

AR-683

**Mud on the Floor**

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Cursus	Sem.	Type
Architecture and Sciences of the City		Opt.

Language of teaching	English
Credits	1
Session	
Exam	Written
Workload	30h
<b>Hours</b>	<b>20</b>
Lecture	16
Exercises	4
<b>Number of positions</b>	

**Frequency**

Only this year

**Summary**

The seminar is about how to study construction sites. It will foreground both methodological questions and questions of agency. It will critically unpack the entanglements between architecture and the construction industry, real estate, and the material supply chain.

**Content****Mud on the Floor: Dirty Realities in Scholarly Work**

This workshop will introduce students to existing and novel research approaches to construction sites. It will foreground both methodological questions (for example, how do we trace who has worked on a site when construction labor is notoriously "under the table"?) and questions of agency (for example, how do we take into account the improvisation, happenstance, and yes mud of the site that so rarely conforms to the imagined "execution" of a drawing into a building?). This seminar will be held as four sessions: one introductory session that will theoretically frame the course and three specific sessions framed for different types of projects within EDAR: history of architecture, contemporary humanities-informed research, and technical research. The intention of the course is to engage and encourage students to approach the construction site with new eyes and through a plurality of voices, supported of course by critical readings and guest lectures.

Each contributor has significant academic work that is informed by real-world issues faced on construction sites, from the question of the ethics of construction site labor to the politics of the building detail. Doctoral candidates are thus encouraged not to insulate their scholarly work from their experience in the field and to discuss the methodologies by which such dual identities can become the basis for relevant and impactful research. In doing so, this seminar will critically unpack the entanglements between architecture and the construction industry, real estate, and the material supply chain - all key points of intersection that must be taken on for architecture to address the climate crisis.

To fulfill the course for credit, students will be expected to write a two-page (max 1000 word) response that synthesizes and critically engages with the guest presentations, suggested readings, and, where applicable, their own doctoral work. In addition to this, students with relevant research would have the opportunity to present at one sessions with the guests (30 mins for presentation and discussion) on a voluntary basis.

Scholars in Transition - EDAR Public Lectures series

The guest presentations will be open to the public and will represent the 2024 Scholars in Transition public lecture series. This established EDAR yearly series of lectures aims at giving a voice to contemporary scholars who, within their ongoing research activity, are experiencing a "transition" condition: their contribution to new and emerging research topics, and to tentative interpretations and unconventional approaches, marks the intersection of their personal research agendas, the evolution of their discipline, the public debate, and the availability of sources and data. SCHOLARS in Transition aims at raising a collective debate on the potential of scientific initiative and the responsibility of scholars in the wide fields of Architecture, Urbanism, Regional and Urban Studies.

**Resources**

**Moodle Link**

- <https://go.epfl.ch/AR-683>