ARCH 8630: Architecture, space and culture: Interaction paradigms in the adjustable home

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Catalogue Description:
Accounts of the social functions of architectural space and associated design choices, across a variety of building types and scales of environmental design.

Aims:
This is a research oriented elective class, with two aims.
1. To introduce theories or architectural space and associated methods of spatial analysis that can be applied to: (a) model the human functions of buildings; (b) benchmark design alternatives; (c) evaluate competing designs to support design choices; (d) inform the design imagination.
2. Collectively pursue a particular research question, a different one each time the class is offered.

This year the focus will be on the way in which the design of the domestic environment affects the interaction between people and the interaction between people and things, including the building itself.

Learning outcomes:
The most important learning outcome of any ambitious research oriented course is not easily assessable in the short term: helping to develop a fruitful way of thinking about a field of inquiry and an area of practice. This course is associated with the following particular learning outcomes that can be readily assessed.
1. Understanding the basic theoretical concepts that help us model the human functions of building layouts.
2. Understanding representations and measures of spatial relationships that define the affordances of built environments as settings for everyday life: (a) visibility and accessibility; (b) centrality and separation; (c) subdivision and differentiation; as these structure.
3. Test this understanding by developing detailed or diagrammatic designs that advance particular propositions about desirable patterns of inhabitation.

Course assignments and course assessment:
The course will be run as a workshop with participants developing short essays through texts and drawings. These will be discussed in class in draft form, over several iterations, before their final assessment. 70% of the grade will be based on the final deliverables and 30% of the grade on participation in class discussions. It is assumed that course work will be linked to the projects completed by graduate students in Fall 2019 and to the projects that seniors will be developing in Spring 2020.

Readings:
An in-depth study of papers, book chapters and architectural projects will be undertaken. Some material will be treated as ‘data’ (accounts or settings of inhabitation) and some will help develop conceptual foundations, modes of inquiry and methods of analysis and design thinking.

Eligibility:
This year, the course is intended for graduate students who took the studio ARCH8866 Design + Space Syntax in Fall 2019 and senior students taking the joint studio ARCH/ID in spring 2020 only.