In sum, the ambitious task proposed by Rossi led him to believe that architecture should be thought of in the same way as the natural and human sciences. For this to happen, the first step was to pinpoint where architecture was, to determine the territory it could call its own. Rossi had no doubts here: architecture’s territory was the city. Now if architecture was in the city, it was necessary to know how the city was built, what principles had guided its development, how the different zones and quarters comprising it had been formed. Hence, it was important to begin by describing the city, that reality which was for Rossi “the most complete representation of the human condition”. Rossi was convinced that describing the city would help him find the keys to explaining architecture.

-Raphael Moneo on Aldo Rossi
From Theoretical Anxiety and Design Strategies
In the Work of Eight Contemporary Architects

The development of the American city is an ongoing project. Every building either conforms to an agreed upon set of planning principles (zoning and existing infrastructure) or suggests a new type of urban form through its response to a particular site or edge condition. The shape of a city is determined by multiple factors; global economics, available resources, natural features, the mechanisms behind land ownership, and even the effects of war and natural disasters. In the end, the urban condition represents our high points and low points as a society, both our dreams and our failures. It represents our desire to work and live together, to distribute the benefits of progress equitably and fairly, it gives us an identity in the global market and can be responsive to specific climatic and cultural conditions. Conversely, it can also be the site of tragedy. Recent natural disasters have focused attention on the density and population growth of urban centers, resulting in both an increase in the loss of human life as well as the ineffective federal response to these disasters.

This semester we will study the history of two Southern cities; Mobile, Alabama and Savannah, Georgia. These cities can be characterized by parallel conditions. They are both frontier towns, Mobile being the first capital of French Louisiana, and Savannah being a British military outpost to defend against the Spanish forces in Florida. Mobile has been occupied by enemy forces on three occasions, and Savannah was famously spared by General Sherman in the last days of the Civil War. The importance of history and circumstance on the shape of these two cities will be studied in detail.

The nature of the city and the condition of architecture as it occurs in the city will be the primary focus of this fourth year level studio. Each student will design a project in these two cities; the program will be constant, however the site will change radically. Through this exercise, each of you will be able to compare the character of the two sites, understand how context (both physical and social) affects your design decisions, and gain an understanding of the consequences of important site conditions and influences on building form. The program for this studio will be housing; a perfect vehicle for studying plan and section, building skin and public space, human scale and urban scale.
**Expectations**

Architecture is a social art, and you are learning to contribute to the shared physical environment. Part of this responsibility requires that you demonstrate sensitivity to others and to your shared surroundings. You are expected to contribute in a positive manner to the studio community. Additionally:

You are required to perform all of your work in studio.

No late work will be accepted.

You are required to attend school lectures presented during studio hours.

**Attendance**

Every unexcused absence will result in the reduction of your final grade by one full letter for the semester. Absences will be excused in accordance with the excuses defined in *Tiger Cub* by the University. For every excused absence you will have one class day to make up the missed assignment. There will be no Incompletes assigned unless warranted by extreme circumstances.

**Grading and Special Accommodations**

Students who require special accommodations should make an appointment with their studio professor by the end of the first full week of class. Please bring your memo from the Program for the Students with Disabilities.

You will receive grades after the research phase, each collaborative charrette, mid-semester and at the end of the semester. Each half of the semester will count 50% toward your overall grade. Grades will be established according to the following criteria:

A  Exemplary work that is attended to with initiative well beyond the description of the stated problem. Work that makes evident a significant understanding of the problem, and shows mastery and integration of the required skills. Work that is attended by an attitude of exploration, of open-mindedness, and a willingness to benefit from criticism.

B  Exemplary work that shows an understanding of the problem, displays a conceptual foundation, and is well crafted. Shows competence and mastery of skills. Attended with an open and inquisitive attitude.

C  Adequate work that meets the requirements of the problem and the course. Shows an understanding of the problem while acknowledges some deficiencies. Shows reasonable competence of skills and concepts. This grade is seen to represent the average expected solution and therefore will be most prevalent.

D  Work that, although complete, does not show an understanding of the problem, and demonstrates deficiencies in the mastery of skills. This work may often be attended to with a belligerent or close minded attitude particularly with respect to criticism and self motivation. Work in this category, although technically passing, is seen as unacceptable in a professional course.

F  Failing work that does not significantly meet the requirements of the problem or the course, shows a serious deficiency in the mastery of skills, and raises questions with respect to future successes within the program.

**Reading and Field Trips**


We are planning one field trip to Savannah, Georgia and another to Mobile, Alabama. Details for these two field trips are forthcoming. These trips are required; we will make academic accommodations for students unable to attend on a case by case basis.

*Syllabus subject to change in class by instructor as necessary. This syllabus outlines the general framework for the semester. Individual assignments and requirements will be given weekly.*