

University of Michigan
Taubman College of Architecture + Urban Planning
Arch 660, Thesis Research + Development
Hot Pink Cosmic Roughriders
Friday, 1-4 pm, Fall 2026
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'Hot Pink Cosmic Roughriders'

If you're up for augmenting, even changing the ways in which you think about and produce design, pay close attention.

HPCR's will operate like a think-tank, working always as designers, building design knowledge—a rare commodity in spatial education. Each member of the cohort will take ownership of the construction of their thesis, in both terms. There is no thematic, or technique overlay in the seminar and studio. Both are taught by me, individual work (although two or more people can form a group), no travel required, and other voices always welcome. As designers, generosity and curiosity are the two most important things we can have. Constructing, not assuming, the studio culture is essential. We won't accept things common in architectural education as default assumptions, at any levels. I/ we will unpack a full range of things that belong to both a thesis construction and to spatial education. We will focus on setting up ways to 'practice'—a discipline for making work, and for framing a thesis in relation to a 'project'. While almost everyone assumes they are the same, they are not... by a lot.

In this section, you could pursue your curiosities about rerouting Excel spreadsheets, BIM protocols and alternative construction techniques, to critically reframe labor practices, while producing a 'how to' manual for use; chase living aquatic technologies through material computation, machine learning and rapid prototyping; making three houses, situated in 'split temporalities' and 'split geographies', in one house; queer and monstrous ecologies, that meet Greek mythologies, towards new practices of alternative social justice; image density, social media and Midjourney as the 'new' linear perspective; up-cycling, down cycling and circular economies crossed with speculative notational systems towards an office'ish bulding; radically transforming architectural education; or, all of the above simultaneously. Or you might pick the metaphorical locks of the 11'ish other theses, co-opting them as your own, through deep fakes and digital twinning.

In the fall we will establish several core foundations for setting a thesis construction into play: identifying and contextualizing various types of theses; discovering and articulating your interests; contextualizing and positioning those interests; framing and conceptualizing a discipline for working on them; establishing the roles of key players in the thesis construction—the 'mechanics of engagement'; exposing highly diverse design methods (14 of them) and many representation techniques aimed at working more effectively on your work; exposing several possible means of delivery for a thesis; and extensions of the work beyond thesis. Importantly, we will develop the scope and stakes of your work, the tone(s) of your work, and the 'leave'—how to take the next shot beyond school. We will unpack default things like 'program' by using programmatic structuring; 'site', through situational thinking; and questions surrounding authorship. We will take nothing for granted in our work together. I look forward to everyone producing unique, pithy, and amazing work—going to places you've never imagined possible. Cultural agents, all.

The work for the fall includes 'I Could Imagines'; 'I Could Imagines, Again'; 'Entourage'; 'Mechanics of Engagement'; 'Studio Brief'; and the 'Thesis Operating Manual'—the operational map for the winter road trip. All come with briefs and particular time frames. We will lean into the 'design' equation early. Physical constructs may well be part of the work of the studio.

The roles and definition of the architect are changing. Rapidly. We must be prepared to lead the charge by augmenting the terms of spatial realms and educational models. As social injustice, information transfer, globalized practices, technological shifts, and the environment morph, complicatedly, at unprecedented speeds, it is critical that architects know how they work, what they work on, and the ramifications of their work. They need to be many architects.

*At a critical juncture, the education of architects is tricky business. Spatial education must open eyes and minds to that which is conceptually, philosophically, materially, and representationally possible. Inclusively. Accordingly, **HPCR's** will inspire burning curiosities through a belief that imaginative thinking, spatial speculation, and critical reflection can be taught. Everyone will be a transformational and transformed cultural agent, becoming the hottest + pinkest, cosmic rough riders.*