PAVILION ATLAS: CHALLENGING THE LIMITS OF THE ARCHITECTURE THROUGH DESIGN
'An international architectural design competition'

COURSE SYLLABUS

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COURSE DESCRIPTION

In this design studio, students will engage with the conceptual framework of **Pavilion Atlas 2026, an international architecture competition** that explores how a pavilion can express the essence of a place. Rather than designing a conventional building, students are asked to create a **conceptually strong and contextually sensitive pavilion** that represents a chosen country and narrates its cultural, environmental, social, or political identity through spatial form. Architecture has the capacity to act as a catalyst for change, transcending temporal boundaries and bridging diverse cultures. Within this framework, the studio explores architectural design as a radical tool for building many forms of symbiosis. As future architects, students are encouraged to critically reflect on how their designs may shape the social fabric of a place. **The proposed spaces should function as platforms for cultural exchange, learning, and collective production, fostering positive interaction and mutual understanding among different groups.**

Within the scope of the studio, students are also encouraged **to explore the relational capacity of architectural design and its connections with multiple urban, cultural, environmental, and social issues. T**he pavilion is approached not merely as an isolated object, but as an architectural device capable of engaging with the problems of cities and communities.** Through multi-scalar thinking, students should be able to develop proposals that address these issues by establishing spatial, symbolic, and programmatic relationships between architecture and its broader context. In this sense, the pavilion becomes a means of proposing architectural responses to contemporary urban and societal challenges. This studio also treats **architectural design competitions as a cultural and professional practice**, aiming to familiarize students with competition culture as a significant mode of architectural production and critical experimentation.

A pavilion is understood as a concentrated architectural idea: temporary in nature, yet powerful in meaning. Students will explore how architecture can communicate values, memory, atmosphere, and narratives without relying on literal symbols or clichés. The project encourages critical interpretations of place and culture and translates these readings into architectural form, space, and experience. **The outcome of the studio is expected to be a comprehensive architectural product:** a pavilion proposal

that introduces **a new architectural idea, offers spatial and tectonic resolutions, and proposes a meaningful response to a contextual or urban condition.** The project must therefore be conceptually strong, closely related to its context, and resolved across multiple scales, from urban relationships to architectural form and spatial articulation, resulting in a coherent and well-developed architectural proposal.

There is no fixed site for the pavilion. Students may choose a real or speculative setting that strengthens their concept. The pavilion may be imagined in an urban, rural, natural, or abstract context. The main focus is on developing a strong conceptual narrative and expressing it clearly through architectural representation.

The process will be supported by readings, lectures, in-class exercises, juries, site visits, and discussions. Students are expected to document their design process through sketches, diagrams, models, and written reflections in a logbook. **Your logbooks will be an inseparable instrument for your design process and an important accompaniment to the weekly critiques**.

KEY WORDS

Conceptual Design, Place-Making, Architectural Narrative, Representation of Place, Pavilion Architecture, Spatial Storytelling, Cultural Interpretation, Urban Continuity

TERM PROJECT

The notion of 'pavilion atlas' is key in your design process. You will be tasked with designing spaces that serve as a catalyst for change, transcending time and bridging diverse cultures. Our focus will be on how architecture can help to reform a dialogue of memory and culture, creating spaces that reflect and respond to the social and cultural complexities of the community. **In this context, students are expected to develop architectural scenarios that activate the restorative, generative, and transformative capacities of architecture.** The spaces they create should function **as platforms for cultural exchange, learning, and collective production, fostering positive interaction and mutual understanding among different social groups.**

SPATIAL REQUIREMENTS

- Within the scope of the term project, students are expected **to design a pavilion as an architectural cure** for specific contexts.
- Your pavilion designs must serve as **a communal building** to fulfill the needs of socializing, learning, and rehabilitation that challenge the limits of the architectural design.
- It is also aimed at designing **an architectural solution** for the **defined problems** of the **chosen context.**

ARCHITECTURAL PROGRAM

The architectural program will be produced by the students according to their design approaches. Students are expected to define a basic architectural program for the pavilion, including exhibition, collective, and transitional spaces, supported by an additional optional function related to the narrative of the selected country.

Key Spaces to Include (Tentative- tbd according to the concepts of design):
Students are expected to structure their pavilion proposals around the following spatial components: (it is acceptable to offer a different architectural program according to changing needs)

• Exhibition / Display Space
(the primary space for conveying cultural, historical, or conceptual narratives)

• Collective Space / Gathering Area
(a space for interaction, encounter, and public use)

• Threshold / Transition Space
(an intermediate space mediating between interior and exterior, and between public and semi-public realms)

• Optional Program (one required):
– workshop
– small library/archive
– performance space
– contemplation space
– educational space

CLASS	CLOSED SPACE	SEMI OPEN SPACE	OPEN SPACE
202	2.000 – 3.000 m² + %20 circulation & service	1.000 – 2.000 m²	Tbd according to context and concept
302	5.000 – 5.000 m² + %20 circulation & service	1.500 – 3.000 m²	Tbd according to context and concept

*sqm's are flexible, small changes according to individual student concepts are acceptable.

TECHNICAL CHALLENGES

Students are expected to propose a clear structural and material logic for their pavilion design. While the project remains conceptual, the architectural proposal should demonstrate an awareness of construction principles, materiality, and spatial articulation. The pavilion should be conceived as an architectural product that is buildable in spirit, even if speculative in form.

For 3rd grade students, it is required to submit 1/5 and 1/20 structural details. They are also expected to produce design solutions in urban scale.

All students are cordially encouraged to break the conventional ways of designing and avoid producing traditional cellular typologies; the main aim is to formulate alternative models by considering context-based (i.e., climate, topography, etc.) and user-specific solutions (i.e., accessibility).

METHOD OF LEARNING

- ARCH 202-302 are applied courses in the form of a studio. The studio is the essential environment where students come together with the instructors to discuss and develop their term projects through class discourses, **panel or table critiques, in-class assignments, occasional site visits, and** individual working hours based on learning by doing understanding.
- The course might include a **teamwork** assignment during the semester.
- First 6 weeks of the course all the design critiques will be given on **hand drawings and sketches**!!

COURSE OUTCOMES

1. The student can define a place with the help of tangible and intangible elements and concepts and interpret a context through cultural, environmental, and conceptual readings.

2. The student can be able to formulate a clear design concept and translate it into architectural space.

3. The student can integrate information from different scales in the design and offer a holistic approach to an ill-defined design problem.

4. The student can analyze and interpret a given program of requirements, the location, and the surrounding landscape. The student shows awareness of the value of this interpretation for the design and offers unique, flexible solutions that have future potential.

5. The student can document the design process in architectural signatures, sketches, and models.

ASSESSMENT

Assignment	Weight (%)
Warm Up Assignment	must
Assignment 01: Site Analysis	must
Assignment 02: Case Study	must
Logbook A3 notebook + (attendance)	10
Midterm Jury	25
Pre-Jury	15
Final-Jury	50

ATTENDANCE*

* There is a total of 15 weeks (120 hours) of class for this course. 3 missing lectures will be counted as NA and will result in **failing** the course.

* Each lecture has 2 theory hours and 6 application hours. In total there are 30 hours of theory and 90 hours of application. If the student misses more than % 30 of the theory hours (9 hours) or more than % 20 of the application hours (18 hours) they will **fail.**

* Missing any of the juries (midterm – prejury – final) will result in **failing.**

TIME PLAN*

Week Nr.	Date	Program
ASSIGNMENT 01 & ASSIGNMENT 02		
1	09/02/2026	Introduction
2	16/02/2026	**Given: Warm Up Assignment** **Assignment 01 - Case Study Research**
3	23/02/2026	Presentations of Case Study Research & Warm Up Assignment **Given: Assignment 02 - Conceptualand Contextual Minings**
4	02/03/2026	Presentations of Conceptual and Contextual Minings
5	09/03/2026	Discussions of Early Design Decisions
6	16/03/2026	Discussions of Early Design Decisions & Spatial Organization
7	23/03/2026	Discussions of Spatial Organization, Plan – Section Drawings
8/9	date tba	**Midterm Jury:** **Site Analysis & Conceptual Design & Floor Plans – Sections**
FINAL ASSIGNMENT		
10	13/04/2026	Spatial Development
11	20/04/2026	Eid - Holiday
12	27/04/2026	Final Design Critiques
13	04/05/2026	**Pre-Jury:** **Spatial Organization & Drawing Quality**
14	11/05/2026	Discussions of Plans/Sections-Elevations
15	18/05/2026	Discussions of Poster & 3D Model Quality
	date tba	**Final Jury:** **Pavilion Atlas** Submission of Logbooks

*This is the core syllabus. There might be revisions during the semester!

READING LIST*

- Akcan, E. (2008). Reading "The Generic City": Retroactive Manifestos for Global Cities of the Twenty-First Century. Perspecta, 41, 144-152. Retrieved from http://www.jstor.org/stable/40482324
- De Certeau, M., 1984. The Practice of Everyday Life. Berkeley: University of California Press.
- Deleuze, G., & Guattari, F. (1988). A thousand plateaus: Capitalism and schizophrenia. Bloomsbury Publishing.
- Heidegger, M. (1996). Building Dwelling Thinking.
- Farrelly, L. (2007). *The Fundamentals of Architecture*. AVA Academia.
- Lefebvre, H. (1991). The production of space. In The production of space. https://doi.org/10.4324/9780203132357-14
- Lynch, K. (1960). *The image of the city*. MIT Press.
- Norberg-Schulz, C. (1996). *Genius loci: Towards a phenomenology of Architecture*. Rizzoli.
- Peter Lang, W. M. (2003). Superstudio: Life without Objects. Milano: Skira.
- Rasmussen, S. E. (1959). Experiencing Architecture. Cambridge: The MIT Press.
- Zumthor, P. (2006). *Peter Zumthor - atmospheres architectural environments - surrounding objects*. Birkhäuser.

The PDFs of the readings are available upon request