



## Department of Architecture

### Learning + Teaching Culture Policy

#### INTRODUCTION

The Department of Architecture Learning + Teaching Culture Policy (LTCP) is a living document designed to guide the learning community toward an ethical environment that productively educates and champions healthy, capable, and intelligent students and faculty. This goal can only be achieved by ardently working together as an entire team and as committed members of the school. The LTCP is adapted from the model document published by the national American Institute of Architecture Students (AIAS) and incorporates elements from the 2023 version of the Department of Architecture Studio Culture Policy.

In addition to the overarching values and ethics of the University of Memphis, the Department of Architecture is dedicated to optimism, professional conduct, constructive evaluations and instructions, collaborative community, time management and school-life-work balance, health and wellbeing, diversity and solidarity, respectful stewardship and space management, and well-rounded enrichment. The pedagogy of architecture and design is as complex as it is rewarding, and as dynamically evolving as the people who learn and teach it. That understanding is the core of this document.

#### DEPARTMENT OF ARCHITECTURE HONOR CODE

The faculty and students in the Department of Architecture understand and value the impact the design studio has on the overall educational experience. To enhance and preserve the effectiveness of the studio environment, the Department of Architecture Honor Code was developed and implemented. It has been in place since 1987.

The Honor Code of the University of Memphis Department of Architecture states:

*"I will not lie, cheat, or steal nor tolerate those who do."*

Because architecture and interior design are professions with a code of ethics governing professional conduct, similar rules and protocols are in effect in the design studios and classes as well as other education-related environments.

One of the most distinctive features of architecture and design education is the degree of trust which must exist among students as well as between students and faculty members. Students are responsible for themselves and for others.

No one affiliated with the Department of Architecture is exempt from the Honor Code and must abide by it at all times while on the campus of the University of Memphis, its extended locations, or while participating in any activity affiliated with the Department of Architecture.

In addition, it is expected that all students and faculty will respect others and will act in a manner so as to deserve respect.

Violating the Honor Code has serious implications. Depending on the severity of the violation, penalties include: receiving a grade of F on the examination or assignment, receiving a grade of F in the course, loss of studio privileges, exclusion from the degree programs, or expulsion from the University of Memphis. Violation may also result in a report being submitted to the Office of Judicial and Ethical Programs under the Division of Student Affairs.

The Department of Architecture focuses on fostering a studio environment that enhances the ability of students to run parallel to the mission of the University of Memphis as a learner-centered metropolitan research university providing high quality educational experiences while pursuing new knowledge through

research, creative expression, and interdisciplinary and engaged scholarship. By creating and maintaining an environment that is both positive and respectful, the creative process is much more likely to emerge and succeed.

In addition to the Honor Code, a set of rules, regulations, policies, and procedures have been developed and implemented. These are revised periodically to reflect changing conditions and needs of the students and faculty of the Department of Architecture. A complete set of policies may be found in the Department of Architecture Policies Manual.

## VALUES

The Learning + Teaching Culture Policy is based upon the following Values adapted from the national Culture Policy developed by the American Institute of Architecture Students.

- a. Optimism
  - i. Students and faculty will strive to be curious and academically minded, and to constantly be working toward positive solutions in design, for the profession, and in the method of teaching; the learning process should be continuous.
  - ii. The Department will provide an atmosphere of enjoyment that fosters creativity.
  - iii. Students and faculty will display empathy and strive to be kind to their community members while respecting academic freedom.
- b. Professional Conduct
  - i. Students and faculty will maintain a professional manner of respect with their peers and with each other. Open dialogue and respect of the identities, property and well-being of others are always expected.
  - ii. In order to maintain positive work-life balance, productivity and professional readiness, workload expectations of students and faculty will be well-communicated and realistic, and will prioritize health and wellbeing for rigor.
  - iii. University-sanctioned breaks and holidays will be honored and will be designated as time for students and faculty to rest.
  - iv. Students and faculty will strive to complete tasks in a timely manner. Students will arrive to class on time and turn in projects on time, while faculty will also arrive to class on time and provide information and feedback in a timely manner.
  - v. Students and faculty will be prepared ahead of time for classes, meetings, projects, and other tasks in a manner that is respectful to the time of other community members and is professionally acceptable.
  - vi. Students can expect and trust faculty to be equipped with a reasonable amount of knowledge in or around the topic they are teaching. Faculty can expect and trust students to recall and be equipped with skills they have been taught up to that point in their education.
- c. Constructive Evaluations and Instruction
  - i. All members of the community will be encouraged to express their ideas and purposes in a positive manner, and will receive constructive feedback on their process and methodology.
  - ii. Faculty can be expected to make every effort to be available for discussions outside of class during consistently scheduled office hours. Students can be expected to make every effort to attend those office hours if there is a need for additional instruction.
  - iii. Formal or informal reviews or critiques given by instructors or guest jurors will always be discussion-oriented; such discussions will never be critical of the person, but will always be directed to the work as it stands. It is the responsibility of the faculty to inform guest instructors and jurors of how to conduct themselves during reviews in accordance with the mission of the Department and the LTCP. The student whose work is being reviewed will arrive on time, be well prepared, adhere to the schedule proposed by the design critic, and will be engaged with the entire review. Faculty will facilitate opportunity and motivation for all students to remain engaged in all reviews.
  - iv. Faculty and students can expect each other to be attentive to material and emotional complexities in ways that seek to help before they condemn. The culture and process by which concerns are addressed will reflect that understanding in an open and conscientious way.
  - v. Via all communication means available (including syllabi, convocation, class meetings, email

- and other messages, etc.), students can expect faculty to be transparent and forthright about class details including, but not limited to the following: tentative dates of evaluations, grading scales, deliverable requirements per project, goals and intents of the class, and other things that are out of the control of the student. Faculty can expect students to receive, read, and retain these messages when they are sent. Only the official faculty and student University email will be used in this correspondence.
- vi. The entire learning community at the Department understands the difficulty of evaluating a qualitative discipline with quantitative grading, but will be fair and evaluate work without bias.
- d. Collaborative Community
- i. The Department recognizes the power of the collaborative design process and will make time and space for students and faculty to work together to better prepare students for the professional work they will achieve and the global issues they will go on to solve.
  - ii. The Department has a zero-tolerance bullying/harassment policy. The Department will not tolerate physical or emotional bullying by creating overly competitive learning environments or situations that weaken student-to-student relationships. Any behavior that resembles bullying will be addressed and punished per University Guidelines. Anyone who would like to report an incident can refer to resources on the website of the UofM Office of Student Accountability.
  - iii. Students are responsible for embodying academic integrity and shall not participate in or instigate plagiarism among their classmates. Any behavior that resembles plagiarism will be addressed and punished per the University Guidelines.
  - iv. Freedom of expression in architecture and design are rights of all students and faculty so long as such expression does not offend or mitigate the ability of another individual to express themselves.
  - v. As part of a community, students will be actively engaged and take pride in their work. Students are encouraged and invited to share their successes with the rest of the Department by showcasing in-process and completed work in designated spaces that are facilitated by the Department, as available.
  - vi. All students will intend to meet expectations for team projects or collaborative discussions by helping each other learn new skills, and sharing resources. As architecture is an interdisciplinary practice, students are encouraged to always seek to uplift rather than tear down other students.
- e. Health and Wellbeing
- i. The complex decision-making inherent in architecture education demands the focus and concentration that can only come from effective time management, personal well-being, physical health, mental health, sufficient sleep, and good nutrition. The Department encourages students to operate to the best of their abilities, something that can only be accomplished with a healthy balance of work, rest, food, and sleep.
  - ii. Absences for sickness or wellness-related reasons will be excused per the Department Attendance + Participation Policy with reasonable advance notice. Students will make up missed work at the discretion of their professor.
  - iii. The University provides assistance to those who are struggling with their health and wellbeing and taking advantage of those resources is encouraged of both students and faculty.
- f. Time Management and School-Life-Work Balance
- i. Time management is a skill that will be taught and exemplified for students in their early curriculum with the intent of their development of responsible habits. Healthy time management allows for a reasonable schedule dedicated to class time, personal time, or mental wellness, sleeping, and time for homework.
  - ii. The Department recognizes the diversity of obligations that make an education possible, and will not expect students or faculty to complete planning or schoolwork as if they have no other (familial or financial) obligations. Per a time management standard that centers on wellness, every assignment will be given enough time to be completed and constructively evaluated.
  - iii. Adopting chronically unhealthy sleep patterns in order to complete studio or class work prevents mental health and is not a tolerated facet of the Department. Lack of sleep and other noticeably unhealthy time management practices of students or faculty are not encouraged and will not be praised.

g. Diversity and Solidarity

- i. The Department recognizes the importance of diversity in and among architecture, and demands its own cultivation of an inclusive culture in the words we speak, the actions we take, the history we teach, the behaviors we model, and the buildings we design. The Department will provide opportunity and safe spaces to have those open discussions.
- ii. The Department respects the backgrounds (which could include any combination of but is not limited to: culture, race, ethnicity, religion, age, sex, gender, sexual orientation, disability, socioeconomic background, identity) of its students, and is open to accommodations through channels that are in accordance with University policies.
- iii. Financial barriers to succeeding in class will be addressed with provisions for those who are unable to participate financially.
- iv. All students will operate in an atmosphere of solidarity, shared effort, and mutual support. This entails meeting expectations for team projects, helping each other learn new skills, and sharing resources. Students are expected to be understanding and supportive of the realities their peers may be facing. Students are encouraged to establish a culture of generosity that will help ensure the personal growth and collective success of the class.
- v. Similar to the ongoing practice of architecture, the Department will seek to understand and learn more about the evolving stresses of its learning community, and how they may be eased or solved. The right of everyone to grow in their learning will be respected.
- vi. The Department recognizes the importance of encouraging a diverse range of career opportunities post-graduation, and will endeavor to reflect that in curricular instruction.

h. Respectful Stewardship and Space Management

- i. All members of the Department will respect the rights of others; this includes the property of other individuals, groups, and the Department. Studios, classrooms, and other public amenities within the Department are for the benefit of all and are expected to be treated with care.
- ii. The Department will not knowingly endanger its students, faculty, administration, or the environment by requiring or perpetuating the use of hazardous or toxic materials. As designers, future architects, and stewards of the Earth, it is the responsibility of the students, faculty, and administration within the Department to recycle used materials and mitigate waste.
- iii. Faculty and students can expect the Department to be upheld and maintained in such a way that protects the Health, Safety, and Welfare of its occupants on a regular basis, including security over school breaks. All members of the Department are expected to abide by safety measures and regulations that are instituted by the university.
- iv. It is the responsibility of every member of the Department to avoid bringing further damage and wear to critical common resources.

i. Well-Rounded Enrichment

- i. The Department will incorporate time in the curriculum to teach students the skills they need to know in order to succeed in subsequent classes and post-graduate research, experimentation, fulfillment, or employment. In a profession with an ever-shifting, technical and professional landscape, the Department will do its best to combine fundamental skills with contemporary tools in ways that prioritize student success and retention of skills.
- ii. An education at the Department can lead to a diverse range of career opportunities, and such potential will be reflected in all curricular instruction.
- iii. The Department recognizes that in accordance with a healthy school-work-life balance, this curriculum will facilitate or provide enrichment in the education of its students in order to create an environment that matriculates well-rounded graduates.
- iv. Exposure to and preparation for professional opportunities will be included in the curriculum or available resources at this school.
- v. Student participation in extracurricular activities (student-run organizations, activities, interdisciplinary cohorts, volunteerism, etc.) that enhance and supplement an education and life experience will be prioritized and modeled by faculty and administration.

## REVIEW PROCESS

Although a frequently updated LTCP is required by the 2020 NAAB Conditions for Accreditation (PC7, page

2), the LTCP may be revised as often as necessary to stay connected and attentive to our learning community. The LTCP is available to the public via the Department of Architecture website, and will also be provided to students, as well as discussed in the Introduction to Architecture course, and will be discussed at the Department-wide orientation each year as well as the AIAS “Welcome” event each year. The LTCP will be reviewed and revised, if necessary, annually by a committee composed of equally-empowered student leaders, faculty, and administrators.

## GRIEVANCES AND CONFLICT RESOLUTION

In design education, conflicts and other issues requiring formal resolution may occur. While many issues may be resolved at the Department level, issues such as grade disputes, behavioral issues, and others may be pursued to the University level (see University of Memphis Policies). To facilitate open interaction with students, all faculty members including administrators have posted office hours. The Chair also maintains an “open door” policy for students.

The AIAS Studio Representatives are elected to represent all of the students in each academic year. These representatives may bring issues to the administration from their studio or collectively from the student body. This process is intended to keep administrators informed of concerns as well as to create a process by which a student who may not wish to talk with an administrator personally still has a pathway to the administrator.

The LTCP committee is also responsible for interpreting the document and considering grievances, suggestions, and discussions, and may be advised in the event of greater violations. Complaints and concerns relative to the content herein may be submitted individually or through one of the six AIAS Studio Representatives.

## UNIVERSITY OF MEMPHIS POLICIES

All students are bound by the University of Memphis policies on academic dishonesty, disruptive behavior, and other policies in the University of Memphis Code of Student Rights and Responsibilities. Students violating these policies may be subject to disciplinary action. For more information, please visit the website of the Office of Student Accountability. References to these and other websites are contained in the syllabus of all courses taught within the Department.