

Approaching research practice in architecture

This doctoral course is a collaboration between KTH School of Architecture in Stockholm and the TU Munich with the BauHow5 consortium and the Swedish Research School ResArc. It is open to doctoral candidates enrolled at other universities.

Length: 6 modules, Oct-Apr, followed by peer-review and publication of papers to appear Oct 2021
Effort: 25-30 hrs per month
Price: free of charge
Institution: the course is led by TUM and KTH
Subject: Architecture
Level: 3rd cycle
Language: English
Course type: Instructor-led on a course schedule
ECTS: 7,5 as applied in Sweden (corresponding to 200 hrs class including preparatory efforts); 2 SWS for doctoral students at TUM)
1 ECTS credit per module + 1,5 ECTS credits for submitting a paper for peer-review
On completion of the course, participants will receive a course certificate to register their ECTS credits at their home university according to their local credit system.

Subject

Theory and Methodology of Practice-oriented Research in Architecture

Course description

The course gives a perspective on theoretical and methodological trajectories of practice-oriented research in architecture. It provides an overview of how theory and methods are addressed concerning forms of knowledge in architecture, with a focus on explorative, reflexive, and critical research methods rooted in the humanities, social sciences, and STS. Notions of different scientific traditions, paradigmatic shifts, and inter- and transdisciplinary research are presented and discussed in ways that are particularly useful for enrolled and emergent doctoral researchers pursuing practice-oriented research. Course participants are provided with an understanding of selected key concepts and topics; the relationship between epistemology, ontology, and methodology, and the linkage between research questions, objectives, methods and outcomes, through lectures, literature seminars, workshops, collaborative and specific tasks. In emphasizing social complexity and experimentation, the course offers doctoral candidates insights into recent architectural thinking, innovative methods, and performative research practices. On completion of the course, participants will acquire tools to critically reflect on the epistemological and ethical challenges, inherent to their research practices.

How to apply

Participants of Module 1 International workshop, please send a statement of interest specifying the modules you wish to participate in to: research.edu@ar.tum.de

Newcomers, add a short bio and an abstract describing your research project.

The deadline for application is 15th of November 2020.

Syllabus

The course is organized in 6 intense modules of 2 days and requires 1-2 days of preparatory reading. Course activities include lectures, reading seminars, workshops, presentations of own work, and group work.

Module 1 International workshop: APPROACHING RESEARCH PRACTICE IN ARCHITECTURE: 5 Questions

8-9/10/20

This two-day event takes as its point of departure the growing interest in practice-oriented research in the broadest sense, including expanding modes of work in well-established areas of architectural research such as architectural history and theory or urban and landscape studies as well as in art- and design-based studies. It offers a reflection upon the multitude and diversity of current research practices in architecture. This module brings together doctoral researchers, supervisors, and senior researchers in a two-day international workshop with presentations, panels, and roundtable discussions.

Module 2: REINVENTING METHODOLOGY – DOING RESEARCH (what do I know through my practice and experience?)

3-4/12/20

This module deals with methodological issues in practice-oriented research focusing on interactions between theory, practice, and modes of knowledge production. It considers research as a craft, a form of skilled practice that ranges from scholarly and experimental writing practices such as site-writing, to building surveys and documentations, ethnographic studies, visual work, and other forms of performative research activities. In group work, participants will discuss methods in relation to research questions and also invent a method for their own research project to be explored and put to the test in the following course modules.

Module 3: ARCHITECTURAL DESIGN HISTORIES (what is known in my field?)

28-29/01/21

This module explores a history of practice-oriented research, including basic insights into relevant research methodologies stemming from historical studies. With a focus on the development of concepts and approaches that have guided practice-oriented research, this module aims at giving participants an understanding of the historical context of their contemporary practice taking into account the techno-social, cultural, political, material cultures and acts of production and consumption that have shaped them. In particular, this involves critical studies in how creative practice, in terms of both education and profession, has responded to the changing conditions of society.

Module 4: THEORETICAL POSITIONING (how do I/we know?)

25-26/02/21

This module focuses on the use of theory and ‘how we know’ in practice-oriented research. It emphasizes the integral role of theorization in knowledge production as inseparable from practice, whether it is reflective or speculative. The module addresses key concepts, theoretical, and philosophical works and corresponding spatial practices. The module aims at furthering the ability to locate, articulate, and develop theoretical issues in research.

Module 5: SPECULATIVE ETHICS (what would the effects of my research intervention be?)

18-19/03/21

The fifth module deals with the ethical and political implications of pursuing and constructing knowledge from positions of practice-oriented research. It considers a growing range of work on contemporary ethics from the fields of environmental humanities, risk ethics, ethics considering social and sexual difference, labour studies, feminist ethics of care, postcolonial theory, and critical race studies, to posthuman- and multispecies ethics in practice-oriented research. The module aims at reflecting upon and discussing the ethical challenges of one’s own research.

Module 6 REFLECTIONS ON PRACTICE-ORIENTED RESEARCH (what is the role of practice in the research performed and represented?)

8-9/04/21

The sixth module deals specifically with research within and about practice-oriented research. We will think about processes and formats, links between written and ‘critical spatial practice’, and tackle questions of production-representation in relation to practice-oriented research. The format of this module is designed as a creative practice module allowing researchers’ practice to come into a critical yet nurturing dialogue.

Intended learning outcomes

On completion of the course, participants are equipped with tools to

- describe and discuss concepts of knowledge in relation to research practice
- describe and discuss central theories and methods of practice-oriented research in architecture and assess them in relation to foci, topics, and aims
- describe and discuss inter- and transdisciplinary research practice, and have a historical view of disciplinary divisions and modern divides
- critically reflect on how environmental, political and social complexity at the intersection of aspects of gender, class, racialization and other factors of (dis)empowerment affect the preconditions for research, in general, and given specific studies
- critically reflect over their own research practices in view of epistemological and ethical challenges

Participants

Doctoral candidates are expected to read and discuss literature at the theoretical and philosophical level, to present and discuss their readings at literature seminars, to partake in workshops and to conduct independent critical and reflective thinking in the writing of a paper. To be eligible for the course, participants must have completed a masters' degree or have an equivalent level of education in architecture or affiliated subjects within the humanities and social sciences. The course requires a minimum of 5 and a maximum of 30 students to be held.

Structure

The course is based on several modules. The ambition is to develop a shared learning platform with video presentations, suggestions for tasks and literature, and digital formats for interaction. The course is planned to run once a year for six months. It will offer a number of tasks and online supervision meetings with tutors and curated participants' working groups.

Contributions from the course will be submitted to peer-review and published in a special Journal issue, tentatively in *SPOOL*, TU Delft's accredited online Journal.

Examination happens on the basis of the fulfilment of tasks that are handed in continuously during the duration of the course, participation in supervision moments and the conference, and a published article.

The course will be held once a year. It shall have a common start and conclusion and run over a period of approximately one term. Working time for all six modules equals 7,5 credits (of the Swedish academic system) or 200 hours which includes own work efforts such as reading, preparations for seminars, and writing an academic article. It is possible to sign up for individual modules. Doctoral candidates are expected to have read the indicated literature and have handed in their material in due time before online meetings. In these meetings, ca. 10-15 doctoral researchers will meet 1-2 tutors. Participants will also read and respond to each other's works.

Course responsibility

The course responsibility is with TUM and KTH.

The course involves tutors and peer-reviewers from all BauHow5 universities and ResArch: CTH Gothenburg, ETH Zürich, TU Delft, TU Munich, UCL Bartlett, LTH Lund and KTH Stockholm.

Timeline

8-9 October	Module 1: WORKSHOP APPROACHING RESEARCH PRACTICES IN ARCHITECTURE FIVE QUESTIONS
3-4 December	Module 2 REINVENTING METHODOLOGY
28-29 January	Module 3 ARCHITECTURAL DESIGN HISTORIES
25-26 February	Module 4 THEORETICAL POSITIONING
18-19 March	Module 5 SPECULATIVE ETHICS
8-9 April	Module 6 REFLECTIONS ON PRACTICE-ORIENTED RESEARCH
2 May	Deadline for articles
3 May – 15 June	Peer review
31 August	Deadline for revisions
October	Journal number goes online, launch at WORKSHOP 2021

Coordinators

Dr Meike Schalk, associate professor in Urban Design and Urban Theory, KTH School of Architecture, Stockholm / Anna Boyksen Fellow, TU München

Dr Torsten Lange, August-Wilhelm Scheer guest professor in Theory and History of Architecture, Art and Design, Dept of Architecture, TU München

Dr Andreas Putz, professor in Recent Building Heritage Conservation, Dept of Architecture, TU München

Dr Tijana Stevanovic, senior teaching fellow at The Bartlett School of Architecture, UCL/ postdoc at KTH School of Architecture

Advisory board

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