

School of Architecture | Georgia Tech | Fall 2026

ARCH 6028: Core I Studio

Required Course for M.Arch

ARCH 6028 Syllabus

Credit Hours: 5 credits

Location: Hinman Building, Main Floor

Schedule: Monday/Wednesday - 12:30PM-5:25PM

Instructors: Michael Stradley, Ventulett NEXT Fellow

Email: mstradley3@gatech.edu

Office Location: Architecture East Building, Room 110

Office Hours: by Appointment

General Course Information

Course Description

ARCH 6028 (Core I) is a foundational architectural design studio, which emphasizes analytical and analogical strategies applied to studio problems that engage architectural representation, composition, and fabrication.

Core I is the first design studio of the Master of Architecture program, for students entering the discipline. It proceeds through three exercises of escalating scale and complexity — a wall, a room, a field of rooms — each introduced with a written provocation that states the design problem as a contradiction rather than a program. The studio's central operation is translation: moving between drawing and model, two dimensions and three, analog and digital, and in both directions.

Course Learning Outcomes

At the conclusion of the studio, students will be able to:

- Read architectural drawings as spatial descriptions of three-dimensional space.
- Employ the foundational conventions of architectural drawing: plan, section, elevation, and axonometric projection.
- Dimension architecture at the scale of the body: stair, door, threshold, room, and the intervals between them.
- Translate a design proposition from sketch to drawing to model and model to drawing to sketch, with an awareness of what each medium preserves, transforms, and generates.
- Employ digital tools to produce design and representation, drafting accurately in two dimensions, modeling in three dimensions, and moving fluidly between the two.
- Produce physical models as primary design instruments, demonstrating material intelligence and deliberate decisions about connection, material, and fabrication.

- Formulate a design concept and develop that concept across media and scales.
- Communicate design ideas through the full palette of architectural representation: language, the sketch, measured drawing, models, diagrams, and so on.
- Iterate and produce successive versions that build up a design idea incrementally.
- Present and discuss work in desk crits, pin-ups, and formal reviews, and respond to criticism from instructors and peers productively.
- Maintain a documented design process across the length of the studio, evidenced in the accumulating body of work and an ongoing studio sketchbook.

Course Guidelines

Each exercise is introduced by a riddle and carries three kinds of deliverables: drawings, a physical model, and a written text. Every design exercise is expected to be revised and developed through multiple iterations before review.

Each exercise will specify precise deliverables with page sizes and graphic standards. Student work should adhere to these formatting and graphic requirements.

Each exercise carries a written requirement. Language is treated as a mode of representation alongside drawings and models, and should be pinned with the work.

Studio practice. At the conclusion of every studio session, students will select, format, and prepare a single trimmed process drawing or image for pin-up in a dedicated studio space (tbd). This artifact should be evidence of the day's work and thinking — not presentation quality, but carefully chosen and specific. These daily artifacts will accumulate into a living record of the studio's progress.

A bound sketchbook should be brought to every studio session. Students should maintain an active drawings and sketching practice.

A progress pin-up or a formal review will occur each Monday, and new work should be presented, without exception.

Course Expectations and Materials

Working in studio rather than at home will reinforce a studio culture and make you part of the dialogue the studio setting is designed to produce. You will learn as much from your peers as you learn from any instructor. Your development as a designer is magnified by your cohort and group reviews are collective for a reason: each designer has unique perspective they bring to the studio and each has something to gain from the perspectives and ideas operating in the work of others.

Work in the studio builds sequentially, so commitment to incremental, iterative development on a daily basis is critical. Late work does more than lower a grade, it puts you out of alignment with a studio structure that accumulates and builds over the semester.

Course readings, assignments, and reference materials will be provided via Teams and through physical print-outs in class. Students should have a laptop capable of running Adobe software and Rhino, as well as a three-button mouse. Students will be responsible for purchasing a modest quantity of drawing/modeling materials throughout the semester, as well as basic studio supplies which will serve them in this studio and in design studios moving forward.

Basic drafting supplies and tools can be purchased at Sam Flax, Blick Art Supply, or elsewhere. Below is a modest list of suggested supplies:

- Drafting pencils or mechanical pencils, minimum HB and 2H
- White vinyl eraser and an erasing shield
- A 45° drafting triangle and/or an adjustable triangle
- Metal straightedge for both measuring and cutting
- Drafting dots or drafting tape
- Drafting brush
- X-Acto knife or utility knife with many extra blades
- Self-healing cutting mat, 18" x 24" minimum
- Chipboard, museum board, foamcore, basswood strips and sheets. (Buy as needed rather than in advance)
- A pad of 18" x 24" paper – 100lb+ weight and decent quality
- Sobo or Tacky model-making glue
- Small clamps or binder clips
- Sandpaper, assorted grits, and a sanding block
- Bound sketchbook, hardcover. (durable and not spiral-bound)
- Tape measure
- T-pins or push pins

Grading Policy

The final course grade will be a cumulative total of points earned from all assignments. The sum of a perfect score on all assignments is 100.

Assignments

Student performance is evaluated across three exercises of escalating scope, together with sustained record of studio practice and participation, and the SoA portfolio and archiving requirement. All work is individual.

- Exercise I — The Wall (15 pts)
- Exercise II — The Room (20 pts)
- Exercise III — The Field (40 pts)
- Sketchbook and Studio Practice (15 pts)
- Portfolio and Archiving (10 pts)

Grading Criteria

Assessments are based on the requirements of each exercise, in relation to the following criteria:

- Concept — How clearly are conceptual intentions articulated?
- Translation of concept — How well is the concept used to develop an architectural response to the problem posed?
- Craft and conventional accuracy — Are drawings correctly constructed, correctly weighted, and well made? Is the model built with care? Conventional error is error, independent of the strength of the idea.
- Representational quality — To what degree do the representations convey what they ought to?
- Iteration — Does each successive version differ structurally from the last, and can the student account for what has been refined and advanced?
- Oral presentation — How clearly are ideas presented, at the desk and before a jury?
- Participation and response to criticism — How constructively is the student involved in studio discussion, and how effectively is criticism taken up?
- Auto-criticality — To what extent is the student able to critique their own work regularly and effectively?

Grading Rubric

- A grade of "F" indicates failure to meet studio requirements, including attendance and minimum presentation requirements.
- A grade of "D" means significant attendance problems and failure to meet basic studio requirements.
- A grade of "C" means the basic requirements of the studio have just been met, with a plausible but substantially undeveloped body of work and minimal participation.
- A grade of "B" means basic requirements are met and the studio work is developed enough for evaluation against the seminar's themes and criteria.
- A grade of "A" means the project clearly demonstrates understanding of the studio themes, criteria, and self-motivated exploration far beyond basic requirements.

Grading Scale

- A 90–100%
- B 80–89%
- C 70–79%
- D 60–69%
- F Below 60%

Course Schedule

An annotated course schedule is listed below, but schedule is subject to periodic revisions. Updated schedules will be distributed to the studio via Teams.

Attending SoA lectures during studio time on Mondays or Wednesdays from 12:30–1:30 p.m. is required for all M. Arch students.

- **Week 1**
Monday 8/24 – Exercise I Launch
Wednesday 8/26 – Desk Crits
- **Week 2**
Monday 8/31 – Pin-up
Wednesday 9/2 – Desk Crits
- **Week 3**
Monday 9/7 – Labor Day, No Class
Wednesday 9/9 – REVIEW EXERCISE I
- **Week 4**
Monday 9/14 – Exercise II Launch
Wednesday 9/16 – Desk Crits
- **Week 5**
Monday 9/21 – Pin-up
Wednesday 9/23 – Desk Crits
- **Week 6**
Monday 9/28 – Pin-up
Wednesday 9/30 – Desk Crits
- **Week 7**
Monday 10/5 – Fall Break, No Class
Wednesday 10/7 – REVIEW EXERCISE II
- **Week 8**
Monday 10/12 – Exercise III Launch
Wednesday 10/14 – Desk Crits + Site Visit
- **Week 9**
Monday 10/19 – Pin-up
Wednesday 10/21 – Desk Crits
- **Week 10**
Monday 10/26 – Pin-up
Wednesday 10/28 – Desk Crits
- **Week 11**
Monday 11/2 – Pin-up
Wednesday 11/4 – MID REVIEW, EXERCISE III
- **Week 12**
Monday 11/9 – Pin-up
Wednesday 11/11 – Desk Crits
- **Week 13**
Monday 11/16 – Desk Crits
Wednesday 11/18 – Desk Crits
- **Week 14**
Monday 11/23 – Desk Crits
Tuesday 11/24 – FINAL REVIEW, EXERCISE III
Wednesday 11/25 – Thanksgiving Break, No Class
- **Week X**
Monday 12/7 – Portfolio due
SoA Portfolio Competition and Alumni Networking Event, 6:00–9:00 PM

Course Objectives – Specific NAAB Criteria

Levels of delivery and content:

- Introduced: This content is introduced, meaning it is referenced, introduced, and/or supported in the course.
- Practiced: This content is practiced, meaning students practice, understand, and are assessed on it.
- Assessed: This content is assessed, meaning it is a critical component of the course, students are evaluated, and the program assesses the student performance for accreditation and/or annually.

Criteria:

- PC.2 – Design: How the program instills in students the role of the design process in shaping the built environment and conveys the methods by which design processes integrate multiple factors, in different settings and scales of development, from buildings to cities. This content is Introduced in this course.
- PC.7 – Learning and Teaching Culture: How the program fosters and ensures a positive and respectful environment that encourages optimism, respect, sharing, engagement, and innovation among its faculty, students, administration, and staff. This content is Practiced in this course.

Course Policies

Attendance and Participation

Students are expected to make measurable progress on their design projects during each studio session, responding to feedback from the instructor, but also advancing the project critically and independently.

Active participation at all class meetings is mandatory. Absences will be excused only for medical or family emergencies, Institute-approved events, and religious holidays documented in writing. (Notify your instructor in writing during the first two weeks of the semester about any anticipated religious holiday absences.) Late arrivals will be counted as absences.

Missing two classes without an approved excuse may result in a letter grade reduction. Additional absences or missed reviews may result in failure of the studio.

Students are highly encouraged to submit absence verification for documented illness, hospitalization, accidents, family emergencies, or lengthy illnesses to the Dean of Students: <https://studentlife.gatech.edu/request-assistance>

Academic Integrity

Georgia Tech aims to cultivate a community based on trust, academic integrity, and honor. Students are expected to act according to the highest ethical standards.

Review [Georgia Tech's Honor Code](#) and the student [Code of Conduct](#). Any student suspected of cheating or plagiarism will be reported to the Office of Student Integrity.

For expectations of student and instructor conduct, consult [Code of Conduct \(rules/19\)](#) and [Student-Faculty Expectations \(rules/22\)](#).

Student-Faculty Expectations Agreement

At Georgia Tech, we believe that it is important to strive for an atmosphere of mutual respect, acknowledgement, and responsibility between faculty members and the student body.

[The Student-Faculty Expectations Agreement](#) articulates some basic expectations that you can have of me and that I have of you. Simple respect for knowledge, hard work, and cordial interactions will help build the environment we seek.

Accommodations for Students with Disabilities

If you are a student with learning needs that require special accommodation, contact the [Office of Disability Services](#) (404-894-2563) as soon as possible to make an appointment, obtain an accommodations letter, and discuss your special needs. Please also schedule an appointment with your instructor to discuss your learning needs.

Use of Generative AI

In this course, the use of Generative AI tools (insert appropriate AI tool(s) here) is encouraged as part of your learning and creative process. Responsible use is expected. All submitted work must include a brief AI Usage Statement outlining: which tools were used, when they were used, what prompts or questions were given, and how the AI output informed or shaped your final submission. Use of Generative AI must comply with Georgia Tech's Honor Code and academic integrity guidelines.

CIOS — Course Evaluations

At the end of the term, students are asked to complete the online course evaluation for all courses at Georgia Tech (<https://gatech.smartevals.com>). CIOS scores and comments have different degrees of visibility based on roles:

Reporting access by role	CIOS Scaled Results	CIOS Comments	TA's Scaled Results	TA's Comments
Instructor	Their Own	Their Own	All within their own course	All within their own course
TA Supervisor	N/A	N/A	All within their own course	All within their own course
Teaching Assistant	None	None	Their Own	Their Own
School Administration	All within their own unit	None	All within their own unit	All within their own unit
Students	All – Summary only	None	None	None

More information: [CIOS Student FAQ](#)

Campus Resources for Students

Undergraduate Student Academic Success Resources

A list of resources for undergraduate students' academic success and advising can be found at Success at Tech. Academic Support (a unit in the Office of Undergraduate Education & Student Success) provides free tutoring: success.gatech.edu/tutoring.

Graduate Student Academic and Professional Success Resources

A list of resources for graduate students is available on the Office of Graduate and Postdoctoral Education website.

Student Well-Being

At Georgia Tech, we are concerned about your overall physical, social, and mental well-being. A comprehensive list of wellness-related resources has been compiled by the Office of the Vice President for Student Engagement and Well-being.

Library & Archives

Contact your Architecture Library subject specialist, Catherine Manci (catherine.manci@library.gatech.edu), for research help and information on available resources.

Contact your Architecture Archives liaison, Jody Thompson (jody.thompson@library.gatech.edu), for assistance with archival research and collections.

Georgia Tech Library: <https://library.gatech.edu/> Georgia Tech Archives: <http://library.gatech.edu/archives>

Approved Communication Platforms

Georgia Tech Approved Communication Platforms

Georgia Tech Values Statement

At Georgia Tech, we see different backgrounds and perspectives as essential to learning, discovery, and creation. We strive to remove barriers to student success and to build a welcoming community where everyone has the opportunity to contribute to our mission. As outlined in our strategic plan, we want to create an environment of holistic learning where all individuals can grow and learn to lead healthy, purposeful, impactful lives.

SoA & College of Design Policies

Archiving

At the end of the semester, all students are required to submit physical and/or digital examples of their work to their instructors or administration for archiving no later than one week after the end of term. By enrolling, each student grants a license to reproduce and display their work online, in forthcoming print publications, and in public exhibitions.

Ownership

For the purposes of continuous improvement efforts, such as accreditations and periodic program reviews, the School will select samples of student work submitted to satisfy course requirements. This includes digital files, papers, drawings, models, etc. Collected samples may be returned to students upon request.

College of Design Facility Rules and Guidelines

Please consult the [Georgia Tech Student Handbook](#) regarding the use of facilities and all Institute policies. Aerosol sprays of any kind are strictly banned from the studio and surrounding areas. A spray painting booth is available in the College of Design shop on the ground floor of the East Architecture Building.

Course Expectations & Guidelines

Per the [GT Catalog](#), all work produced in the College of Design as part of a degree program becomes the property of the College; it may be retained or returned at the discretion of the faculty. The faculty of the School of Architecture reserves the right to refuse credit for any project executed outside the precincts of the College or produced without proper coordination with the faculty.

Emergencies

In case of emergency (e.g., fire, accident, or criminal act), please call the Georgia Tech Police at 404-894-2500. Perry Minyard, IT Support Administrator for the College of Design, is also a firefighter and EMT certified in performing CPR.