ARCHITECTURE
CUHK
This, the fourth notebook, describes the current standing of the programme: its form – intentions, premises, composition, and structure – as well as its content – teaching, research, and communication.

The form of the programme – its underlying structure of primary parts, their balance, and their relationships – has remained essentially constant since its inception. It has guided the balanced development of teaching as well as research, and has provided a framework for the establishment of the direction and strategic intentions and priorities.
Architecture is a collective project. In a way it is like theatre, where much about the individual role is already defined by the play. This makes the role of the individual the more critical. In architecture the city is the play – and the stage. It is the world in the image of human beings in its past and its future in an eternal present. It is the context for the study of architecture as nature is the context for the study of natural science.
A school is not a building; it is a way of thought. The place of study is not one particular building; it is the city and the world at large.
The programme deals with one subject: architecture. It is not merely a collection of courses; it is a projection of architecture onto an academic plane. It is not intended to cover or exhaust the subject; it provides one mode of access into it, like a map to a landscape.
BSSc (AS)
Architectural studies

MArch
Architecture

PGDip
Sustainable and environmental design

MSc
Sustainable and environmental design

MPhil

PhD
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**curriculum**
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In architecture there is little to teach and much to learn. The purpose of teaching is to prepare and inspire the process of learning.

Teaching

Teaching and learning are mutually complementary and inseparable in practice, even in the specifically taught curriculum consisting of design studios, courses, and independent studies.

Studios are organized so that students from all levels participate in them and have the opportunity to work together.

Courses are offered on specific subjects in humanities, technology, design, and professional practice. These are intended both to inform the work in the studios and to broaden the appreciation of the nature and structure of knowledge in general.

Independent studies are occasions available for exercise of initiative and skill in studying and cultivating habits of purposeful yet free exercise of the innate desire for discovery and design.
Research and discovery are both an attitude towards any study, and a specific activity. They are essential to the intellectual vitality of the Department. Research is conducted individually as well as in a group effort in research units.

- Design studios
- Architectural projects
- Architectural history
- Computation and simulation
- Community participation
- Environmental and sustainable design

Communication

Teaching and research have two parts: content and operation. The operational aspect of both is communication. All aspects of the department such as academic or administrative as well its relationship with other bodies are regarded as part of this operational idea.

Education is not about information. The basic instrument of communication in the department is the architecture department information system.

It deals with all aspects of the programme, including administration, and provides for open access and exchange in one co-ordinated source.

It contains all information related to the work and the operation of the department, course material, archival information, as well as department operational structure and guidelines.

- Notebook
- Department information system
- cuhk architecture monographs
The studios are central to the culture of architectural education as public squares are to the culture of cities or laboratories to the culture of scientific education. They host the chaos which allows free play of ideas in search of ordered thought, design, and the exercise of imagination in the discovery and reconstruction of the field of architecture, and through it the development and formation of oneself in the process of education.

**Primary studios**

The studios are centered around study and research into the primal imperatives in the process of design and formation of architecture. Each term a studio project is followed by a school project.

- Habitation
- Urbanization
- Tectonics
- Technics
**Studio projects**

Studio projects are occasions for study and exercise based on the studio as “positions,” not as dogma.

The scope of the projects varies to suit the particular approach and pedagogical strategy of the studio. They provide the possibility of exercises which are particularly suited to the issues in the studio. Beyond the daily and immediate educational objectives, the studies and their results make a cumulative contribution to an implicit discourse between different positions in architecture.

However, in all studios the exercises remain as design exercises within the scope of architecture.

**School projects**

School projects are formulated independently of the studio positions and are occasions for the application of particular design positions to general designs. As in other parts of the programme they are not only statements of “design projects,” but are themselves a way of seeing and interpreting building types.

At the simplest level, three kinds of places seem to define the human world: place of work, place of gathering, and place of solitude. They are the necessary elements of any complete human environment: the house, the school, the factory, the temple.
“Today, … our architecture has passed from the cave to the garden, from the monument to the dwelling house. But in throwing open our buildings to the daylight and the outdoors, we will forget, at our peril, the co-ordinate need for quiet, for darkness, for inner privacy, for retreat. The cloister in both its public and private form is a constant element in the life of men in cities. Without formal opportunities for isolation and contemplation, opportunities that require enclosed space free from prying eyes and extraneous stimuli and secular interruptions, even the most externalised and extroverted life must eventually suffer. The home without such cells is but a barracks: the city that does not possess them is but a camp. In the medieval city the spirit had organised shelters and accepted forms of escape from worldly importunity. Today, the degradation of the inner life is symbolised by the fact that the only place sacred from interruption is the private toilet.”

Lewis Mumford
Culture of cities

Habitation begins as the routines of life take place and develop significant form. The form becomes significant as its ambiance, its conditions of light, its geometry, its relationship to other forms embody symbolic significance. It is not merely a response to immediate functions but also the embodiment of myths, customs, and beliefs. The distance between two persons in conversation, the seating arrangement around a room or a table, the place of entry into a room, the shape of gathering around an event, a procession. These are captured in art, folklore, literature, and customs in various cultures, and have given timeless significance to art, literature, and architecture. They enable a work of architecture to capture the entire history and culture of a community – the past, present, and future – in a single act.
“Every great event has its geographical epicenter – that of the American Revolution was the few city blocks around Carpenters’ and Independence Halls in Philadelphia; that of the great French Revolution was the Place de la Bastille; that of the Revolution of 1848 was the Luxembourg Gardens.”

John Kenneth Galbraith
The age of uncertainty

Land form and urban fabric

The studio studies the shaping influence of factors beyond the individual building. Although architecture may seem traditionally to have been concerned with individual monuments – the ground cover which makes the fabric of the city – the relationships, traditions, and common needs that shape the ground cover influence the city as a whole and provide a formal context for the design of each part. The context in turn evolves with the building of each building. It in a way one is designing the city with the design of each building. Each building is a variation of the timeless architectural duality of “the city and the house.”
“Paper, I understand, was invented by the Chinese, but Western paper is to us no more than something to be used, while the texture of Chinese paper and Japanese paper gives us a certain feeling of warmth, of calm and repose. Even the same white could as well be one color for Western paper and another for our own. Western paper turns away the light, while our paper seems to take it in, to envelop it gently, like the soft surface of a first snowfall. It gives off no sound when crumpled or folded, it is quiet and pliant to the touch as the leaf of a tree.”

Jun’ichiro Tanizaki
In praise of shadows

Tectonics is a manifestation in architecture of the esthetic imperative as part of human nature. It attends to the potential of building for qualities inherent in the material, economy in their use, potential for elegance in resolution in their juxtaposition, and the total compositional quality of form. It goes beyond necessity and responds to a sensibility of a higher order as mastery and skill.

It relates to the sensibility that has characterized all fine works of architecture. It has been the quality of all work of architecture.

The curvature in the entablature of the Parthenon, the joints between stones at Machu Picchu, the composition of windows in the chapel at Ronchamp, are beyond functional necessity.
“One of the most obvious problems in building the dome of Santa Maria del Fiore was how to transport heavy building materials such as sandstone beams and slabs of marble several hundred feet above the ground and then place them into position with the accuracy demanded by Filippo’s design. The sandstone beam weighed some 1,700 pounds each, and hundreds of them needed to be raised on to the cupola. To solve this problem Filippo was compelled to imagine ‘some unheard-of machine’ to move and carry tremendous weights to incredible heights. The hoist that he created was to become one of the most celebrated machines of the Renaissance, a device that would be studied and sketched by numerous other architects and engineers, including Leonardo da Vinci.”

Ross King
Brunelleschi’s dome

Materials and means

The studio studies and practices the innovative processes and skills to design buildings, one might say from first principles, based on specific technologies or needs.

Architecture owes much to buildings and works designed outside the architectural tradition. New needs, new technologies, or new environments all have led to examples such as the Crystal Palace, the 19th-century railway arches, the viaducts and bridges. They best illustrate the point of exploration in the technics studio.

The bold and innovative approach to their design is no doubt an integral part of any work. But the power of such works is evident in the ready place they find in many derivative designs that seem to follow from them.
The study of architecture is ultimately the study of works of architecture.

**Principal areas**

The courses are studied at three levels in each of the following four areas:

- Design
- Humanities
- Technology
- Professional practice
Courses deal with four groups of specific topics related to architecture: design, humanities, technology, and professional practice. They are organized in terms of required courses constituting a necessary common foundation for advanced studies; elective courses offering greater depth in selective areas; and research studies dealing in highly specific areas of investigation. The courses constitute a necessary foundation of information as well as develop skills in assimilating the information into knowledge.

Design is the central and defining subject of a school of architecture. It is the specialized extension of the natural human capability and tendency for resolution of complex and diverse issues into forms, ideas, and theories. In architecture the resolution is design as built form.

Humanities explores the world rooted in human imagination; technology, the world rooted in nature.

The role of each is to lead the student to a broad understanding of the cultural context of architecture, and to the understanding of works of architecture in terms of humanities and technology.

Professional practice deals with issues of management, codes of practice, and nature of professional authority and responsibilities of architects in practice.
“In the immediate world, everything is to be discerned, for him who can discern it, and centrally and simply, without either dissection into science, or digestion into art, but with the whole of consciousness, seeking to perceive it as it stands.”

James Agee, Walker Evans

Let us now praise famous men

Design is widely and validly regarded as the core of architectural education. However, it is not limited to the work in studios. It applies to all studies in the programme. It is a way of thinking. It is a habit of mind towards every action as a fusion of knowledge, reason, and esthetic intention. It is an approach to education.

Design pedagogy, if it is not be limited to demonstration and apprenticeship, must involve theory, an operational theory which provides the basis for study, discourse, and development of formulation of thought from experience in matters of process of design, methods and approaches to the study of works of design, design media, and methods.

Courses on design deal with theoretical aspects of design and criticism in architecture, including the process of design, theories of design, and criticism, which also find another form of discourse during the studio projects of the four primary studios.
REQUIRED

Design studios
Graphics and visual studies
Computer-aided architectural design

ELECTIVE

Studies in selected topics
Visual design
Digital design media
Research studies
“The whole cultural world, in all its forms, exists through tradition.”
Edmund Husserl

“All history is modern history.”
Wallace Stevens

Humanities in the broadest sense of the word, as well as arts and social sciences, are important parts of the study of architecture. More specifically, history, theory, and criticism particularly related to architecture are a formal part of the programme. They deal with the history of architecture, the motivation for architecture, the place of architecture in the general human culture, and the structure and content of architecture as a subject in its own right.

It is hoped that the collection of these studies leads to an understanding of a unifying influence behind all results of human efforts at habitation, all works of architecture, yet provides an understanding of the diversity and uniqueness of each work in itself.

The teaching in humanities consists of a number of courses, each one of which deals with architecture in general – the subject in itself – and with a selected aspect of architecture in particular.
REQUIRED

Introduction to architecture

Architectural history and theory
   I General survey
   II Post-renaissance
   III Modern and contemporary

Land and city

Urban design and planning

Architectural theory and criticism

ELECTIVE

Studies in selected topics
   Issues in architectural theory and design

   Periods or works of architecture

   Aspects of Asian architecture

Research studies
"The aim of the architect is ... to infuse into his works something of this order and method which is found in nature. Ancient architects rightly maintained that nature, the greatest of all artists in the invention of forms, was always their model."

Leon Battista Alberti

Ten books on architecture

Buildings are an artificial world within the natural one. To build them requires an understanding of the natural environment as the context of buildings, materials as the substance of buildings, and methods of construction as the means of executing the construction of buildings. Knowledge of these issues and skill in applying them to the design of buildings are the subject of the courses in technology.

They are a means, an approach, to the study of architecture and as such they are studies of technology with reference to buildings and their design. They are studied in constant relationship to all other significant factors that influence the design and within the integrated context of the total building.
REQUIRED

Introduction to building technology

Building technology
   I  Materials and construction
   II Building structure
   III Environmental technology

Building systems integration

Advanced construction

Advanced building services

ELECTIVE

Studies in selected dopics
   Structural design and building structures
   Materials and methods of construction
   Environmental systems and design
   Building performance simulation

Research studies
“In ancient Greece the term architekton originally meant a ‘master carpenter’; building artisans, shipwrights, and temple designers, all of whom worked in wood, were architects. … Vitruvius … tried to dignify architecture, describing it as a learned career in his treatise. The architect alone, he wrote, combined firmness and utility with beauty.”

Mary N. Wods
From craft to profession

Architecture reaches its full complexity in the reality of daily life. Education in a school by necessity deals with selective aspects out of the full scope. It is a prelude to the practice of architecture and it reaches its full promise, pleasure, and challenge in the reality of that practice. The experience, therefore, of applying learning from the school to real-life situations is an essential and necessary extension of architectural education.

There are clearly an infinite number of ways to acquire the experience of such extension of school learning to real situations. The most customary approach is to participate in the practice of architecture by joining architects in their practice.
REQUIRED

Professional practice

Professional practice and management

ELECTIVE

Studies in selected topics of professional practice

Research studies
Places of life

In the face of the infinite variety of particular situations it seems necessary to seek a deep structure in terms of which to understand and act on them. At the same time, it is necessary to recognize the unique quality of every work. Design becomes a fusion of the universal and the particular.

In terms of physical form, architecture exists within a domain defined by two significant forms: the house and the city. In several senses this is the context of every work of architecture. Each work, while unique to its time and place, is also a variation between these two poles: in a sense every form is a house, and is a city.

A house comprises three fundamental places: a place of work, a place of gathering, and a place of solitude. And so do all forms evolving from it.
Live

All places of habitation are places for living. And a place of living must at a basic level provide for all essential routines of habitation. These can be seen in terms of three modes of daily life: gathering, work, and solitude. They are the necessary constituent parts of a dwelling of any size, whether a one-room apartment or an expansive house. The study and design of places of living involves the entire scope of architecture at the most fundamental level. It touches on narrowly defined functions and embodies timeless and far-reaching customs and beliefs. The house is perhaps the most symbolically significant of any form in architecture. It is the seminal idea in architecture, as the family might be regarded as the seminal unit of human society. The hearth, the altar, the window, the doorway are in the house, more distinctly than in any other work of architecture, routines of life.

Live

Work
Learn
Worship
Perform
Travel
Exchange
**Work**

Much of human life is spent in working. Much of human thought is preoccupied with work. Much of human history is the record of working conditions. Much of architecture deals with places of work. Projects for places for working serve two aims. In one way, they serve as occasions for the study of this major aspect of human life: its history, its influence in human attitudes, its impact on other aspects of culture, etc. In another way they serve to bring all such study into focus as occasions for the study and practice of design.

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**Learn**

Learning as one of the main human activities has been the focus of a major part of human civilization, has led to the development of a distinct line of social institutions, and has occupied a distinct section of architectural history. Despite the extensive development of their many forms, the place of the individual student remains central to all such institutions.

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**Worship**

Worship is a fundamental aspect of human life. The places of worship, when not limited to the individual, have had much in common to other places of gathering and performance. Despite many forms and doctrines, the architecture of worship in all cultures has several common underlying characteristics, even while it responds to important symbolic and doctrinal differences. The history of the architecture of worship responds also to ceremony and ritual. In some way it celebrates universal existence by placing the human being in the presence of timeless and constant natural elements: light, earth, water, and air. Yet the essential condition of worship remains solitude.
Perform

Performance is an integral part of human gathering, communication, and social action. Seen this way, a place of performance is a place of gathering with more or less specific requirements. But, like social activity, the form of the place and of the building giving place to the performance seems to come as much from the gathering and its symbolic implications as from its functional requirements. It is expected that the design of places of performance would offer an occasion for studies at a fundamental level of performance as a part of human civilizing act as well as an exercise in design with functional requirements.

Travel

Movement – physically moving from one place to another – is an abstract human activity pervading many functions. Often it is difficult to distinguish from the content of movement and seems to be the life force of public places relating in an intricate way with the particular function they seem to perform, such as places of arrival and departure, and promenades.

Exchange

Exchange is the predominant mode of social contact in the human community. The market place and the basilica share much in the early social activities and endure to our time in the shape of many public places. The hawkers, the street vendors, the shopkeepers, and the shopping centers have long been the hub of social activity and represent more than the material they offer for sale. In subtle ways they act as training posts, as playgrounds, as places of social gathering, and as various parts of a collective forum accommodating and embodying urban life. They accommodate a way of conducting public life.
Architecture is a field of infinite built forms within a finite and constantly evolving domain with the house as its simplest significant form and the city as its most complex form. All works of architecture are implicitly part of that domain and are designed within it. From its primal beginnings and throughout its history, architecture embodies all aspects of the human architectural imperative of habitation, urbanization, technical innovation, and aesthetic expression. Unlike science or technology, but similarly to art, and above all similarly to nature, forms in architecture once created are part of an eternal present rather than being rendered “invalid” by new forms.
Architecture is a primal human activity like language and music. It is not derived from other fields and can be studied and understood in its own terms. It is the formal extension of the common human instinct for building shelter in search of safety and permanence. It embodies both the physical and the metaphysical; the secular and the sacred. It is the result of habitation in all its aspects and scales, and the expression in built form of all human institutions, from a primal hut to the house, the village, and the city. It is the embodiment of human intentions, myths, and traditions, past, present, and future, all unified in the eternal presence of each work of architecture.
At the end of each term we mount two exhibitions of student work. The first focuses on the work in the different studios. The second emphasizes the quality of individual pieces of work as expressed in a good drawing or a good model.

The topic of the school project in the second term of the academic year 2003-04 was worship.
Worship is a fundamental aspect of human life. Places of worship, when not limited to the individual, have had much in common to other places of gathering and performance. Despite many forms and doctrines, the architecture of worship in all cultures has several common underlying characteristics, even while it responds to important symbolic and doctrinal differences. The history of the architecture of worship responds also to ceremony and ritual. In some way it celebrates universal existence by placing the human being in the presence of timeless and constant natural elements: light, earth, water, and air. Yet the essential condition of worship remains solitude.
The house is the seminal form in architecture. It is the significant form in terms of whose transformations and evolutions all other forms can be understood.
People – The expression of the human spirit revealed through the study of the human body, its surface, and its resonance in space.
In a sense the entire history of architecture is a story of urbanization, from the early adaptation of caves to the modification of land in search of shelter and the creation of entirely artificial worlds.
What is the relationship between space, surface and mass? How is the material arranged in a building? Can we distinguish elements, components, and systems? What is the mutual influence between structure, material, and space?
Technics has been defined as “the method of performance in any art; technical skill; artistic execution.”
The thesis marks the intersection between two important states in a student’s work and, in a way, in his or her professional life. It begins as a synthesis of previous studies, much information assimilated and much more set aside, skills gained and ideas received and developed. At its completion it represents a fact in its own right embodying ideas, interests, aspirations, and the student’s sense of direction. It marks a new beginning for the cycle of search beyond the formal studies in the school, with much broader scope and much greater freedom.
A school of architecture is not a building; it is a school of thought. The school building is like a village of rooms and routes, all leading to a central public place: the market place, the agora, the exhibition room. It provides places for gathering, work, play, public display, and solitary reflection. It is a collection of rooms and places with different qualities but all with the same purpose: to support study, discourse, and learning. These rooms are equipped differently, but no room has a limited function. The limitations in how we use a room are related less to the room and more to the limitations of our imagination.
## Term I

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Full-time

Essy Baniassad
Vito Bertin
Wallace Chang
Kelly Chow
Jeffrey Cody (on leave)
Gu Daqing
Ho Puay-peng
Eymen Homsi
Jeff Kan (on leave)
Andrew Li
Bernard Lim
Liu Yuyang
Edward Ng
Jin-You Tsou
Leng Woo
Zhu Jingxiang
Part-time

Arup Associates
Uli Blum
Hector Cheung
Frank Chiu
Tynnon Chow
Ronan Collins
Pamela Kember
Vincent Kwok
Grace Lin
Gladys Martinez
Tim Nutt
Kenneth Tam
Johnny Wong
Wong Kam-sing
David Yau
Yuet Tsang-chi

Visiting

Daniel Chan
Nelson Chen
Raymond Cole
Baruch Givoni
Dean Hawkes
Bernard Hui
Anthony Ng
Peter Tregenza
Tu Sunan
Brenda Vale