

Thematic Studio

1) Making

In this design module, you will explore Making as the thematic focus. The remit of this module is to develop understanding of the ways that different aspects of making can inform and enrich architecture and the built environment.

Making offers a broader, more interdisciplinary remit than other terms such as ‘construction’, and aligns with current global movements and the general debate on how, where and why things are made. It suggests an interest in the process as well as the outcome, and maps onto a wide range of activities, values, meanings and identities, while avoiding an overt focus on design as a product or commodity.

Under this theme, you are likely to begin your studies with an interest in live build projects and other collaborative making activities. This interest will be the springboard for deeper investigation of the connections between architecture and the underlying process of Making.

2) Environment

In this design module, you will explore the Environment as the thematic focus. The remit of this module is to develop understanding of how foregrounding environmental issues can help enriching architecture and the built environment, rethinking the impact of human activities on the environment as well as creating novel architectural interventions.

Environment offers you the opportunity to apply the understanding, knowledge and abilities that you developed throughout the course, in evolving an ambitious and resolved architectural design which addresses environmental issues. It encourages you to challenge typical solutions and seek responses which significantly reduce environmental impacts by integrating a synthesis of precedents and architectural ideas, theories and arguments.

Under this theme, you are likely to begin your studies with an interest in the discourse around environmental design. This interest will be the springboard for building the capacity for deeper investigations of architecture and the Environment.

3) Adaptation

In this design module, you will explore Adaptation as the thematic focus. The module premise is that the built environment is largely already here. The remit is therefore to consider how we best work with this resource, whether it be cherished heritage or unused / unloved spaces.

In line with UN Sustainable Development Goals, the Adaptation module supports the need for architects and designers to be agile and informed in their re-use of existing buildings. In this context ‘design’ can mean reconfiguring human activities to suit the qualities of the existing as well as creating novel interventions.

Those engaged in this module will have a fascination with existing buildings, how and why they were made but also what they inspire and evoke. Pressing these ways of thinking further, building your knowledge and testing sometimes radical interventions, you will build capacity for making complex justifications required for working with existing buildings.

4) Personhood & Place

In the Personhood & Place Thematic Studio, you will explore the condition and attributes of being a person, both in an individual and collective sense, as the thematic focus of your design work. The remit of this module is to develop understandings of the ways that design can positively support persons in both respects in living their lives through the formation of place.

Personhood is a concept that broadly denotes attributes and capacities associated with being an individual person and a person in relation to other persons, life forms and the wider planet. Architects are continually engaged in acts of responsiveness to the needs of users of their designs. Personhood draws attention to the capacities of individual persons set within a complex web of relationships to, variously, express identities and needs, to act on what matters to them, to respond to experiences, and pursue routes to thriving and flourishing. Hence, it relates to such varied themes and issues of design as accessibility, gender sensitivity, person-centred care, cultural specificity, inclusive design practice and environmental design aimed at safeguarding the future of the planet and the wellbeing of future generations.

Under this theme, you are likely to begin your studies with an interest in a social issue such as ageing or disability, or an aspect of human identity such as sexuality, gender, race or class. This interest will be the springboard for deeper investigation of the connections between architecture, Personhood & Place.