Neom, the Line, Saudi Arabia under construction

MEGASTUDIO 3

FRAMES

INSTRUCTOR
LAM, Tat tatlam@cuhk.edu.hk

ARCHITECTURE AS AGENCY

Architecture is not merely the outcome of creativity or technical skill—it is an expression of agency in layered forms. Within Structuration Theory, it can be understood as both symbol and site: a material crystallization of social production, shaped by rules, resources, ideologies, and institutions, while in turn shaping how we live and act. It is neither passive structure nor pure agency but a dynamic space between the two.
Its agency unfolds through architects, reflexive agents who design within constraints of policy, material, technology, and social expectation, while projecting their own intentions into built form. In radical traditions, design embraces unintended consequences, using architecture to challenge norms, provoke political engagement, and imagine alternative futures. Yet this potential has long been limited by the communicative tools of the profession—drawings, models, and representations.
The rise of AI-assisted design introduces a new form of agency: the co-agent. While not autonomous, AI participates in ideation as a generative, responsive system. This raises questions of authorship and control, where prompt engineering becomes a method of structuration itself. Seen this way, architecture is no longer fixed product but an evolving negotiation between humans, technologies, and the systems they both inhabit and shape.

FRAMES

The studio uses FRAMES as a metaphor for the structural logics shaping both architecture and sociopolitical systems. A frame is not static—it marks boundaries while remaining open to reconfiguration. In this sense, FRAMES encompass material, political, and epistemological structures: the built environment, disciplinary conventions, computational systems, and design imaginaries. Students are asked to recognize and actively reshape these structures, treating design as a negotiation between stability and change. Through iterative work with traditional media and AI, prompts and prototypes become tools for testing flexibility, exposing how actions reinforce or disrupt systems. FRAMES thus serves as a scaffolding for experimentation, where structure is seen as dynamic rather than fixed.

PROJECT CRITERIA

All projects developed throughout the year, both collective and individual, must respond to the following criteria:

Agency and Relevance
The proposal must engage with real issues (social, ecological, or territorial) and respond critically to the conceptual lens of the assigned cluster.

Multiscalar and Contextual Design
The project must operate across multiple scales and respond meaningfully to its socio-spatial, environmental, and cultural context.

Programmatic and Spatial Richness
The project must integrate diverse uses, users, and spatial conditions, avoiding reductive or mono-functional approaches.

Design Resolution and Coherence
The project must be well-developed in form, material, and construction logic, and demonstrate architectural depth through clear drawings, physical or digital models, and a coherent narrative.

RESEARCH QUESTION

How can co-agency between humans, AI, and prefabricated systems redefine architectural authorship and production, moving beyond the singular designer toward distributed and systemic processes?

This studio asks how co-agency between humans, AI, and prefabricated systems can redefine architectural authorship and production, moving beyond the singular designer toward distributed and systemic processes. It also explores how prompt engineering and socio-technical frameworks might transform architecture into predictive and responsive spatial systems that engage with real-time cultural, material, and collective dynamics.

STUDIO DESCRIPTION

MEGA STUDIO v3.0 builds on two years of experimentation with the concept of the "mega," previously explored through case studies in Mogadishu and Hong Kong's Northern Metropolis. These earlier projects revealed the inherent tensions of "going big": the danger of reinforcing top-down, ego-driven narratives within large-scale design. Rather than rejecting the mega altogether, this third iteration adopts a post-critical stance, seeking to realize the potential of mega systems through co-agency and emergent design logics.

The studio positions architecture as a situated practice within the shifting terrain of post-agency, prompt-based intelligence, and infrastructural mega-systems. It challenges students to reimagine authorship by redistributing agency across human, machine, and material systems. Structured in two terms, the studio combines collective experimentation with individual thesis development. Students engage with AI interfaces, modular prefabrication, and complex urban conditions to develop responsive strategies grounded in systems thinking and socio-technical reflexivity.

Here, "bigness" is reframed not as monumental scale but as systemic complexity, integration, and emergence. Design work embraces complexity rather than resisting it, producing responses that are adaptive, iterative, and open-ended rather than singular or resolved.

Three interwoven frameworks guide the curriculum. Post-Agency uses agency as a tool to deconstruct authorship, redistributing it between human intent, AI-driven logic, and material behavior. Prompt Architecture positions the architect as a strategic communicator, engaging with large language models as co-designers whose generative logics are shaped by language, context, and feedback. Systematic Mega reframes the mega not as an object or spectacle but as a condition: political, infrastructural, social, and epistemic, composed of interdependent systems and contested terrains.

The design process begins with shared tool-making. Students collaborate to build a design grammar, prompt interface, and material logic that merges AI outputs with prefab components. Activities include prototyping, scripting, critical writing, and site speculation. In the second phase, students develop individual thesis projects situated within real, speculative, or imagined megastructures—contexts such as Hong Kong's Northern Metropolis, NEOM in Saudi Arabia, or fictional post-urban environments.

Final outputs include a shared design interface that tests the studio's core concepts, alongside individual theses critically addressing both intended and unintended consequences of architectural intervention. Through this, architecture is reframed not as a static product but as a transformative structuring — an evolving negotiation between systems, technologies, and collective agency.

PART ONE_COLLECTIVE

Architecture is inherently collaborative—architects work with colleagues, consultants, clients, and communities. This studio emphasizes collective work as a way to learn teamwork, idea exchange, negotiation, and knowledge-sharing, showing how group effort strengthens design. In the first term, each section develops a collective project aligned with its cluster theme, while students also form individual critical positions. The output may take many forms—pavilions, installations, exhibitions, publications, or performances. Students will work in teams to build an experimental design interface using Large Language Models (LLMs), exploring prompt-based authorship rather than coding. By generating architectural prompts that produce structured outputs—plans, systems, and assemblies—students test how AI can engage with real-world prefabrication, as well as social and political contexts. "Site" is expanded to include real, speculative, or fictional cities, with prompts serving as the core input for spatial and social intelligence. Supported by case studies and factory visits, the term culminates in a collective prototype or demo showing how LLMs can act as co-authors in architecture.

Phases and Deliverables

Collective Framing (Week 1)	Establish shared understanding of co-agency, prompt logic, and mega-complexity. Activities include theoretical readings, precedent studies, site analysis, and co-defining key terms.
Role Allocation + Subgroup Prototyping (Weeks 2 – 3)	Students form subgroups by interest and skill, developing system modules—prompt logic, LLM translation, prefab integration, or feedback systems—producing initial prototypes under a rotating or fixed project manager.
Interface Development (Weeks 4 – 7)	Submodules merge into a working interface using tools such as ChatGPT/GPT-4, Rhino + Grasshopper, p5.js, and Unity, culminating in Interface v1.0 with feedback mechanisms and documentation.
Field Testing + Iteration (Weeks 8 – 10)	Testing and redesign on NEOM.
Representation + Exhibition (Weeks 11 – 13)	Finalize interface, document its design logic, and critically assess it through the lens of the research questions.

PART ONE_PROJECT PROPOSAL

At the end of the first semester and contextual the presentation of the COLLECTIVE work students will present a proposal for the development of their individual or group project for the second part of the studio. This proposal should outline how the project responds to the overarching theme of the MArch — Architecture as Agency — and to the specific conceptual lens of the studio cluster. The aim of this to demonstrate a clear and thoughtful direction that can be further developed in the next phase of the studio.

Deliverables
Students will submit a booklet to illustrate their project proposal. Using a shared Project Book format common to all studios, the layout will be organised into four sections: Project Site, Research Questions, Project Description, Design Concept. The booklet will gather the main outcomes of the conceptual stage, including drawings, model photographs, illustrations and preliminary programme, to clearly convey the core ideas of the project. An InDesign template will be provided to ensure clarity and consistency among the students.

PART TWO_PROJECT

In Term 2, students transition from collective system-building to individualized experimentation, applying the prompt grammar, AI interface, and prefab logic developed in Term 1 to their own design thesis. However, the studio maintains its collaborative ethos by requiring each project to engage with the same core methodology: prompt-based inquiry, iterative refinement, and socio-technical reflection. Each student selects a site of their choice—locally or globally—and constructs a "field of relevance." This field may be spatial (e.g., an informal settlement), political (e.g., state-driven megaprojects), cultural (e.g., community memory), or speculative (e.g., future urban forms).

The scale is also open: a project might engage a megastructure, a street corner, or even a room—as long as it reveals conditions of bigness, complexity, or structuration. Students are encouraged to explore architecture not only as built form but also as a structuring force that engages with power, emergence, and unintended consequences. The studio challenges each student to define what constitutes a "mega condition" and how architecture might negotiate it. Design proposals may include: Revisions of existing megaprojects, such as Xiong'an or Bhutan's new capital city. Territorial or regional speculations, such as extensions of the Greater Bay Area. Responses to complex urbanism, such as urban villages in Shenzhen or informal settlements in South America. Designs for fictional or historically described contexts, such as cities from literary works, speculative fiction, or historical research. In these cases, students must gather and analyze sufficient narrative, visual, or scholarly data to construct a credible and meaningful design framework.

Deliverables

Drawings
Site plan (1:1000 or 1:500)
Floor plans (1:100 or 1:50), at least two key sections
Axonometric or exploded axonometric to communicate structural, spatial, or conceptual systems

Models
Site context model (1:1000 or 1:500)
Volumetric models (1:200 to 1:50)
Detailed fragments (1:50 or 1:20) illustrating material/tectonic conditions

Representation
Diagrams
Conceptual illustrations
Collages, renderings, or visual essays that trace the design logic and prompt evolution

Optional Outputs
Interactive design interface (e.g., LLM-based app)
Metaverse simulation, short animation, or speculative design fiction
These outputs are encouraged for projects with a strong AI/social systems emphasis.

Narrative Statement
A 500-word project essay articulating the design thesis, methodological integration with post-agency theory, and reflections on the socio-political engagement and systemic logic of the proposal.

Final Presentation
Students will give an oral presentation and present their projects using drawings, models, and all required materials in various formats. The Final Review will take place over three days and will be a moment to celebrate and showcase the work developed throughout the semester. As per tradition, a group of international and local experts, invited by each studio tutor, will join the review to provide feedback and share their perspectives.

Project Book
Students will present their final work through a shared Project Book format, common to all studios. The book will be organised into six sections: Project Summary, Research Questions, Project Description, Programme & Technology, Process, and Appendix. It will gather the main outputs of the studio, including detailed drawings, model photographs, and a comprehensive technology report with construction details. An InDesign template will be provided to ensure clarity and consistency, supporting potential use in exhibitions and publications.

IMPACT

Academically, this studio contributes to contemporary architectural discourse by advancing theories of post-agency and structuration within design pedagogy. It challenges traditional models of authorship and introduces new methodologies for integrating AI systems, prompting critical debates on the nature of design intelligence, intention, and emergence. The integration of LLMs and prefab frameworks as pedagogical tools paves the way for future research into computational design ethics, agency distribution, and the architectural implications of human-AI collaboration.
For the industry, the studio prototype offers a model for developing adaptive, AI-supported design systems that can respond to complex urban and infrastructural challenges. By training students to think in terms of systems rather than static forms, the studio equips future professionals with the skills to co-create responsive environments using prompt-driven tools. The outcomes—including the interface, case-based design workflows, and collaborative grammars—can inform digital design platforms, smart urban planning strategies, and interdisciplinary modes of production in architecture, planning, and technology sectors.
Ultimately, the studio reframes architectural agency as a shared process—between human designers, intelligent systems, and the contexts they operate in. This co-agency model offers an alternative to both top-down authorship and uncontrolled emergence, proposing architecture as a strategic interface that negotiates complexity with care, intelligence, and adaptability.

METHODS

This studio adopts a structuration framework, treating architectural design as a process shaped by the interplay of human agency, intelligent systems, and socio-material contexts. The concept of post-agency—or co-agency—is central, offering a means to diffuse ego-centric authorship by engaging AI tools such as Large Language Models (LLMs) as active collaborators. Prompts become a means of structuring dialogue between intention and emergence, producing spatial logics that are responsive rather than deterministic.
Architecture is approached not as a static object but as a structuring system. The design process operates in a recursive loop: generating prompts, producing AI responses, interpreting spatial implications, and re-integrating socio-political insights. Prefabrication systems function as material grammar, translating computational ideas into realizable form. The methodology unfolds across three interconnected stages:

1. Context Selection and Socio-Political FramingEach student defines a site of intervention—real, fictional, or historical—understood as a complex, emergent condition. The site is framed through one of four urban-rural typologies: city in village, city in city, village in city, or village in village. Project scale may vary (city, building, room), as long as it reflects systemic or socio-political "meganess." Research involves mapping, narrative writing, and diagramming. Independent site visits are encouraged.
2. Design Generation Through Prompt-Based SystemsUsing a shared LLM-based interface developed in Term 1, students generate design output via prompt grammar. Site-specific tools may be developed. Prompt outputs are iteratively translated into architectural forms and systems, integrating prefabrication principles and spatial intelligence. The process emphasizes a feedback loop between AI and contextual conditions.
3. Project Synthesis and Post-Agency ReflectionFinal projects synthesize computational output, prefabrication logic, and intentionality. Students reflect on the distributed authorship of their proposals and articulate how their project mediates emergent complexity. Design is framed both as a spatial system and a cultural proposition. Each work demonstrates how architecture can serve as an instrument of structuration—materializing relationships between agency, context, and systemic logic.

REQUIRED READINGS

1. Fu, Tim. “Architectural Practice as AI Co-Agency” – Interview in Wallpaper on the AI-driven Lake Bled project.
2. Zaha Hadid Architects + AI tools – Report in The Times covering AI’s impact on productivity & competition workflows.
3. “LLM and Pattern Language Synthesis: A Hybrid Tool for Human-Centered Architectural Design” – Buildings, 2025.
4. Systematic review of AI in architectural design – Journal of Umm Al-Qura University, summarizing AI techniques like generative design, structural optimization, smart cities.
5. AI in Urban and Smart City Design – Section on real-world cases (e.g., The Edge, Al Bahr Towers, Google’s Bay View Campus) within architecture-AI integration.
6. SiteSolve: AI for Urban Site Analysis – Generative tool that rapidly models development scenarios based on policy and environmental constraints.
7. Text2Map: Natural Language to GIS Visualization – Use of LLMs to create geospatial queries and map displays from simple text prompts.
8. AI in Sustainable & Energy-Responsive Architecture – Time article on AI-driven HVAC optimization in buildings, boosting efficiency.
9. AI-Designed Cooling Paints – Guardian article on AI-formulated building coatings that reduce surface temperatures significantly.

OTHER REFERENCES

AI-driven Residential Project, Lake Bled — Tim Fu Studio
Early, well-documented use of AI as co-author: contextual datasets → AI massing/options → detailing/documentation via Midjourney/Stable Diffusion + Rhino/Grasshopper and a custom “UrbanGPT.” Emphasizes human-in-the-loop authorship rather than automation. (Wallpaper*)

ARCH 793AB: “AI /n/ U” (grad theses showcase) — USC School of Architecture
Studio/Thesis track treating AI as a serious design instrument (not just image gen): students build workflows that use AI to analyze precedents, frame theses, and prototype systems (from material/form experiments to world-building). (USC Architecture Xpo)

SCI-6365 Enactive Design (human–machine co-agency) — Harvard GSD
Advanced research seminar on real-time, bidirectional human–machine interaction—raising machine agency in design environments to explore new collaborative models of ideation and authorship. (Harvard Graduate School of Design)

Design++ “AI in AEC” (LLMs + CAD/regulation links) — ETH Zürich
One-week summer school with a dedicated LLM track: build RAG workflows, simple LLM agents, and link LLMs to CAD and building-reg PDFs—explicitly aligning AI with forward/inverse design and compliance. Open-source toolkits (AIXD/ARA) support deployment. (designplusplus.ethz.chgramaziokohler.arch.ethz.chFuture Cities Laboratory Global)

URB-409: AI for Urban History (LLMs in urban datasets) — EPFL
Project-based course applying LLMs and NLP to historic urban data (cadastres, directories, maps) to build web-based interfaces, interpret change over time, and reflect on LLM epistemology—bridging textual AI with spatial inquiry. (edu.epfl.ch)

LEARNING OUTCOMES

A. Studio Related

1. Develop architectural proposals that integrate aesthetic ambition with technical, environmental, and socio-political requirements.
2. Employ AI systems, prefabrication logics, and prompt-based methods as part of an innovative and critical design workflow.
3. Test, refine, and communicate design ideas through a wide range of media—visual, digital, oral, and written—tailored to different audiences.
4. Analyze and interpret sites and contexts, whether real, speculative, or historical, and translate them into structured frameworks for design.
5. Collaborate effectively within teams, demonstrating skills in negotiation, collective authorship, and knowledge exchange.
6. Engage with stakeholders and non-architects, listening and responding to diverse perspectives in the design process.
7. Articulate an awareness of sustainable, ethical, and human-centered principles in relation to contemporary architectural and urban challenges.
8. Conceptualize architecture not only as a material artifact but also as a structuring force that mediates complexity, emergence, and unintended consequences.

B. MArch Programme Related

Design & Process

1. Develop architectural designs that satisfy both aesthetic and technical requirements.
2. Generate complex and original design proposals that demonstrate awareness of current architectural issues and the ability to test new hypotheses and ideas.
3. Formulate a project brief and programme based on site analysis, user needs, and contextual research.
4. Respond to natural and built site characteristics in the development of a coherent and integrated design.

Communication & Representation

5. Communicate effectively in English, both orally and in writing, on architectural topics.
6. Engage in dialogue with non-architects, demonstrating the ability to listen, explain, and incorporate external perspectives into design.
7. Use a broad range of media (visual, written, oral, digital) to test, analyse, and present design ideas and processes.
8. Apply appropriate representational tools (e.g. drawings, diagrams, models, digital media) to convey design development across all project phases.

Context & Responsiveness

9. Demonstrate understanding of sustainable development principles and the architect’s role in promoting social, environmental, and economic responsibility.
10. Relate architectural design to human needs and scale, including the spatial relationship between people, buildings, and the built environment.

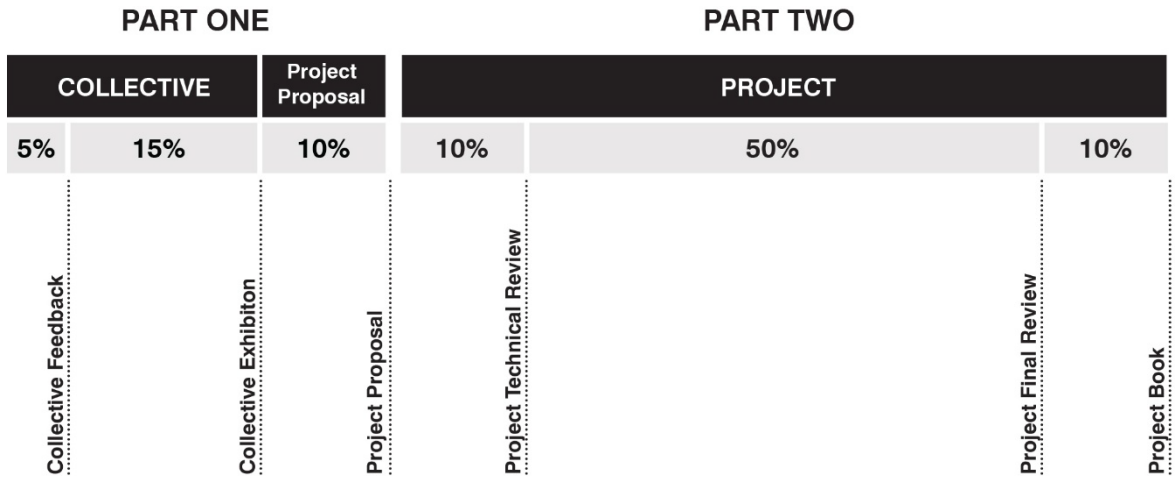
Knowledge & Integration

11. Apply knowledge of architectural history and theory, as well as related arts, technologies, and human sciences, to inform design decisions.
12. Collaborate effectively within team-based design processes, showing initiative, adaptability, and shared authorship.

13. Understand structural principles and systems, including gravity and lateral force resistance, and apply them appropriately within architectural projects.

ASSESSMENT SCHEME

The following diagram describes the structure and the assessment criteria for the year.



TIMELINE

Part One (30%)
13, 16 October: Collective Feedback* (5%)
1-3 December: Collective Exhibition* (15%)
12 December: Project Proposal** (10%)

Part Two (70%)
26 February, 2, 5 March: Project Technical Review (10%)
4-6 May: Final Presentation (50%)
4-6 May: Project Book (10%)

*The final grade for this component will be identical for every student, highlighting teamwork, shared responsibility, and equal contribution to the project.
**Individual or in small groups (Up to three students).

Review Results
Feedback and review will be released to students promptly after completion, together with written comments reflecting their progress and performance.

COURSE FORMAT

Individual and Group Work

1. Students may work in groups on various assignments and projects throughout the course calendar.
2. In the first part of the semester, students will develop a COLLECTIVE group project, which will be evaluated with a single, shared grade for the entire group. However, in cases of specific critical issues (such as illness, lack of participation due to personal problems) an individual assessment may be considered for the student(s) directly involved.
3. Final projects will generally consist of individual architectural design proposals. However, group work will also be allowed, with teams of up to three students permitted to develop a joint proposal. In such cases, students will be required to submit a written statement detailing each member's contribution, in order to clearly assess individual engagement within the group.

Teaching Days

1. The Design Studio will be taught on Monday and Thursday 13:30 to 18:00. Students must be in a studio during these teaching hours.
2. Students must attend School Lectures scheduled 12:30 – 13:30.
3. Field trips, lectures, and other learning activities may be scheduled outside of teaching days.

Studio Spaces

1. Each Studio will have their own space, accommodating a desk for each student.
2. Layouts will be issued at the start of the academic year.
3. The school has made studio space and use a priority. Students should maximise the use of their space by conducting design work in studio.
4. Working in the studio creates an opportunity for peer learning and collaboration – take advantage of this valuable resource.
5. Studio space should be respected – especially with consideration of food, drinking, material use, personal safety, disruption to others, and building safety regulations. Areas relating to fire escape should be always kept clear.

Cluster Dialogues

There will be four Dialogue Days organised across the clusters to share the work-in-progress of each studio and to foster critical reflection on the current and future directions of the design work.
These dialogues will be held within each cluster and will take the form of shared pin-ups, symposium-style discussions, and guest lectures by invited speakers.

PROJECT TECHNICAL REVIEW

The Project Technical Review is intended to support the integration of technical and environmental considerations into the design process. Students are required to prepare a presentation/report detailing their technological and structural strategy, with explicit attention to sustainable principles and their application within the project. In Term 2, consultations with external experts will be organised to strengthen students' knowledge of building systems and performance. These sessions may be scheduled by studio clusters or student groups, and students are expected to come prepared with preliminary research, drawings, and specific questions.

MODEL MAKING

Physical models are at the core of our design expression. To encourage a process of learning by making, we place strong emphasis on hands-on experimentation and material engagement. Laser cutting or 3dprinting should be not recommended especially during the early, conceptual phases of the design process, to prioritize more intuitive, open-ended, and tactile model-making approaches.

FIELD TRIP

NEOM, Saudi Arabia
As part of the studio, students will have the opportunity to engage in a field trip to NEOM in Saudi Arabia—one of the most ambitious urban megaprojects of the 21st century. NEOM embodies a radical convergence of technological, ecological, and political aspirations, offering a living laboratory to observe and critique the promises and contradictions of large-scale, top-down planning. This experience allows students to test their own frameworks of post-agency against a real-world site where authorship, control, and emergence collide. Visiting NEOM provides critical insight into how megastructures are framed politically and socially, and challenges students to imagine alternative models of design grounded in co-agency and responsiveness to complex urban systems.

IMPORTANT NOTE TO STUDENTS

Expectations for Professional Conduct
The motto of The Chinese University of Hong Kong (CUHK) is "Through learning and temperance to virtue". This motto places equal emphasis on the intellectual and moral education of students. In addition to pursuing academic excellence, students of CUHK are expected to maintain and uphold the highest standard of integrity and honesty in their academic and personal lives, respect the rights of others and abide by the law. More information on Postgraduate studies can be found in the PG Student Handbook. https://www.gs.cuhk.edu.hk/

Attendance
Class attendance is required in all courses. For an excused absence, the instructor must be notified and presented with documentation of illness or personal matter. Please note: **Three (3)** or more unexcused absences may result in a failing grade for the course.

Academic Honesty
Attention is drawn to university policy and regulations on honesty in academic work, and to the disciplinary guidelines and procedures applicable to breaches of such policy and regulations. Details may be found at: http://www.cuhk.edu.hk/policy/academichonesty/. With each assignment, students may be required to submit a statement that they are aware of these policies, regulations, guidelines, and procedures. The Final Project will require students to submit and sign a written statement outlining details of any 3rd party assistance and acknowledgement of university policies on Academic Honesty to their studio instructor before their review.

The Chinese University of Hong Kong places very high importance on honesty in academic work submitted by students and adopts a policy of zero tolerance on academic dishonesty. While "academic dishonesty" is the overall name, there are several sub-categories as follows:

i. Plagiarism
ii. Undeclared multiple submissions
iii. Employing or using services provided by a third party to undertake ones' submitted work, or providing services as a third party

iv. Distribution/ Sharing/ Copying of teaching materials without the consent of the course teachers to gain unfair academic advantage in the courses
v. Violating rules 15 or 16 of the University's Examination Rules (Annex 1) or rule 9 or 10 of the University's Online Examination Rules (Annex 2)
vi. Cheating in tests and examinations (including violation of rules 17 or 18 of the University's Examination Rules or rule 11, 12, 13, 14 or 16 of the University's Online Examination Rules)
vii. Impersonation fraud in tests and examinations (including violation of rule 19 of the University's Examination Rules or rule 15 of the University's Online Examination Rules)
viii. All other acts of academic dishonesty
ix. Any related offence will lead to disciplinary action including termination of studies at the University.

Third-Party Assistance
All intellectual work essential to the design project must be completed by the student and cannot, under any circumstance, be outsourced to a third party (including, but not limited to a company, consultant, alumni, and/or friend).
In the design studio context, students may utilise external resources, such as printing services for presentation materials, and/or laser cutting and 3D printing services for prototyping purposes. Use of such third-party services constitutes non-intellectual work done by others. It is only permitted with prior written consent from the studio tutor and acknowledgment of such work done by the third party.

Assistance from other students or friends for aspects of project production also constitutes non-intellectual work done by others; this is allowed only if declared and acknowledged in a written statement attached to any such work that has received assistance.

Under all circumstances, students must declare all work done by others by completing the school's designated form before assessment. This form must include a detailed explanation of the third party's identity (name and relationship to the student), when and how they were utilized, and the specific tasks they performed in the project. The completed form, signed by the student, must be endorsed by the tutor and presented during the final review. The school will collect and retain this form for record-keeping purposes.

Failure to follow this code of conduct may be considered a case of academic dishonesty, to be reviewed by a disciplinary board, and possible failure of the course.

Artificial Intelligence
This studio adopts Approach 4, allowing students to make full use of AI tools in their design process. The decision reflects the nature of the course, which explicitly treats AI as a co-agent in architectural authorship, system-building, and speculative design. Students are encouraged to experiment with large language models, visual AI workflows, and other accessible platforms not as substitutes for design thinking, but as instruments for expanding authorship, testing prompt-based logics, and probing the relationship between structure and agency.

AI usage will be integral to both collective and individual work: from prototyping modular systems and interfacing with prefabrication logics, to engaging socio-political contexts and generating speculative futures. Students are expected to document their use of AI, reflect critically on its influence, and evaluate how it shapes authorship, collaboration, and systemic outcomes. In this way, AI becomes not only a design tool but also a subject of inquiry—challenging conventional notions of creativity, authorship, and architectural intelligence.

Student Work
Submission of studio documentation must be complete and correctly formatted. Missing or incomplete submission of the documentation folder will result in the grade for the course being withheld. This will prevent registration for the following term or delay graduation. In addition, a grade deduction of *one letter grade* will be made.

External Examination
Of paramount importance to the academic rigour and professional relevance of the architecture programme, the external examination process serves as a critical and impartial review mechanism. An invited panel of distinguished practitioners, academics, and industry experts convenes to rigorously evaluate the school's pedagogical ecosystem. This comprehensive audit scrutinises the fairness and consistency of the internal assessment process, benchmarks the standard and ambition of student work against national and international norms, and provides invaluable feedback on the intellectual and pedagogical direction of the curriculum itself.

As a cornerstone of this process and a mandatory graduating requirement, final-year students from both the Bachelor of Social Sciences (Architecture) and Master of Architecture programmes must present their final project and portfolio work in person. This formal defence before the external panel not only validates the authenticity and depth of their learning but also simulates a professional practice environment, demanding they articulate their design rationale, critical thinking, and technical resolution to an authoritative audience, thereby preparing them for the collaborative and discursive nature of the architectural profession.

SCHEDULE

Important Dates

1_Studio Selection	01 SEP
2_COLLECTIVE Feedback	13, 16 OCT
3_COLLECTIVE Exhibition	1-2-3 DEC
4_PROJECT Proposal	12 DEC
5_PROJECT Technical Review	26 FEB, 2,5 MAR
6_PROJECT Final Presentation	4-5-6 MAY
7_PROJECT BOOK	4-5-6 MAY
8_EXTERNAL EXAMINATION	12-13-14-15 MAY

Term 1: 1 September 2025 (Monday) – 29 November 2025 (Saturday)

WEEK 01		
01.09	**ORIENTATION & STUDIO PRESENTATION**	**Studio Selection for Students**
04.09	**DAY_01 OF STUDIO**	**Studio Sections Announced**
WEEK 02		
08.09	**STUDIO**	Theoretical Foundations
11.09	**STUDIO**	Precedent Analysis
WEEK 03		
15.09	**STUDIO**	Define shared vocabulary, co-agency logic, and mega conditions.
18.09	**STUDIO**	Site & Context Mapping
WEEK 04		
22.09	**STUDIO**	Module Prototyping I
25.09	**STUDIO**	Module Prototyping I
WEEK 05		
29.09	**STUDIO**	Module Prototyping I
02.10	**STUDIO**	Module Prototyping I
WEEK 06		
06.10	**STUDIO**	Interface Assembly
09.10	**STUDIO**	Interface Assembly
WEEK 07		
13.10	**REVIEW**	COLLECTIVE Feedback
16.10	**REVIEW**	COLLECTIVE Feedback
WEEK 08		
20.10	**STUDIO**	Field Testing: Apply interface to NEOM: re-framing political and social dimensions.
23.10	**STUDIO**	Field Testing
WEEK 09		
27.10	**STUDIO**	Iteration & Scenario Design
30.10	**STUDIO**	Iteration & Scenario Design

WEEK 10		
03.11	**STUDIO**	Iteration & Scenario Expansion
06.11	**STUDIO**	Iteration & Scenario Expansion
WEEK 11		
10.11	**STUDIO**	Prototype Finalization
13.11	**STUDIO**	Prototype Finalization
WEEK 12		
17.11	**STUDIO**	Exhibition Prep
20.11	**STUDIO**	Exhibition Prep
WEEK 13		
24.11	**STUDIO**	Exhibition Setup
27.11	**STUDIO**	Exhibition Setup
WEEK 14		
01 – 03.12	**EXHIBITION**	COLLECTIVE EXHIBITION
WEEK 15		
12.12	**PROJECT PROPOSAL**	PROJECT PROPOSAL SUBMISSION
Winter Break	Studio Trip	Saudi Arabia

Term 2: 5 January 2026 (Monday) – 18 April 2026 (Saturday)

WEEK 19		
05.01	**STUDIO**	Studio Re-Orientation
08.01	**STUDIO**	Project Positioning
WEEK 20		
12.01	**STUDIO**	Site & Context Framing: Students begin detailed research on chosen sites/fields of relevance.
15.01	**STUDIO**	Site & Context Framing
WEEK 21		
19.01	**STUDIO**	Prompt-Based Exploration
22.01	**STUDIO**	Prompt-Based Exploration
WEEK 22		
26.01	**STUDIO**	System Development
29.01	**STUDIO**	System Development
WEEK 23		
02.02	**STUDIO**	Design Translation Iterative development of spatial systems from AI outputs.
05.02	**STUDIO**	Design Translation Iterative development of spatial systems from AI outputs.
WEEK 24		
09.02	**STUDIO**	System Development II Continue testing and refining design frameworks.
12.02	**STUDIO**	System Development II Continue testing and refining design frameworks.
WEEK 25		
16.02	**Lunar New Year Vacation (16-22 Feb)**	No Class
19.02	**Lunar New Year Vacation (16-22 Feb)**	No Class
WEEK 26		
23.02	**STUDIO**	Technical Integration Structural, environmental, and systems workshops with consultants.
26.02	**REVIEW**	Technical Integration Structural, environmental, and systems workshops with consultants.
WEEK 27		
02.03	**REVIEW**	PROJECT TECHNICAL REVIEW
05.03	**REVIEW**	PROJECT TECHNICAL REVIEW

WEEK 28		
09.03	**STUDIO**	Design Refinement Deepen spatial articulation; expand design narratives.
12.03	**STUDIO**	Design Refinement Explore multiple scales (urban, building, detail
WEEK 29		
16.03	**STUDIO**	Iterative Prototyping
19.03	**STUDIO**	Iterative Prototyping
WEEK 30		
23.03	**STUDIO**	Scenario Expansion
26.03	**STUDIO**	Scenario Expansion
WEEK 31		
30.03	**STUDIO**	Representation
02.04	**STUDIO**	Representation: Focus on narrative coherence; critique of evolving portfolios.
WEEK 32		
06.04	**Easter Holiday (3-6 Apr)**	No Class
09.04	**STUDIO**	Desk Crit
WEEK 33		
13.04	**STUDIO**	Project Consolidation: Begin consolidating design directions toward final resolution.
16.04	**STUDIO**	Project Consolidation: Workshop on book structure and final documentation.
WEEK 34		
20.04	**STUDIO**	Final Refinement: Work on final drawings, models, and digital outputs.
23.04	**STUDIO**	Final Refinement: Work on final drawings, models, and digital outputs.
WEEK 35		
27.04	**STUDIO**	Studio desk crits focused on detail articulation.
30.04	**STUDIO**	Studio desk crits focused on detail articulation.
WEEK 36		
04 – 06.05	**FINAL REVIEW + PROJECT BOOK**	PROJECT BOOK SUBMISSION
WEEK 37		
12 – 15.05	**EXTERNAL EXAMINATION**	

Grade	Descriptor	Criteria	Points
A	Excellent	Comprehensively excellent performance on all aspects of the design intention, development, technical resolution and presentation. Achieving all learning outcomes with distinction.	4
A-	Very Good	Generally outstanding performance on the design intention, development, technical resolution and presentation. Achieving all learning outcomes with merit.	3.7
B+	Good	Substantial performance on the design intention, development, technical resolution and presentation. Achieving all learning outcomes satisfactorily.	3.3
B			3
B-			2.7
C+	Fair	Fair performance on the design intention, development, technical resolution and presentation. Achieving all learning outcomes at a passing standard.	2.3
C			2
C-			1.7
D+	Pass	Barely satisfactory performance on the design intention, development, technical resolution and presentation. Achieving all learning outcomes at a barely satisfactory standard.	1.3
D			1
F	Failure	Unsatisfactory performance on the design intention, development, technical resolution and presentation. Not achieving all learning outcomes.	0

Academic Honesty Statement

*Please print out and pin-up next to your works on your allocated panels

Relating to the 2025-26 Studio Review pin-up (MArch students)

Please tick one of the following:

☐ All the work and models presented at the Final Review were made by me personally

☐ All the work and models presented at the Final Review were made by me.
with the exception of the following:

Under all circumstances, students must declare all work done by others by completing this form before the review. Provide a detailed explanation of the third party's identity (name and relationship to the student), when and how they were utilized, and the specific tasks they performed in the project.

Student's Name: _____ Date: _____

Signature: _____

Tutor's Name: _____ Date: _____

Signature: _____

Written Feedback to Students

Term: _____ **Grade:** _____

Course Code: _____

Review: _____

Tutor: _____

Student Name: _____

Student ID: _____

Feedback from Tutor:

Achievements:

Challenges: