METU ARCH PROG GRADUATE SEMINARS

ARCH 504 Spring Semester 2024-25

This is the official document prepared for the graduate seminar course of ARCH 504.

Spring 2025 Semester

Date of the Meeting: 17.06.2025 at Kubbealtı, Faculty of Architecture

Online Meeting Link: https://teams.live.com/meet/933106614012?p=EKe1iKM90fXgFSaJgy

Meeting ID: 933 106 614 012

Passcode: j2m6dy

Course Instructor: Gizem Deniz Güneri Söğüt



10:00 - 10:20

A Neoliberal Spatial Instrument:
Smart City Policies and Their
Ideological Impacts on Architectural
Education and Research in Turkey
Since 2000
Elif Kara

10:20 - 10:40

Spatial Backdrops: Expanding

Scenography in Exhibition Design Nusret Atakan Harmancı

10:40 – 11:00

Beyond Storage: An Architectural Inquiry into Museum Depots

Beyza Nur Yağlı

11:00 - 11:20 Anthropogenic Landscapes: Sinkholes as Symbols of Shifting Grounds
Selen İlhan

11:20 – 11:40 Artificial Architectural Imaginations:
A Critical Look at Diffusion Al's Role in Architecture

Bartu Lokumcu

11:40 - 12:00

Assessing Energy Poverty and Household Vulnerability in the Built Environment Başak Elgin

12:00 - 12:20

A Data-Driven Design Support Framework for Sustainability Transition in Educational Buildings Beste Eser Kantekin 10:00 - 10:20

A Neoliberal Spatial Instrument: Smart City Policies and Their Ideological Impacts on Architectural Education and Research in Turkey Since 2000

Elif Kara

Supervisor: Güven Arif Sargın
Jury Members: Olgu Çalışkan

Arzu Gönenç Sorguç

The growing impact of smart city regulations on architectural education and research in Turkey will be the focus of our study. It is believed that, although these policies are often promoted as neutral, technology-based solutions to contemporary urban challenges, such as traffic congestion, energy use, and disorganised growth, they are, in fact, deeply embedded in broader neoliberal restructuring processes. The study illustrates how state-led smart city objectives influence knowledge production in architectural education through their integration into academic institutions via various means.

Key public institutions — including the Council of Higher Education (YÖK), the Scientific and Technological Research Council of Turkey (TÜBİTAK), and the Ministry of Environment, Urbanisation, and Climate Change — play an active role in shaping research and curriculum through strategic funding programs, performance metrics, and priority areas. Consequently, while social engagement or justice-oriented approaches receive minimal institutional backing, architecture departments increasingly value data-driven, efficiency-oriented research. The study will use a qualitative research design. The research argues that smart city policies, rather than being purely technological, act as instruments of political and economic control. Such issues, therefore, raise important concerns about the autonomy of academic works and the narrowing of research agendas. The study aims to contribute to broader discussions about urban governance, neoliberalism, and the future of architecture education by offering a critical perspective on the intersection between ideologies and environmental studies.

keywords: Environmental Studies, Smart City, Ideology, Architectural Education and Research

10:20 - 10:40

Spatial Backdrops: Expanding Scenography in Exhibition Design

Nusret Atakan Harmancı

Supervisor: Ayşen Savaş
Jury Members: Haluk Zelef

Alişan Çırakoğlu

This ongoing research explores scenography beyond its theatrical origins, examining its role in shaping architectural formations across different contexts. Using the Tragic, Comic, and Satiric Scenes of Sebastiano Serlio (1475-1554) as a pretext, the study highlights their spatial frameworks shaped by perspectival representation, a mode that generates "spaces in relief." It traces the appearance of these scenes through Venetian paintings, where they act as spatial backdrops, opening new dialogues between art and architecture. From there, research extends to contemporary exhibition practices that interrogate the relationship between content and container.

In the context of recent developments in artificial intelligence, the fast-paced consumption of architectural visuals, and ongoing challenges in the construction sector, representation methods have become increasingly critical architectural tools. Exhibitions now serve as vital platforms for representing alternative social, political, and ecological narratives. Adopting a research-by-design methodology, this study proposes scenography as a tool for exhibition design, encompassing architectural drawings, façades, stage sets, vitrines, and display cases as forms of interdisciplinary exchange.

The study also considers scenography's metaphorical use in relation to the stage and the city, its dialogue with tectonics, and its resonance with the "Strada Novissima." It engages with debates around sciographia and perspective, offering a broader theoretical grounding. Highlighted examples such as Storefront for Art and Architecture in New York and Ka Space for Visual Culture & Artistic Thinking in Ankara reveal how urban vitrines can be reimagined within educational and narrative frameworks, transforming the city itself into a spatial backdrop.

keywords: Display, Representation, Architectural Drawing, Scene, Perspective

10:40 - 11:00

Beyond Storage: An Architectural Inquiry into Museum Depots

Beyza Nur Yağlı

Supervisor: Ayşen Savaş
Jury Members: Afşin Altaylı

Ayşegül Aydıngün

Along with the democratisation of museum institutions, storage spaces have undergone significant transformations with increasing efforts to make collections visible in line with institutional policies. In this context. once limited to technical roles of preservation and protection, museum depots are now being reconsidered for their spatial and narrative potentials. This ongoing research critically scrutinises the spatial and conceptual potentials of depots as narrative elements within contemporary museology. By exploring architectural alternatives that challenge traditional storage typologies, the study investigates the depot museum not only as a distinct typology that blurs the boundaries between storage and display but also critical lens for rethinking the role of storage in museology. Even though global discourse increasingly acknowledges the evolving role of museum storage, the architectural and curatorial dimension of depots in Turkey remains largely unexplored. The concept of a depot museum in Turkey has been restricted to a limited number of initiatives and has not yet been adequately addressed at a theoretical and practical level. In this context, drawing on international case studies and historical precedents of storage practices, and applying architectural analysis to selected examples from Turkey, this study aims to define the ideal components of the museum depot and explore new spatial strategies by contributing to the field of architectural discourse on museum depots.

keywords: Museology, Depots, Curatorial Practices, Depot Museum, Storage and display 11:00 - 11:20

Anthropogenic Landscapes: Sinkholes as Symbols of Shifting Grounds

Selen İlhan

Supervisor: Funda Baş Bütüner

Jury Members: Gizem Deniz Güneri Söğüt

Nesli Naz Aksu

The immense impact of human agency on the Earth, along with the accelerating force of environmental change, is causing transformations in various territories. The role of the Architect as the one who contributes to those alterations the most, has shifted. The epoch is now calling for architecture to engage with landscapes and to mediate between humans, soil, and more-than-human agencies. Anthropogenic Landscapes are areas that have been shaped or changed by human actions. One of the most important elements in these landscapes is soil where construction activities, mining zones, planetary urbanization, shift their characteristics. This study approaches soil as part of the Critical Zone, a thin layer of the Earth where life, land, and human activity all interact closely. Seeing sinkholes as part of this zone helps us understand them not just as surface problems, but as signs of deeper changes happening in the land.

Human-induced sinkholes as Anthropogenic Landscapes are investigated throughout the study while embracing mapping as a proactive tool. Sinkholes, as geomorphological forms occurring in karst plateaus, are both a result of and a contributing factor to the shifts on the ground. These elliptic collapses on the ground jeopardize urban and rural environments since they are abrupt and ambiguous in time, location, and scale. In this context, sinkholes can be discussed into two types: Human-Induced Sinkholes and Natural Sinkholes. Thus, by examining several sinkholes from Konya, Türkiye (Obruk Plateau) this research aims to map the shifting territories to highlight the subsequent operations on the ground.

keywords: Anthropogenic Landscape, Soil, Sinkhole, Shifting Ground, Critical Zone

11:20 - 11:40

Artificial Architectural Imaginations: A Critical Look at Diffusion Al's Role in Architecture

Bartu Lokumcu

Supervisor: Zeynep Mennan
Jury Members: Egemen Kızılcan

Duygu Tüntaş

This thesis critically investigates how diffusion AI models, such as Stable Diffusion and Flux, have influenced architectural design workflows. These tools blur the boundary between conceptual design and final visualisation and have started to be increasingly adopted in architectural practice, in addition to many other creative fields. The research aims to integrate theoretical analysis of diffusion models, from conceptual design to the production of various kinds of visualizations. Theoretically grounded in Guy Debord's Society of the Spectacle, it examines whether diffusion based AI workflows reinforce architecture's role as a spectacle-ignoring both material and social realities—or allow designers to develop more creative and interactive ways of design that produce valuable results. It plans contribute to the current literature with the critical investigation of some case studies for the rapidly evolving uses by asking the deeper questions about creativity, visual culture etc.

keywords: Diffusion Models, Generative AI, AI in Architecture, Creativity, Representation, Curatorship

11:40 - 12:00

Assessing Energy Poverty and Household Vulnerability in the Built Environment

Başak Elgin

Supervisor: **İpek Gürsel Dino**Co-advisor: **Günsu Merin Abbas**

Jury Members: Gizem Deniz Güneri Söğüt

Ayşem Berrin Çakmaklı

Energy poverty is a growing concern globally, particularly for developing countries, which now extends beyond economic issues and starts to sprawl into spatial and environmental conditions that impact everyday life. This thesis will examine how the built environment, household structure, and changing climate parameters correlate with each other and how much they can be related to energy poverty in Ankara, Türkiye. While energy poverty is widely addressed in policy and academic discourses globally, most existing studies usually rely on income-based indicators or household energy expenditures, but they overlook the spatial, material, and climatic dimensions that contribute to energy deprivation. By creating a methodological framework that integrates socioeconomic data at the household level with building performance simulations assisted by current climate data and future climate projections, the study aims to fill this gap.

With the absence of official energy poverty recognition, climatic diversity, and a wide variety of housing stock, Türkiye is a context that needs to be studied from the perspective of energy poverty, especially in urban contexts with diverse housing stocks such as Ankara. A multidimensional energy poverty risk matrix will be designed, unique to Ankara's climatic and urban characteristics, to identify patterns of vulnerability across different segments of the city. This study will aim to contribute to a more robust and spatially focused understanding of energy poverty in Türkiye, not just to address urban policy issues but also to draw attention to the built environment.

keywords: Energy Poverty, Built Environment, Residential Vulnera* bility, Climate Change Adaptation

12:00 - 12:20

A Data-Driven Design Support Framework for Sustainability Transition in Educational Buildings

Beste Eser Kantekin

Supervisor: **İpek Gürsel Dino**

Jury Members: Gizem Deniz Güneri Söğüt
Aysem Berrin Cakmaklı

Improving the environmental performance of educational buildings requires a comprehensive understanding of how building form, energy use, and climate-responsive retrofit strategies work together. School buildings, due to their high occupancy rates, regular usage patterns, and long-standing societal functions, present both significant opportunities and unique challenges for energy-focused renovation. Although these buildings play an essential role, much of the current research still focuses on isolated aspects, often addressing energy consumption alone without fully considering the combined effects of occupant behavior. physical characteristics, and local climate conditions. Limited access to accurate and up-to-date building data, particularly for older schools, adds further complexity to the development of effective retrofit strategies. To overcome these challenges, this study introduces a performance-based, climate-responsive decision-making framework designed to support the evaluation and prioritization of retrofit options for educational facilities. The research draws on multiple data sources. including institutional records, assumptions derived from literature, and simulation-based estimates, enabling comparative analysis across different building types and construction periods. The study compiles a broad dataset covering construction features, operational patterns, occupancy characteristics, climatic variables, and energy consumption data. The primary objective is to establish a framework that guides the selection and ranking of retrofit strategies by balancing potential energy savings, implementation feasibility, and climate resilience. By combining empirical data with design-informed evaluation methods, the study aims to contribute to the advancement of performance-based retrofit approaches for educational buildings.

keywords: Educational Buildings, Climate-Responsive Design, Design Tool, Performance-Based Renovation



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ARCH 604 Spring Semester 2024-25

This is the official document prepared for the graduate seminar course of ARCH 604.

Spring 2025 Semester

Date of the Meeting: 17.06.2025 at Kubbealtı, Faculty of Architecture

Online Meeting Link: https://teams.live.com/meet/933106614012?p=EKe1iKM90fXgFSaJgy

Meeting ID: 933 106 614 012

Passcode: j2m6dy

Course Instructor: İpek Gürsel Dino



Treatments on Architectural Surfaces
Cihat Çağlar

13.55 - 14:20

Dwelling Beyond the Unit:
Reimagining Public Housing as Place
İbrahim Alpdemir

No Such Thing as a Return:

Representational Value of Motifs and

13:30 - 13:55

15:10 - 15:35

14:20 – 14:45

Searching for Participatory Design
Approaches in Post-Disaster Housing
Senem Türkkul

14:45 - 15:10 Habitat in Architectural Theory and the Biopolitics of Transcorporeal Space Ece Gören

A Critical Reading of Ankara's

Socio-Spatial Fabric: Decoding Urban

Interstices through Property Relations as Differential Spaces
Aysema Ülke

15:35 – 16:00 In Other Words, In Other Worlds: The Linguistic Condition of Architecture

İpek Akın

13:30 - 13:55

No Such Thing as a Return: Representational Value of Motifs and Treatments on Architectural Surfaces

Cihat Çağlar

Supervisor: Ayşen Savaş
Jury Members: Celal Abdi Güzer

Umut Şumnu

While often dismissed as historical residue or aesthetic surplus, motifs and treatments mediate architecture's negotiations with meaning, memory, and materiality, often without theoretical recognition or conceptual clarity. This introductory investigation questions the representational value of "architectural motifs and treatments" through a critical and thematic interpretation of architectural discourse from the late 19th century to the mid-20th century. Based on the theoretical frameworks on and around "motifs and treatments," the investigation challenges the reappearances of ornament to signify a simple return to historical and traditional styles. In contrast, the study examines how ornaments are reconfigured and by which agents or discourses within architectural understandings. Due to the absence of a more precise term, "motifs and treatments" functions as a term that encompasses ornament, decoration, and various surface supplements. The study steers clear of simplistic classifications, focusing instead on their complex discursive and material aspects. It adopts a post-structuralist perspective that views ruptures, reinventions, and "returns" as significant formations rather than merely nostalgic gestures in a non-linear flow. Instead of a definitive conclusion, the investigation aims to open up further terrain for architectural speculation and theoretical reflection.

keywords: motifs, surface treatments, ornament, decoration, materiality, representation

13:55 - 14:20

Dwelling Beyond the Unit: Reimagining Public Housing as Place

İbrahim Alpdemir

Supervisor: Celal Abdi Güzer
Jury Members: Cânâ Bilsel

Özlem Erdoğdu Erkarslan

As a multifaceted and complex matter, public housing has often been discussed on its failures in efficiency, cost and maintenance, or its stigmatization within political narratives. However, such frameworks often ignore or obscure the deeply human and experiential aspects of dwelling. This study explores how public housing can move beyond its conventional role as standardized shelter to become a meaningful, lived environment rooted in identity, belonging, and spatial quality. Focusing on the phenomenology of place and placemaking, the study critiques current mass housing practices—particularly in Türkiye—that prioritize quantity and cost over human experience. Drawing on the dichotomy of space and place it examines how residents personalize, adapt, and inhabit public housing to create a place. Employing a mixed-methods approach, including cross-cultural case studies, phenomenological interviews, and design and policy analysis, the research compares global and Turkish examples to identify design and policy factors that either foster or inhibit placemaking. By centering the lived experience of residents, the study offers critical insights into how public housing can be reframed as a dynamic and participatory process of dwelling and inductive design, rather than a static product of top-down planning.

keywords: Public Housing, Phenomenology of place, Placemaking, Inductive design, Spatial Justice

14:20 - 14:45

Searching for Participatory Design Approaches in Post-Disaster Housing

Senem Türkkul

Supervisor: F. Cânâ Bilsel
Jury Members: Celal Abdi Güzer

Serap Kayasü

Post-disaster reconstruction is a complex and multi-layered process that intersects with urgent humanitarian needs, long-term development goals, and deeply embedded social and cultural dimensions. Numerous studies recognize that efforts to reconstruct must take into account the identities, aspirations, and lived experiences of those affected rather than being just motivated by efficiency or technical expertise. In this context, participatory design has emerged as an alternative model for producing post-disaster housing that is both socially sustainable and resilient. This research synthesizes significant findings from various research on participatory approaches to post-disaster housing, particularly focusing on the improved living environments in the face of the problem of speed and efficiency in construction, the temporality of reconstruction, and the role of diverse actors in these processes. The 2023 Kahramanmaras earthquakes provide a current and relevant context in which these issues, particularly the case of Antakya, require critical examination. This seminar paper addresses these issues while presenting a literature review conducted on participatory housing design and participatory post-disaster housing reconstruction.

keywords: Post-disaster reconstruction, Community participation, Housing, Spatial and temporal aspects of reconstruction, Kahramanmaraş earthquakes 14:45 - 15:10

Habitat in Architectural Theory and the Biopolitics of Transcorporeal Space

Ece Gören

Supervisor: Funda Baş Bütüner
Jury Members: Esin Kömez Dağlıoğlu

Gizem Deniz Güneri Söğüt

The conceptualization of 'habitat' in architectural discourse has historically functioned as a medium of division, defined less by its capacity to sustain life than by its function of excluding, classifying and segregating different corporealities of life. Architectural theorizations of habitat have thus often served to classify, separate, and contain rather than aligning with its biological conception as a relational setting that enables life. Situated within the Anthropocenic context of massive and ongoing destruction of habitat, this research is driven by the urgency of rethinking architectural praxis in response to planetary crises. The basic methodology of the research is to conduct a genealogy of habitat in architecture. The analysis is aimed at uncovering the anthropocentric and exclusionary tendencies inherent in the architectural understanding of habitat, foregrounding the absent or neglected relationships within mainstream architecture practice. The theoretical framework of this research builds upon new materialist theory and ecofeminist transcorporeality to challenge the binary distinctions between human and nonhuman, subject and object, built and unbuilt environments, and habitat and the 'other'. Additionally, the research engages Foucauldian conceptions of biopolitics to examine how architectural definitions of habitat operate as techniques of power—regulating bodies, populations, and boundaries in accordance with normative ideals of life. Through these lenses, the research proposes an ecology of practices as a generative medium for enabling the articulation of multiple architectural imaginaries and narratives of habitat that can expand beyond static definitions of the term.

keywords: Habitat, Environmental humanities, New materialist posthumanism, Biopolitics of space, Anthropocene

15:10 - 15:35

A Critical Reading of Ankara's Socio-Spatial Fabric: Decoding Urban Interstices through Property Relations as Differential Spaces

Aysema Ülke

Supervisor: Güven Arif Sargın

Jury Members: İnci Basa

Funda Baş Bütüner

Urban is a complex organization in terms of both material and immaterial conditions. This complexity requires not only disparate components but also the conditions that could ground the dialectical processes. Among binary components such as urban vs. rural, private vs. public, figure and ground, there is always the said dialectic, which is composed of, melts into, and/or left out by the duals. In the current literature, the connotations of this liminality, the third component - the process itself - vary from the threshold, the in-betweenness to leftover or from the thirdspace to non-space; and yet, I believe that they have clear-cut descriptions that contrast with the nature of the dialectics. On the contrary, interstice, preliminarily deriving from its definition as the space between its essential materialities, is both an ambiguous procedure and an absolute matter. Ambiguity refers to uncertain, vague, obscure or opaque conditions that all suggest a constant process of betweenness, leaving almost no material existence for an absolute spatiality. On the other hand, in an urban context, absoluteness occurs under material socio-spatial traces of a variety of agencies and/or actors; it even derives its essence from the very micro-spatiality, perhaps at the micro-scale.

However, both the conditions of ambiguity and absoluteness are made out of either everyday life's practices or through the mechanisms of planning and architecture, creating a complex array of socio-spatiality. At all events, the dialectic between ambiguity and absoluteness of interstitial spaces co-occurs within the discourses of the property relations, border, boundary, and hence the territory within their shifting relationality. Therefore, this research is to propose a critical reading of Ankara's socio-spatial fabric to problematize its urban interstices through specifically property relations, which are instrumentalized in the production and reproduction of the said urban fabric as well as its discursive practices as exercised through ambiguous and absolute conditions, based on the rights to use or to own. By critically unfolding urban interstices with the employment of neo-Marxian dialectical reading, in this respect, the study aims to problematize interstitial spaces in terms of social and political contestation and thus to map out how and to what extent the said contestation presents its full-force existence in urban sections via differential spaces.

keywords: urban interstices, ambiguity, absoluteness, property relations, differential space

15:35 - 16:00

In Other Words, In Other Worlds: The Linguistic Condition of Architecture

İpek Akın

Supervisor: İnci Basa

Jury Members: Güven Arif Sargın

Berin Gür

This study investigates the evolving mechanisms of language in architectural thinking, critical theory, and practice, approaching not as linear shifts but as a recursive, branching phenomenon with a network of multiplicity in relations and roles. Following a diachronic approach, from the textual beginnings of Vitruvius to contemporary practice and drawing on elementary studies in linguistics, this research explores the close relationship between language and architectural thinking. Architecture uses, produces, and is produced by language. Attempting to map the broader network of architecture's linguistic conditions, this study aims to reveal the plurality of relations in cognitive, epistemological, and practical formations. Language, by performing a myriad of roles, operates as the conceptual infrastructure of architecture, producing and organizing knowledge, articulating meaning, and mediating design in syntactic, semantic, and pragmatic contexts. Drawing on linguistic theory, from Saussure and Jakobson to Derrida and Foucault, this study traces how architecture internalized structuralist, post-structuralist, and deconstructivist models of signification, intertextuality, and difference. The linguistic discourse of architecture takes several critical positions on architecture's relationship with language, elevating the importance of theory at times, criticizing language's limits and misuses, as well as the unprecedented roles of language today, where prompts, codes, metaphors, and intertexts intersect in a polyglot ecology. Understanding this ecology is essential for engaging architecture intellectually, critically, theoretically, and ethically in the age of technology.

keywords: Textuality, Architectural Thinking, Linguistics, Architectural Writing

