Iterative Ceramics: Containing Ritual Through the Architecture of Nothingness

Context

If we find a mound six feet long and three feet wide in the forest, formed into a pyramid, shaped by a shovel, we become serious and something in us says, "someone lies buried here." That is architecture
- Adolf Loos in "Architecture" (1910)

Although Vitruvius is better known for relating the origin of architecture to the primitive hut¹, he also relates the origin of architecture to the funerary urn. Citing the ancient myth of a young maiden from Corinth who fell ill, Vitruvius tells the story of the origin of the Corinthian column, which comes from the acanthus plant overgrowing the funerary urn of the maiden². Reading Adolf Loos’ quote against this backdrop, architecture emerges from the primordial need to house the mind-body in death and in life, including a symbolic meaning-making dimension which goes beyond pragmatic functionalism. Moreover, this symbolic beyond has universally recognizable forms, as given in the example of the mound. This course explores architecture not as the simple sheltering function of the primitive hut, but rather as something which emerges in the attempt to contain and bring forth the wholeness of human experience and meaning.

Course Description

Slipcasting ceramic urns, students will develop methodologies for manipulating tangible materials to make the intangible and the invisible visible – architecture as a container for the immaterial. Thinking through making, the course aims to introduce students to a critical understanding of the spatial and temporal power of material processes to inform architecture. Exploring how to contain rituals through the making of urns, students will learn how to think spatially through emptiness, the material process of casting, and the material of ceramics.

The course will use the ceramics slipcasting process to explore the formal and symbolic aspects of transference, inversion, imprint, and trace. The semester will begin with casting exercises in “thinking inversely” to both introduce to the students to the notion of negation (thinking about emptiness inversely) as well as getting hands-on experience with the mold making and slipcasting processes. Students will spend the rest of the semester testing methodologies through the iterative casting of ceramic urns.

Ceramic Facilities

Students will have access to facilities within the School of Architecture for slip-casting as well as supervised access to the Glaze Lab and Kilns at the College of Visual + Performing Arts’ Ceramic Studio in the Comstock Art Facility. Our course will meet at various intervals in the semester with Prof. Errol Willet’s (Coordinator of the Ceramic Program) slipcasting class to share and discuss our work.

Prerequisites

This is an advanced elective in both theory and fabrication. Therefore, previous experience in architectural thinking and making (or equivalent) is required. Experience in 3d modelling, casting, mold making, CNC milling, vacuum foaming, and 3d printing are highly recommended. Previous ceramic experience is not required.

On Nothingness

Lacan’s reading of Heidegger’s vase – it [the vase] creates the void and thereby introduces the possibility of filling it. Emptiness and fullness are introduced into a world that by itself knows not of them.¹

Heidegger’s temple – A building, a Greek temple, portrays nothing. It simply stands there in the middle of the rock-cleft valley. The building encloses the figure of the god, and in this concealment lets it stand out into the holy precinct through the open portico. By means of the temple, the god is present in the temple.²

Timothy Morton’s Hyperobjects – …nothing is ever experienced directly, but only as mediated through other entities in some shared sensual space. We never hear the wind in itself, argues Heidegger, only the wind in the door, the wind in the trees…We see the footprint of a dinosaur left in some ancient rock that was once a pool of mud. The dinosaur’s reality exists inter obsessively: there is some form of shared space between the rock, ourselves, and the dinosaur, even though the dinosaur isn’t there directly.³

Loazzi’s Dao De Jing, Ch. 11: The Use of What Has No Substantive Existence – We put thirty spokes to make a wheel: But it is the hole in the center that the use of the cart hinges. We make a vessel from a lump of clay; But it is the empty space within the vessel that makes it useful. We make doors and windows for a room; But it is the empty spaces that make the room livable. In the same way matter (material body) is necessary to form (existence), the value of reality is measured by its immaterial soul.⁴

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2 Ibid., Book IV, 102–106.
6 Loazzi’s Dao De Jing, Chapter 11: The Use of What Has No Substantive Existence: The Function of the Non-Existent / The Value of Non-Existence (476 BC – 221 BC).
In an age of mass communication and disneyzation\(^1\), we see bizarre **urban mutations**. Strewn across the American landscape emerge enclaves that exude qualities and characteristics that follow European cultural themes. Not quite authentic, they represent both a familiar and exotic value set through a vocabulary of traditional cultural elements that narrate back to a destination. With names, such as: Frankenmuth (Germany), New Glarus (Switzerland) or Lindsborg (Sweden) these towns use specific classifications of symbols to identify back to an existing place and time. Originally founded by immigrants, these towns become a postproduction of the theme park, a new tourist destination. Their **transcultural settings** are regulated through building codes that are derived from a collection of imagery from foreign countries that collide with the local construction type.

The ‘Are we *there*, *there’?*” seminar is on how we can construct an **identity** with **images** to share immediate cultural experiences. The class will question aforementioned characteristics, typical elements, and significations that create a character of a **place** and its **culture**. Additionally, as designers we are interested in how we can actualize these codes\(^2\) through materiality and assembly techniques. Over the course of the semester students will analyze **architecture**, **photography**, and **film** that use architectural **details** and imagery that evoke certain associations and feelings for a place. In combination with **lectures, readings** on theory will be assigned to enhance the discourse in class.

As a case study of one of these towns, students will examine New Glarus, Wisconsin this semester. **4 workshops** will support the production of an **image collection** and a detailed **physical model**, that document and deploy what currently flourishes under the Swiss themed building codes in Wisconsin’s little Switzerland... As a final outcome, the seminar is asking students to design an Ensemble\(^3\) in the transcultural setting of New Glarus in form of a **diorama**.

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1 According to Alan Bryman Disneyzation is the process by which the principles of the Disney theme Parks are coming to dominate more sectors of the American society as well as the rest of the world. To read more on the topic: Alan Bryman, Disneyzation of Society (2004)

2 Codes in the seminar are understood as a set of cultural symbols and characteristics that classify or identify with a place.

3 According to Miroslav Šik designing an ensemble means choosing from the variety of a setting a few characteristic allusions, to emulate them, and at the same time mixing them with other architectures that may be alien to the particular setting. To read more on the topic: Miroslav Šik, And now the Ensemble!!! (2012)
Credit Hours: 3
Course number: ARC 500.9 (13950)
Professor: Roger Hubeli
Disciplinary Concerns: Tectonics, Construction, Materiality and Fabrication
Prerequisites: none
Meeting time: W 2:15-5:05pm
Enrollment cap: 14
Location: 325 Slocum Hall (Some classes will be held in the lab)
Office hours: By appointment (326c Slocum)
Email: rhubeli@syr.edu

THE TECTONICS OF CONCRETE

POSSIBLE SUBTITLES:
OUT OF PLANE
POP UP
BEND AND FLEX
WARP AND WRAP

Course Context:
Many of the current research and development in concrete technology form radical departures from the typical rebar reinforced, formwork casted, concrete that is proliferate through-out the construction industry. While the actual research and development on the material itself is far advanced, the potential for new formal and performative application of contemporary concrete in architecture are in their infancy and offer a wide array of possible innovations, both from a technical as well as from a design perspective.

Course Description:
In this context, the course will look at early to midcentury concrete structures and explore the potential for new tectonic and atmospheric qualities that can emerge from revisiting these projects through the lens of advanced concrete technology, fabrication and construction methods.

The course is divided into two concurrent parts: theoretical and practical. The place of origin for the theoretical part is a series of readings and case studies, including the work of Fisac, Isler and Mangiarotti among others. These studies will be compiled through presentations that include images, drawings and text. The second part will be dedicated to the development of an assembly system for a roof structure. A key component of the course will be that the design, which will be developed through drawings, renderings and prototype models will be emergent from the construction fabrication process of the system itself.

The course will require group work.

What you will learn:
The course will give you an understanding of the possibility of advanced concrete technology. While part of the class is dedicated to research through design, the students will also be able to work with the material hands on through making test casts and prototypes. Students will get a better understanding of different mixes, formwork and casting techniques and realize the potentials and limitations of the material and its corresponding methods.

What you will produce:
There will be a digital as well as a physical outcome to this class. The digital outcome will be a series of presentations, short texts and drawings. The physical outcome will be a series of study models and concrete casts for a mid to long span roof structure.

Expectations:
The complexity of the seminar demands an intense engagement with the topic and requires an interest in historical as well as current discussions in design and construction. The students should be self-driven to research historic as well as current precedents. For the drawings and models, students need to be proficient in Adobe CS (Illustrator, Photoshop and InDesign), AutoCAD and Rhino. These programs will be used for digital modeling and fabrication techniques.

The course is part of a larger research agenda that investigates the relationship between formal and performative aspects of concrete, a long-standing collaboration with Cemex Global R&D.

Image: Miguel Fisac, Center for Hydrological Studies, Roof Detail
ARC 511: ADVANCED STRUCTURAL RESOLUTION

Credits: 3
Instructor: Mac Namara
Pre-req: ARC 311 or ARC 612

This Professional Elective is best suited to either students in Integrated Design Studio or Thesis students who have a thesis project with a complex structural engineering dimension.

The course will engage in a series of short structural design problems in the first five weeks of the semester to learn structural problem solving tools and techniques such as FEA software SAP2000. The rest of the semester will produce a full structural resolution of the students' current design work in either Comprehensive Studio or Thesis. Iterations of the design will be analyzed and tested to facilitate design decisions. Final designs will be fully analyzed and rationalized from a structural engineering perspective, and detailed design calculations will allow a rich, fine-grained representation of the students' projects.
This seminar will examine the last 40 years in architectural activism, alliance building and advocacy for a more equitable, diverse discipline. The point of departure is the 1977 Women in American Architecture exhibition curated by Susana Torre at the Brooklyn Museum. It was an extension of the larger Women’s Liberation Movement, itself spurred by the Civil Rights Movement. The course takes a critical look at the progress made in fostering a more inclusive discipline; progress which was not inevitable, but the result of a hard-won battle by impassioned advocates to keep the unique struggles of marginalized groups at the forefront of national consciousness. This will include movements such as Black Lives Matter, LGTBQ, gender, environmental, and immigration rights, as well as others that provoke us to envision a future for architecture that enables all architects to achieve their potential, regardless of gender, race, sexual orientation or physical ability in pursuit of a better world.
Gender, Space & Power in Europe & America:  

*Ancient Theory*  

To  

*Modern Thinking*  

ARC 500 M300  
Fall 2017 MW 2.15 to 3.35 pm  
Dr. Sara L. French, instructor  

This course will investigate the idea of gender as a fluid concept with fixed characteristics from the ancient world to modern day issues of bathrooms, locker-rooms, and accessibility. Ancient Greek treatises on public & domestic life; Roman laws regarding marriage & divorce; Medieval ideas of women’s roles; Renaissance transgressions of gender norms; and 19th & 20th century gender theories will inform historical and modern questions of domestic v. public space; religious, social, and cultural segregation; privilege and power in political, religious, and academic life; the issue of privacy; and modern questions of gender identity and social interaction.
ARC 334 & 634 / HOA 454

The Architecture of Revolutions

*European Architecture from the Scientific to the Industrial Revolution*

Professor Jean-François Bédard

MW, 3:15pm-5:05pm, 110 Maxwell Hall

*Course description.* History and theory of architecture in Europe, from 1650 to 1850, with a focus on France, England, and Germany.

*Course rationale.* The course covers one of the most innovative periods in European architecture. It is designed to provide foundational knowledge on the origins of modernity in architecture and allied disciplines.

*Conceptual framework.* Students will be introduced to the idea of “revolution” in European epistemology during the seventeenth century and the resulting critical thinking associated with the Enlightenment, which challenged traditional knowledge in science, technology, and the fine arts, including architecture. Key concepts covered are: Vitruvianism, humanism, antiquarianism, aesthetics, modernity, techno-science, sensualism, associationism, and reception theory.

*Course goals/expectations/outcomes.* At the end of the course, students will be familiar with the principal actors and the important debates in European architectural theory between 1650 and 1850. They will have examined the most significant buildings and unbuilt projects that paralleled these discussions. Semester-long assignments will ensure that students can identify the techniques used in architectural drawings. Students will learn how to perform advanced bibliographic research, write a full research paper that follows the conventions of scholarly writing (footnotes, bibliography, illustrations, and captions).
This class traces the French approach to the reinterpretation of antique architecture during the periods commonly known as the Renaissance and the Baroque. We will confront the presuppositions of this periodization in the light of the diversity of phenomena that make French architecture of the early modern era one of the most creative moments in the art of building in the West.

Each meeting will focus on the historical, cultural, and intellectual contexts of key buildings and projects, important architects and theorists, and outstanding patrons. Special attention will be devoted to the many different incarnations of architecture, from realized buildings, drawn projects, to written treatises and pattern books. Architectural practice will be related to the larger world of ideas in the arts, the sciences, philosophy, and literature. Some individual themes will include: the chivalric imagination at work in the early châteaux of the Loire Valley; the techniques of projective geometry developed by Philibert de l’Orme for stereotomy, the art of stone cutting; the political use of architectural publications in the printed work of Jacques I Androuet du Cerceau; the influence of Descartes in the architectural and scientific work of Claude Perrault; and the political use of spectacle by Louis XIV in his gardens and château of Versailles.

Two threads will be constantly picked up in our examination. The artistic outcome of political power, architecture, then as now, relied heavily on its institutional sponsors. This class will look at the ways in which, in the hierarchical society of the Ancien Régime, the monarchy, the clergy, even the merchant class used buildings to proclaim their status. This period also saw the emancipation of the architect from the position of mere builder to that of respected intellectual. The class will end on a discussion of the French institutions that sealed that transformation—the Royal Academy of Architecture founded in 1671 and the Bâtiments du Roi (the King’s Building Works) as reorganized and amplified by Jean-Baptiste Colbert and Louis XIV. These bodies, magnified until the French Revolution, announced the key features of contemporary architectural practice: the development of theoretical and practical knowledge delivered in formal education and the design and supervision of building projects in specialized offices.
Represent Represent: Hip-Hop Architecture in 2D  
ARC 500 M004, Fall 2017 - 3 Credits  
Tuesdays and Thursdays 9:30 – 10:50, 325 Slocum Hall  
Instructor: Sekou Cooke

Introduction

“I start to think and then I sink into the paper like I was ink …”
Eric B. & Rakim from “I Know You Got Soul”

Graffiti, one of the original four elements of hip-hop culture, has long surpassed the narrow perception of simple vandalism. It created the visual backdrop for the other three hip-hop elements (deejaying, emceeing, and b-boys) while actively transforming urban environments through simple repurposing of its 2D surfaces. Graffiti, along with hip-hop fashion, party posters, magazine covers, album art, and music videos, helped shape the visual identity of the early counter-cultural movement.

Reframing these areas of hip-hop visual culture through the lens of architectural representation will be the primary area of research within this seminar. The course will investigate popular understandings of the hip-hop image as evidenced by its visual products. How can architectural tools (composition, proportion, projection, line weight and line quality) be used to generate a legible understanding of hip-hop culture in two dimensions? How can this new understanding, in turn, support the production of a coherent architectural language?

The subject of Hip-Hop Architecture will be primarily explored through analog and digital drawings, collages, and other modes of 2D image making. Students will also expand their understanding of the topic through targeted readings and written responses.

Course Objectives

- Expansion of the graphic language used to describe Hip-Hop Architecture.
- Increased vocabulary analog and digital representation tools
- Material generated within the course will add to the collective body of knowledge being developed within the study of Hip-Hop Architecture.

Bibliography

Craig L. Wilkins and Kara Walker (2014) “Ruffneck Constructivists,” Institute of Contemporary Art
Jeff Chang (2005) “Can’t Stop Won’t Stop”
Re-Presenting History:
Use of Art and Architecture to Memorialize and Revive Connections to the Past

Fall 2017 / 3 Credits
Professional Elective ARC500 M005 / TRM500
Thursdays 9:30 – 12:20/ Slocum 404

Instructors:
Edward Morris, Professor of Practice, Transmedia, VPA
Yutaka Sho, Associate Professor, School of Architecture

This course will examine the theory of historiography in the context of museums and/or memorials, and will also put theories and ideas into practice with an exhibition produced by the class during the course of the semester in the Everson Museum of Art in Syracuse.

The course will question the naturalized and static understandings of historical events, reveal the historian/curator/storytellers’ intentions and biases, and their dissemination mechanisms. The course will examine subsequent political and social impacts of such curations in the contemporary world and will intervene in order to propose alternative methods and meanings. We will focus on historical atrocities, especially on the atomic bomb attack on Hiroshima in 1945, and will bring such atrocities into relation with the present.

The choice to focus on the Hiroshima’s experience was inspired by the encounter with Ms. Keiko Ogura from Hiroshima. Ms. Ogura was eight years old when she was exposed to the atomic bomb at her home, about 1.5 miles north of the hypocenter. In October we will welcome Ms. Ogura to our class. The students will conduct in-depth research into the Hiroshima’s and Ms. Ogura’s experiences and incorporate it in their specific projects.

Atrocities such as nuclear weapons attacks are indicative of global risks we face today. Many of the contemporary global threats, including nuclear radiation, climate change and economic crises, know no boundaries, geographical, class, racial or otherwise. Yet many of them are difficult to imagine because they are slow in development, often invisible, until the effects are irreversible. The society is tasked to invent a new way to communicate the urgencies of these risks, and artists and architects are well-equipped to take up the challenge. The course will seek radical and courageous means to participate in the on-going efforts to mitigate risks.

Throughout the semester the course will extract archival materials from three different sources to create historical constellations. Students will select, organize, exhibit and eventually manipulate the archival pieces and their relationships in order to tell new histories. There is only one restriction: all archival resources must be from or around 1945. Chosen pieces should be thoroughly analyzed. Three archival sources are:

- Everson Museum of Art
- Syracuse University Bird Library and Belfer Audio Archive
- Hiroshima Peace Memorial Museum

The students will then create their own work and interventions in response to the archival material. This process will take place in the Member’s Gallery at Everson Museum throughout the semester. The Gallery will act as a revolving, experimental, interactive curatorial space that invites interaction and response from the audience that will also be open to the public. We will organize a public event in conjunction with the class and exhibit.
INTRODUCTION

Cities represent the aspirations of our common interests and the realities of political compromise. They are the product of the power invested in regime, of political will, of contention and compromise, of cultural ambition and economic exigency. Cities are made, they are crafted with intention, but they are also circumstantial and the product of climate and geography. Cities are negotiated territories and they are the place of dwelling.

Although there are many factors that bear on the quality of urban life, often omitted from a very long list is the relationship of the individual living unit to the larger structure of streets, blocks, and open space. But, formal and social aspects of the private city in the context of the public realm, both buildings and open space, are among the significant factors that render urban centers amenable to human life. The ways in which we dwell determine and are determined by larger urban systems.

Too often, the study of architecture and the city is limited to a review of monuments, buildings of cultural and institutional importance and smaller projects by known architects. Iconographic monuments and open spaces are the ones by which cities are readily identified - and they usually are the buildings and places in which public life resides. But cities are primarily composed of residential fabric, the place of daily, domestic activity. Given the predominance of housing fabric over other types of building, it may be argued that the kind and character of housing, of residential streets and blocks, is what gives form to the city as a spatial and sociopolitical entity.

Cities are distinguished not only by the quality of the public realm, the streets and open spaces, but also by the private, habitable spaces, the place of quotidian existence. This course examines urban housing within the context of cultural, social, political, economic and formal ambitions from the 17th century to the present as the product of political and social ambition, aesthetic culture, a twentieth century, modernist urban agenda, technology, economic markets, and sustainability. The relationship of the formal and socio-political, the private dwelling and urban, collective ambition focuses discussion in the seminar.

Everyone relies on the city and all the public services that it contains. If we have concluded rightly, from what the philosophers say, that cities owe their origin and their existence to their enabling their inhabitants to enjoy a peaceful life, as free from any inconvenience or harm as possible, then surely the most thorough consideration should be given to the city's layout, site, and outline. Yet, opinions vary on these matters."

- Leon Battista Alberti, De Re Edificatoria, Book 4, chp. 2, c.1450
"The architecture of the large city depends essentially on the solution given to two factors: the elementary cell and the urban organism as a whole. The single room as the constituent element of the habitation will determine the aspect of the habitation, and since the habitations in turn form blocks, the room will become a factor of urban configuration, which is architecture's true goal. Reciprocally, the planimetric structure of the city will have a substantial influence on the design of the habitation and the room."

- Ludwig Hilberseimer, *Grosstadtarchitektur*

### Summary Schedule and sample readings:

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<th>1</th>
<th>W</th>
<th><strong>Introduction</strong></th>
<th>Snow, Dan</th>
<th>Filthy Cities / London, BBC Documentary</th>
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<tr>
<td></td>
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<td><strong>London and Bath: residential squares and the English terraced house</strong></td>
<td>Evans, Robin</td>
<td>&quot;Rookeries and Modern Dwellings,&quot; Translations from Drawing to Building, AA Documents 2, The MIT Press, pp. 92-117</td>
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<td>4</td>
<td>W</td>
<td><strong>Ildefonso Cerda and the plan for Barcelona</strong></td>
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<td>6</td>
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<td><strong>Research progress presentations - by appointment during the week.</strong></td>
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<td>7</td>
<td>W</td>
<td><strong>German housing estates and Red Vienna</strong></td>
<td>Miller-Lane, Barbara</td>
<td>&quot;The New Architecture in the Service of Society,&quot; &quot;The Debate over the New Architecture,&quot; Architecture and Politics in Germany</td>
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<td>9</td>
<td>W</td>
<td><strong>Housing of Le Corbusier</strong></td>
<td>Sert, J. L., et. al.</td>
<td>The Athens Charter</td>
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<td>10</td>
<td>W</td>
<td><strong>&quot;Taken for a Ride,&quot;</strong></td>
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<td>The rise of the auto industry and suburban growth. Jim Klein and Martha Olsen, producers, 1996</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>W</td>
<td><strong>Research progress presentations - by appointment during the week.</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>W</td>
<td><strong>Team 10 and the metabolists</strong></td>
<td>Smithson, Alison</td>
<td>Team Ten Primer, MIT Press, Boston, 1968 Alfred A. Knopf, Inc., New York City, 1992</td>
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<td></td>
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<td><strong>Urban Development Corporation (UDC)</strong></td>
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ARC 555- Intro to Building Information Modeling (BIM)
Class meeting time will be conducted **Tuesdays** in the Slocum Computer lab 6:30-9:20 PM

This course will give the student an in-depth look at Building Information and how it is used for coordination, visualization and production in the architectural field. The primary software will be Autodesk Revit version 2016. The area of emphasis is how well students can produce buildable construction documents while being able to relay their design through perspectives and isometric views, and data lists such as door and window schedules. Once complete the students will be competent in the use of Revit and the understanding of Building Information Modeling.

The class is conducted as an instructor-led, step-by-step examination of each area of Revit as it relates to architectural building systems such as wall systems, floor systems, roofing systems, and stairs/ramps. Also, this class will cover structural systems, and the relation of architecture to mechanical, electrical and plumbing (MEP) systems.

The class deliverable will consist of each student creating their own model on their own. This model can be commercial or residential. It can be a real building, or a made up design of the student’s desire. Grading will be judged by the construction documents produced. Plans, elevations, sections enlarged dimensioned details are the most important. Effort plays a critical role, as does classroom attendance and participation.

Reading material is Revit Architecture No Experience Required. This will be furnished for free by the instructor.
ARC 500- Advanced BIM and 3D Design using Revit  
Section M006  
Class meeting time will be conducted **Wednesdays** in the Slocum Computer lab 6:45-9:35 PM

Building on the fundamentals learned in the Intro class, this course prepares the student for Revit production in a live firm, sharing live models in a wide area network capacity. The students will learn how to set up projects for their firms, and how to work with other trades in the BIM spectrum. In-depth instruction on how to model custom content will be a main area of focus as well as reconstruction, design options and of course free form massing and curtain systems. Once this course is completed, our students are ready to work in any firm, big or small using Revit. Also, this course allows the students to adding potential BIM coordinator to their resumes.

This course will be instructor led, with more lab time allocated to students working on file sharing, custom content, and collaboration with other students. The class will have a stand-alone project that the students can work on as a group, or as individuals. The focus is on the students’ understanding of multi-user, collaborative model sharing, as well as development of phasing plans and custom content.

This course will be accompanied with the use of Lynda.com courseware which is provided through the University.