

Approaching research practice in architecture

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

Length: 5 modules, December 2021-June 2022, followed by an exhibition in autumn 2022, peer-review and publication of papers to appear April 2023
Effort: 25-30 hrs per month
Price: free of charge
Institution: the course is led by TUM and KTH
(at KTH as F1A5035 Theory of Science and Research Methods, 7,5hp)
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,
or an exhibit to the exhibition
On completion of the course, participants will receive a course certificate on request 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 own research practices.

How to apply

New participants: Please send a short bio and an abstract describing your research project and a statement of interest to: research.edu@ar.tum.de

(If you took part in the International workshop (13-14 Oct 2021): Apply to the course by sending a statement of interest to: research.edu@ar.tum.de)

The deadline for application is **20th of November 2021.**

Syllabus

The course is organized as 5 intense modules of 2 days plus a short writing moment on the following Friday morning and requires 1-2 days of preparatory reading. Course activities include lectures, literature and writing seminars, workshops, presentations of own work, peer review, and group work.

Pre-course event (not necessary for course participation): International workshop: APPROACHING RESEARCH PRACTICE IN ARCHITECTURE 13-14/10/21

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 event brings together doctoral researchers, supervisors, and senior researchers in a two-day international workshop with presentations, panels, and roundtable discussions.

Module 1: REINVENTING METHODOLOGY – DOING RESEARCH
What do I want to know and how? 01-02/12/20

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 2: ARCHITECTURAL DESIGN HISTORIES 26-27/01/21
What history do I tell?

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 3: THEORETICAL POSITIONING 09-10/03/21
What is deemed knowledge in my field and in what way do I challenge it / expand it?

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 4: SPECULATIVE ETHICS 27-28/04/21
What impacts might my way of doing research have?

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 5: REFLECTIONS ON PRACTICE-ORIENTED RESEARCH 01-02/06/21
How can I / we rethink and reproduce other ways of knowing?

The sixth module deals specifically with the practical part within practice-oriented research. We will think about processes and formats, links between writing and ‘critical spatial practice’, and tackle questions of production-representation in practice-oriented research.

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

Participants are expected to read and discuss literature at 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 and / or the making of an exhibit. 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, social sciences and technology. The course requires a minimum of 5 and a maximum of 30 students to be held.

Structure

The course is based on six modules and is run on Zoom. Each module approaches a broader debate through specific examples. 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 *Dimensions of Architectural Knowledge*, BauHow5's accredited printed and 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 a published article and / or an exhibition.

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 and / or creating an exhibit. It is possible to sign up for individual modules. Participants are expected to have read the indicated literature and have handed in their material in due time before online meetings. 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, KTH Stockholm, and guests.

The course is financed by a TUM-IAS Anna Boyksen Fellowship to advance equity and diversity research, TUM Department of Architecture, and KTH School of Architecture at The Royal Institute of Technology in Stockholm.

Timeline 2021-2022

01-02 December	Module 1 REINVENTING METHODOLOGY
26-27 January	Module 2 ARCHITECTURAL DESIGN HISTORIES
09-10 March	Module 3 THEORETICAL POSITIONING
27-28 April	Module 4 SPECULATIVE ETHICS
01-02 Juni	Module 5 REFLECTIONS ON PRACTICE-ORIENTED RESEARCH
31 July	Deadline for articles
1 August – 30 September	Peer review
31 October	Deadline for revisions
November - December	Journal number goes into production with launch spring 2023

Coordinators

Dr Meike Schalk, associate prof. in Urban Design and Urban Theory, KTH School of Architecture, Royal Inst. of Technology, Stockholm / Anna Boyksen Fellow, TUM-IAS

Dr Torsten Lange, lecturer, Inst. of Architecture IAR, Lucerne School of Engineering and Architecture / visiting prof. in Theory and History of Architecture, Art and Design, Dept. of Architecture, TUM

Elena Markus, doctoral research fellow and lecturer in Theory and History of Architecture, Art and Design, Department of Architecture, TUM

Dr Andreas Putz, prof. in Recent Building Heritage Conservation, Department of Architecture, TUM

Dr Karin Reisinger, FWF Hertha Firnberg Research Fellow and lecturer, Academy of Fine Arts Vienna

Advisory board

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Paul Chan, TU Delft
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