the deadline will result in a grade of “incomplete” and could result in a drop in grade.