



Detail, Four Corners, Ultramoderne, Boston Society of Architects, "Urban Timber," exhibition, 2014

Mass Timber

Case Studies in Contemporary Construction

Case Studies in Contemporary Construction is a series of experimental seminar/labs that explore the complex forces that influence and shape the final physical form of a building through its development, documentation and delivery. The focus of each year will shift to cover a wide range of evolving issues that are changing the way architecture is practiced.

In this project-based lab, students will explore case studies of contemporary architectural constructions through research, analytical drawings and physical models that seek to understand and explicate the interrelationships of material flows, logistics, labor, and climate among other pressures that are changing the way buildings are conceived and developed.

This semester the focus of the course will be on pre-engineered mass timber construction methods and assemblies. Students will work in small teams to develop representational strategies to explore approaches to representing constructional constraints and other factors which influence the final outcome of the design and construction process, including building codes, material limitations, construction sequencing and logics, the integration of building systems both active and passive, implications of various structural systems, building envelope performance, as well as methods of project delivery and workflow.

Team projects will be explored through drawings and physical models that describe the interrelationships of these various aspects of architectural form and the various forces that differentiate its complex material organization. Class meetings will primarily be structured as workshops with short supplementary lectures as well as guest architects, and engineers throughout the semester. At least one site visit is planned for the semester. Working sessions and lectures will be in person with the expectation of synchronous attendance. Exceptions will be made as necessary.