

## Teaching Philosophy

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### **Narrative Imagination as a Design Strategy**

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My teaching philosophy and research revolve around enriching architectural thought through narrative imagination. As a researcher and educator, I explore various narrative forms including literary constructs, theatre, and cinema to delve into the lived spaces within them and share these findings with students. Instead of initiating space-related assignments solely with architectural programs and quantitative measurements, I advocate for the integration of verbal and dramatic arts. In engaging these mediums, my students and I forge a creative and shared social connection, aligning ourselves through elements that hold personal significance.

The “personal significance” refers to aspects within a piece of verbal or dramatic art that evoke a profound sense of value. We harness, refine, and apply this evoked sense of value as a stimulant for the imaginative process of architectural design. This participatory injection of meaning to architecture offers a deeper understanding that architecture is inherently intertwined with cross-disciplinary imaginaries, empowering us to address the social complexities and humanity involved in the design praxis facing challenges and inequalities of the real-world.

For instance, in an upper-level lecture class entitled “Origins of Modern Architecture, (OMA),” I assigned students the task of translating the mystical spatial experiences depicted in the short stories of Argentine writer Jorge Luis Borges to the language of architecture. They were to do this by creating architectural composite drawings, using collage and montage techniques. These assignments led students to discuss and practice complex spatial aspects of architecture such as temporality, mood, and atmosphere.

In my assignments, I conduct narrative encounters with architecture for students to explore the emotional, sensory, and experiential dimensions of architecture to comprehend space cognitively. It allows them to envision architecture not merely as a functional background or a formal shell, but rather as the embodiment of human imagination.

### **Assessment and Peer Engagement**

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In theory courses, my teaching approach emphasizes the use of maieutic dialogue, arranging students to formulate their own questions and challenge their assumptions. I employ short in-class debates, assignments, and exercises to promote collaborative and critical thinking among them.

In design workshops, my assessment method includes conducting critiques (crits) and pinup sessions, not only during midterm and final presentations, but also throughout the course, to foster socially-based peer interaction. I believe that active learning thrives on peer engagement, transforming the classroom into an interactive event.

For example, in OMA, we began architectural composite drawings by having students present their ongoing work informally, creating a gallery-style setting that encouraged discourse. Initially, I guided these peer dialogues, but as we progressed, I gradually stepped back, transitioning from a guide to a facilitator. This shift promoted open dialogue and allowed learning to naturally unfold and decide design choices on their own, empowering students to transition from dependent to independent learners.

Learning occurred through students' discussions and their capacity to evaluate both themselves and their peers with positive reinforcement. I also motivated students to actively participate in their colleagues' formal pin-up sessions and requested each presenter to designate a note-taker during their reviews. This approach highlights the importance of peer community even in formal settings, enabling individuals to assess their progress in cooperation with their peers. It particularly benefits reflective learners who can later review the notes at their own convenience.

### **Teaching Philosophy Evaluation**

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The vibrancy and depth of dialogue facilitated by these methods are a testament to the teaching philosophy just described. For example, in the context of the course OMA, I invited professional architects, other professors, alumni of the course, and artists, ensuring that all 32 students received comprehensive feedback. I assessed the efficacy of my teaching approach by observing the quality of the interactions between guest critics and students, as well as their engagement with the projects. Beyond the visual aspects of their work, I found valuable insights in students' choices of words and the ways in which they conveyed the narratives of their design decisions.

The greatest payoff is watching students learn to evoke a personal sense of value through verbal and dramatic art, and to anchor their projects within the social sphere. In essence, my primary objective is for students to recognize that every architectural project should emanate from a narrative perspective on life, and thereby ultimately furthering social justice towards a hoped global amity.