

LARCH 4960: Urbanism: At The Pool

Instructor name: Katherine Bennett & Jake Boswell
Year and term: Autumn 14
Meeting time: MWF 1:50-6:15
Meeting location: KN 175 / Larch Studio

COURSE INFORMATION

DESCRIPTION

We shit in it and we play in it. We submerge ourselves in it; yet we know that to do so for long invites certain death. Water is among the most elemental properties of life as we know it. Water comprises over 80% of our bodies. We are, quite literally, made of it. Yet our relationship with water is ambivalent. We fear its destructive power and yet we utilize it in nearly every aspect of our daily lives.

This course will explore our relationship with water through a study of urban waters and the role that water plays in the physical, experiential, and semiotic life of the city -- eventually settling on the public pool as the site of typological innovation and design. The studio is divided into five cumulative projects: a material exploration of water and its properties, an exploration of water based mechanisms, site research, site selection, and design. All projects will draw on biological, material, cultural and typological research to generate design proposals that respond to the question and nature of water in relation to the contemporary city.

GOALS

By the end of this course, you should be able to:

- Research, analyze and describe the social and environmental dynamics of public baths, pools, and other aquatic facilities.
- Identify biodiverse populations of these landscapes and their habitat requirements.
- Integrate social and environmental contexts into site-specific documentation, analysis and design.
- Address key parameters of site systems design, including different modes of circulation, energy and material flows, relationships between various species of populations, and zoning, codes and public policies.
- Analyse the complex relationship between site and infrastructure; and synthesize the historic and contemporary role of infrastructure in the production of Urbanism.
- Use a variety of representational methods to explore, develop and communicate design concepts.

FORMAT

Each week we will read and discuss assigned readings in class. The readings have been selected to assist your design process and to round out your intellectual background regarding our cultural, physical and material relationship with water. Your participation in reading discussions will factor into your participation grade (see Evaluation). We hope you enjoy these readings and find them helpful in your work.

Mondays of most weeks, we'll discuss the readings in class. Readings will be assigned the Monday fore the discussion to give students enough time to read and prepare for discussion. Two students discussants will lead the discussion each week, presenting and questioning or arguing ideas drawn from the week's reading. Discussants should meet before the discussion to prepare notes and questions to lead the conversation.