



METU ARCH PROG GRADUATE SEMINARS

ARCH 504 & 604 Fall Semester 2025-26

This is the official document prepared for the graduate seminar courses of ARCH 504 and ARCH 604.

Fall 2026 Semester

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at Kubbealtı, Faculty of Architecture

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Meeting ID: 932 762 420 732 9
Passcode: NB7wS6

ARCH 504 Course Instructor:
Gizem Deniz Güneri Sögüt

ARCH 604 Course Instructor:
İpek Gürsel Dino

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10:00 – 10:25

Revisiting Vorkurs: Curriculum Translations in First-Year Architectural Design Studios

604

Çiğdem Çalık

Supervisor: **Esin Kömez Dağlıoğlu**

Jury Members: **Ekin Pınar**

Afet Derin İnan

The increasing complexity of contemporary design problems and professional contexts has renewed attention to the pedagogical foundations of architectural education, particularly the first-year design studio. As students' initial encounter with an idiosyncratic learning environment grounded in learning by doing, the foundation studio plays a critical role in shaping architectural thinking and professional identity. While existing literature addresses first-year architectural design education through specific thematic lenses, contemporary studies examining the design studio curriculum holistically remain limited. This paper responds to this gap by revisiting the Bauhaus Vorkurs as a pedagogical reference point for curriculum research rather than as a fixed historical or stylistic model. Drawing on multiple learning – particularly experiential, embodied, and situated – alongside curriculum theories of student-centered pedagogy, the paper develops a framework for examining curriculum dynamics. It examines how and why Bauhaus pedagogical principles persist, transform, or disappear across different contexts. Methodologically, the research adopts an interpretive approach, analyzing historical and contemporary first-year design studio curricula influenced by the Vorkurs, including Bauhaus University Weimar, IIT College of Architecture, Black Mountain College, ETH Zurich, and the Architectural Association. By interpreting these pedagogical translations through a student-centered lens, the study contributes to curriculum-oriented discussions on the foundation design studios of architecture. It highlights how abstract thinking, experiential learning, and interdisciplinarity between art and architecture can inform contemporary architectural curricula and support the formation of architects engaging with complex real-world problems.

Keywords: **First-Year Architectural Design Studio, Bauhaus Vorkurs, Curriculum, Student-Centered Pedagogy**

504**Bahadır Pehlivan**Supervisor: **İpek Gürsel Dino**Jury Members: **Esin Kömez Dağlıoğlu****Gizem Deniz Güneri Söğüt**

Due to the rapid urbanization in cities, combined with increasing adverse effects of climate change, cities have become responsible for approximately two-thirds of global primary energy consumption. Efforts to mitigate these adverse effects involve the understanding of energy consumption behaviors within the built environment. Urban Building Energy Modeling (UBEM) is a powerful tool for developing simulation datasets to support decision makers for urban-scale renovations. Moreover, to further manage the actions to mitigate climate change, the geographic location of the data becomes imperative. In this regard, the integration of Geographic Information Systems (GIS) is fundamental to developing mitigation strategies. Through the utilization of diverse data layers, GIS technologies make it possible to support different infrastructures and networks for developing, selecting, and managing urban-scale strategies within various stages. In this review, frameworks regarding the integration of GIS within urban-scale strategies to support 1) the determination of optimal study areas with the utilization of spatial retrieval operations, and Structured Query Language (SQL) operators; 2) the visualization of geometric data, and their attributes with geographic search and attribute query capabilities; 3) the analysis of georeferenced data layers including but not limited to, energy generation and consumption by buildings, grid networks, population density, and demographics to be used in smart city planning, and sustainable urban development through energy and resource management; 4) the survey of transportation routes, road networks, and population density to limit greenhouse gas emissions by the use of public transportation; and 5) the development of nationwide decision support systems to help stakeholders efficiently manage the resources and energy are studied.

Keywords: Energy Efficiency, Climate change impacts, Geographic Information System (GIS), Decision support systems, Sustainability

10:45 – 11:05

504

Who Is the City For- Redefining the Dweller in Architecture Through a More-Than-Human Perspective

Ece Tektepe

Supervisor: **Funda Baş**

Jury Members: **Esin Kömez Dağlıoğlu**

Deniz Altay Kaya

Architectural and urban design practices have long relied on the concept of the user as a central figure guiding design decisions. However, this figure is often implicitly defined and vaguely human-centered. How the user is defined directly influences who the architecture is for, as well as who or what is excluded from consideration. In the context of the escalating climate crisis and biodiversity loss, such anthropocentric definitions are increasingly insufficient.

This paper tries to answer a fundamental question: Who is the city for? If the cities could be considered purely human territory, considering the increasing urbanization pressures is debatable. In response, the paper proposes an expanded understanding of the “user” as a more-than-human dweller encompassing animals, plants, ecosystems, and environmental systems alongside human inhabitants. By expanding the conceptual boundaries of usership, this paper seeks to address ecological concerns in ways that are concrete, actionable, and embedded within architectural practice, rather than remaining abstract ideals.

Keywords: Dweller, Urban pressures, More-than-human, Non-human, Sustainable cities

504**Çağatay Atay**Supervisor: **Funda Baş**Jury Members: **Gizem Deniz Güneri Sögüt****Deniz Altay Kaya**

Forming a new artificial sphere of the Earth, the technosphere diverges from natural spheres—namely the geosphere, biosphere, cryosphere, hydrosphere, and atmosphere—by extracting materials and resources and transforming them through technologies that typically interrupt nature's circular processes. Within this newly formed environment, the technospheric terrain generates its own species, including architecture, infrastructure, and machinery, which materialize the nature of the technosphere. Herein, production spaces constitute a critical ground in shaping the technosphere's trajectory by foregrounding the interplay between technology and anthropogenic change. Within this evolutionary process, while new architectural species are created and evolve through technological development, some former species become extinct and turned into technofossils. This research aims to analyze the technospheric terrain through the lens of production spaces and the species they generate. It frames the discussion through a series of instances that together form a genealogy of the technospheric terrain, particularly shaped by production spaces.

Keywords: **Anthropocene, Technosphere, Architecture, Technofossil, Evolution, Technospheric terrain**

504**Damla Turgut**

Supervisor: **Gizem Deniz Güneri Söğüt**
Jury Members: **Ela Alanyalı Aral**
Deniz Altay Kaya

The contemporary urban condition is increasingly lived through fragmentation and uncertainty. The city is encountered less as a stable whole than as discontinuous situations of consumption, circulation, and transit. Urbanites move among roles, scenes, and micro-worlds without a single narrative to hold everyday experience together. This everyday conduct under fragmentation, in Baumanian terms, requires practices that momentarily organize uncertainty and enable situated agency. This renders playfulness momentous, insofar as it lets subjects test boundaries, negotiate rules, and temporarily recompose the meanings of urban space.

This research situates itself within an architectural lineage in which leisure, play, and technology have been mobilized as instruments of urban transformation. It traces how contemporary ludic spatial practices diverge from post-war large-scale undertakings, arguing that present-day expressions are more fragmented and distributed, and therefore most legible through micro-transformations and improvised appropriations. Within this frame, the study conceptualizes urban playfulness as a critical, performative tool operating through such situated acts. It asks under what conditions playfulness can re-author rules, stretch established boundaries of conduct, and enable inhabitants to reconfigure urban space-time through bodies, objects, surfaces, temporal rhythms, and social cues. In further stages, the research will draw on Cedric Price's Fun Palace as an operative diagram from which key concepts can be extracted and redeployed for contemporary contexts, and will employ methods such as photography, video-making, and mapping to critically document selected sites in Ankara (and/or potentially other cities) in order to trace how play persists, mutates, and re-emerges in smaller registers of urban life.

Keywords: **Urban playfulness, Fragmentation, Micro-transformation, Improvised appropriation**

The Stadium as Vibrant Matter: Dismantling the Architectural Constituents of an Assemblage

504

Ali Onur Demirçalı

Supervisor: **Gizem Deniz Güneri Söğüt**
Jury Members: **Fatma Cana Bilsel**
Deniz Altay Kaya

As depicted in Serdar Akar's cult film *Dar Alanda Kısa Paslaşmalar* (2000), life bears a striking resemblance to football. While the game itself is fundamentally simple - playable with a crushed can or defined by arbitrary markers - it has evolved under capitalism and globalization into a complex industrial phenomenon. Professional stadiums, as the primary arenas of this industry, embody this complexity, transforming a simple game into a multi-layered sociopolitical entity.

Drawing inspiration from Pierre Vittorio Aureli's (2011) critique of Rem Koolhaas's *City of the Captive Globe*, this thesis posits that the stadium functions as an "enclave." Similar to Aureli's description, the stadium's strict dependence on circulation and accessibility is compensated by an "ideological overdose" and powerful iconography. By synthesizing this perspective with Jane Bennett's (2010) *Vibrant Matter* and assemblage theory, this study redefines the stadium not merely as a static container, but as a dynamic "architecture-intense" assemblage comprised of diverse human and non-human actants.

This research aims to dismantle the architectural layers of the stadium to reveal its capacity as a spatial technology used by political powers to manage and direct the "affect" of the masses. It examines how disparate elements - Law No. 6222, the Passolig system, surveillance cameras, architectural form, and adrenaline-fueled crowds - converge to constitute the stadium assemblage. Moving beyond a purely sociological analysis, the thesis adopts an architectural lens to explore how these constituents interact to produce specific atmospheres and political realities. Grounded in the situated perspective of the researcher as an architect and a fan, the study ultimately dissects the stadium as a vibrant, political matter.

Keywords: **Stadium Architecture, Assemblage Theory, Vibrant Matter, Political Ecology, Atmospheric Experience**

12:05 – 12:25

“The Architect As...”: Situating a “Minor Architectural Subject” through the Changing Positions of the Architect

504

Eylül Aydın Şimşek

Supervisor: **Fatma Cana Bilsel**

Jury Members: **Gizem Deniz Güneri Sögüt**

Onur Eylül Kara

In recent years, architects have increasingly explored practicing “otherwise,” the unconventional ways of practicing architecture to challenge the dominant forms that have shaped the architecture discipline for a long time. The economic, social, and political conditions have historically defined a narrow space for the architectural subject to occupy. However, especially with the agency of the architectural subject to overcome this situated condition, an increase in the responsibilities and roles attributed to architects is being observed. In trying to be everything: a researcher, policymaker, mediator, form-maker, hacker, or activist, the architect has long tried to situate themselves among these changing roles. This research takes these situated positions, dualities, and contradictions not as a sign of a crisis of practice, but as a productive ground for understanding the possibilities of escaping major conventional forms of practicing, occupying in-between positions, and searching to define a “minor architectural subject.” The notion of “minor” is derived from Deleuze and Guattari’s work on Kafka: Toward a Minor Literature, where they argue that the minor practices, the acting “from within”, have the potential to deterritorialize the structures of “major.” Building on this theory, the ongoing research does not propose an alternative theory of practicing architecture but rather aims to document the agency of architectural subjects, where they produce their own “lines of flight” from conventional ways of making. Rather than understanding these positions as fragmented practices, it aims to situate a common conceptual ground for these minor architectural subjects to occupy. This study employs a comparative case study method on the agency of selected practitioners and/or collectives and their distinct positionalities within the “the architect as...” framework.

Keywords: **Architectural subject, Agency, Lines of flight, Minor, Minor architecture**

12:25 – 12:50

From Construction to Extractivism: Contradictory Spaces of Material Flows

604

Simla Şanlı

Supervisor: **Güven Arif Sargin**

Jury Members: **Hüseyin Tarık Şengül**

Gizem Deniz Güneri Sögüt

This paper outlines a general framework for the literature on extractivism, considering geographical and historical contexts, as well as theoretical and methodological frameworks and the evolving conceptualisation of extractivism. This study area has evolved since the 20th century, beginning with a focus on the extraction of natural resources in Latin America. In the 1980s and 1990s, critical studies on resource extraction increased in the fields of resource geography and political ecology. While critiques of resource extraction are based on colonialism and capitalism, criticisms within the literature on indigenous, environmental, and development issues focus on neoliberalism in the 1990s and 2000s. During this period, the concept of extractivism expanded to represent an economic model. Conversely, the contemporary use of the term has expanded to encompass an ideological dimension, referring to the extractive logic behind activities. After providing an overview of the literature, this study examines extractivism from the perspective of urban political ecology (UPE), which conceptualises urbanization in terms of metabolic flows, including class struggles and power relations. UPE provides a methodological framework for identifying the socio-natural injustices and contradictions inherent in urbanisation processes. Building upon this framework, the study focuses on extractivism in the context of raw material extraction for construction, discussing ideologies of nature from a UPE perspective. The aim is to contribute to the discipline of architecture by recognising its agency in transforming socio-natures.

Keywords: **Urban political ecology, Extractivism, Construction minerals**

Architecture and the Life-World: An Inquiry into the Photographic Medium

Sena Nur Cabadaş

Supervisor: **Gizem Deniz Güneri Söğüt**

Jury Members: **Ayşen Savaş**

Duygu Tüntaş Şerbetçi

Images – produced, circulated, endlessly recombined – now structure contemporary visual culture. In an accelerated visual economy, they shape attention, desire, and judgment, often displacing content through conveyance logics. Such saturation, however, also multiplies visual traces, making spatial realities recordable, revisitable, and open to re-reading.

Architecture occupies a particularly ambivalent position within this image-saturated milieu. Digital tools and visual infrastructures expand practice, accelerating circulation and enabling new modes of design, communication, and collaboration; but image-optimized encounters [legible, shareable, quickly consumed] risk mistaking visibility for knowledge and representation for experience. Concurrently, incidental, often non-professional photographs accumulate a growing visual record of spaces in use. This work approaches such photographic material not merely as documentation, but as an unintentional archive through which architecture's temporal and social dimensions become partially and unevenly traceable in and through the lifeworld. Therein, it treats unintended images as phenomenological residues of lived immersion – rather than failed compositions – indexing the inhabitant's situated gaze rather than the architect's elevated viewpoint.

Grounding this inquiry in Ingold's ontology of the weather-world, and situating his work within the broader trajectory of critical landscape theory, the work draws upon the built world as a meshwork of atmospheres, materials, bodies, and temporal flux. Learning from landscape, it intends to highlight photographic medium's evidentiary and interpretive capacities to think, design, and critique space, and to read incidental traces as contingent knowledge of spatial becoming.

Keywords: **Photography, Perception, Lifeworld, Weatherworld, Archive**

13:10 – 13:30

Performing Space: Architecture of Event-scapes

504

Gizem Yılmaz

Supervisor: **Ayşen Savaş**
Jury Members: **Pelin Yoncaçı Arslan**
Mine Söyler

This study begins with the assumption that architectural space is in a constant state of change due to the interaction between space and bodily events occurring within and around it. Benefiting from other spatial disciplines, such as performance, with an interdisciplinary approach, which can be utilized to create transformative potential for conventional notions of space and have the ability to challenge them, the goal is to explore the performative quality of the space as a power to establish action. With the lens of Performance Studies and Bernard Tschumi's concept of space and event, the possibilities of new ways of producing and representing space will be explored. The research questions would be: "In which ways could performance influence architectural thinking?" "How does movement enable us to apprehend architecture and how it can be represented?"

Keywords: Performance, Movement, Event, Representation

13:30 – 13:50

504

Postanthropocene Representations: Representation of Architectural Agency

Ebru Evin

Supervisor: **Ayşen Savaş**
Jury Members: **Güven Arif Sargin**
Bilge İmamoğlu

This thesis revisits architecture and its understanding of agency in response to the ethical, political, and ontological challenges of the post-Anthropocene. While the Anthropocene names humanity as a dominant geological force, this designation simultaneously conceals asymmetrical power relations and sustains a human-centered worldview inherited from Renaissance humanism. The study argues that addressing contemporary crises requires a fundamental rethinking of subjectivity, agency, and architectural practice beyond anthropocentric assumptions. Building on posthuman and post-anthropocentric theory, the research examines how subjectivity is transformed from a unitary humanist figure into a relational and nonunitary condition, and how agency must therefore be understood as a distributed, political, and "intra-active" process involving both human and nonhuman actors. Within this framework, architectural agency addresses both the agency of architecture as a forceful geological and systemic agent and the agency in architecture enacted by the subjects acting through it. The study utilizes representation theory to critique traditional modes which reduced architecture, the land and the built environment to a human signifying structure and denying their autonomous entity with own independent agencies. To address this, the thesis invokes the land ethic of Aldo Leopold, tracing an evolution from land as a passive commodity to a "natural contract" that recognizes it as an active agent. The thesis concludes that architecture must reposition itself as a mediating, ecological, and political practice, no longer merely building on the world, but actively participating with it.

Keywords: **Architecture theory, Agency, Land ethic, Representation, Anthropocene**

13:50 – 14:10

504

Questioning the Architectural Profession: Labor, Ideology, and Organization; the Experience of Uncomfortable Questions in Architecture (UQA)

Berk Bulut

Supervisor: **Güven Arif Sargin**

Jury Members: **Gizem Deniz Güneri Sögüt**
Bülent Batuman

This study questions the architectural profession in relation to contemporary labor regimes, professional ideology, and the possibilities of organizing the worker-architect. Under neoliberal transformation, characterized by insecurity, flexibilization, and the fragmentation of labor processes, the profession's inherently contradictory nature has become visible. In the current conditions, "architect" has lost its status as a field and cannot bear its class-based and ideological processes. To fixate "architecture" in a semantic geography, an interdisciplinary study will seek an ontology of architecture and the historical class identity of the occupation. This study makes a unique contribution by examining the architectural profession through both the researcher's collective activities and external theoretical frameworks. In this regard, the thesis is based on an auto-ethnographic approach, which avoids a hierarchical division between academic discourse and practical application, arguing that these two domains are entwined processes that continuously generate and produce one another. This approach is developed through the collective Uncomfortable Questions in Architecture (UQA), which forms the central context of the thesis. UQA aims to reveal the characteristics of labor, exploitation, disorganization, and class in architectural education and professional practice; it is an organizational practice that seeks collective knowledge production through workshops, forums, publications, and international collaborations. The thesis treats the UQA experience not merely as a case study but as a political, epistemological, and pedagogical opportunity that intrinsically questions the labor processes of architecture.

Keywords: **Labor Regimes, Professional Ideology, Worker-Architect, Organization, Uncomfortable Questions in Architecture (UQA)**

