AR-527

# Construction policy

Tombesi Paolo

| Cursus | Sem. | Type |
|---|---|---|
| Architecture | MA2, MA4 | Opt. |

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|---|---|
| Language of teaching | English |
| Credits | 3 |
| Session | Summer |
| Semester | Spring |
| Exam | During the semester |
| Workload | 90h |
| Weeks | 12 |
| **Hours** | **2 weekly** |
| Lecture | 2 weekly |
| **Number of positions** | |

## Summary

Construction Policy seeks to familiarise architecture and engineering students with instruments of policy analysis, evaluation and, eventually, design. This by introducing elements of policy theory, examining historical and contemporary case studies, and preparing a proposal.

## Content

Today's architectural programs seem to be characterized by a widespread desire amongst students to question and possibly change many of the established rules of territorial development, from the resources in use to the building types to focus on, the ways to construct to the industrial supply chains behind them.
In an ideal world, we would privilege the use of natural materials and ban that of C02 emitters, limit new construction activity and redistribute existing built space, recycle construction components and limit the circulation of newly produced ones, control energy consumption modalities and define preferred patterns of living for the whole community.
But how easy is it to move from theory to practice within a sector that, economically, defines our lives and the welfare of many amongst us? What is required to reach social agreement and concrete action in the presence of multiple political constituencies with differing stakes, and thus different ideological positions, in relation to the construction industry and its numerous extensions?
The clarification of these very issues is at the centre of the subject, which focuses on the analysis of how government strategies and political decisions (and in some cases lack thereof) can affect or adapt to the construction characteristics of the built environment as well as the industrial processes underlying its production.
The discursive framework of the class is defined by the Davos Baukultur Quality System, an instrument created by the Swiss Federal Office of Culture (FOC) in 2021, and the objectives of the Swiss National Research Program 81, launched in December 2023 by the Swiss National Fund.

## Keywords

building policy, architectural practice, building culture, knowledge production, discursive and institutional frameworks, economics, wealth, industrial structure, power relations, professional boundaries, community involvement, information exchange, decision making, validation methods

## Learning Outcomes

By the end of the course, the student must be able to:

- Recognize the various dimensions of the construction industry and the macro-scale logics that move it.
- Elaborate the relationship between building industry output, socio-political environment and policy actions.
- Discuss built environment characteristics in relation to political processes and their technical underpinnings.
- Formulate the terms of a policy proposal aimed at achieving a specific construction result.

## Transversal skills

- Set objectives and design an action plan to reach those objectives.
- Use a work methodology appropriate to the task.
- Communicate effectively, being understood, including across different languages and cultures.
- Identify the different roles that are involved in well-functioning teams and assume different roles, including leadership roles.
- Resolve conflicts in ways that are productive for the task and the people concerned.
- Demonstrate the capacity for critical thinking
- Manage priorities.
- Access and evaluate appropriate sources of information.

## Teaching methods

The subject has a lecture component and a research component.
The lecture component provides a general theoretical framework largely borrowed from policy studies but adapted to the analysis of the design and building sector and integrated with examples, which will be presented to the students to enable the development of policy development skills.
The research component will seek to apply the elements of this framework to specific situations proposed by the students and providing opportunities for exposing the complexity of the subject matter.

## Expected student activities

Students will be asked to select a topic of their own interest in the evolution of the building sector, and outline a policy for its implementation in the course of the semester. This will be done progressively with the help of the instructor, and through seminar discussions with the other students.

## Assessment methods

Assessment revolves around three components:

- Class participation, or the display of one's ability to identify and discuss the elements required for ambitions to become reality in the realm of construction.
- Gathering of discussion-specific data, showing one's ability to research and collate information about relevant social elements in given industrial contexts /situations.
- Policy proposal due at the end of the term, demonstrating one's ability to identify and address key steps and issues when planning technical change with large social impact

## Supervision

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| Office hours | Yes |
| Forum | Yes |