This is the third course in the required Design Arts sequence for architecture students; the course is also open to non-majors who have a particular interest in the subject. The course is based on the following core concept:

All building projects are situated within a larger cultural, environmental, economic and architectural context. Human-based, sustainable architecture is not made up of isolated objects in the world, but in contexts of nature, culture and place. Successful architecture reflects its context and also improves it, and the course will deal with the ways in which this happens, including theoretical ideas connected to the questions of context, and case studies that demonstrate various ideas connected to these questions.

The course will deal with these ideas in the country and the city. It will discuss history and theory, and describe how architectural and urban projects at a variety of scales, and in different places in the world, respond effectively to context, and how studio projects may be developed to reflect these ideas. The course will combine the theoretical and the practical, in the expectation of influencing design in helpful ways. The course will include lectures in vernacular architecture, the emergence and change of cities, the relationships between cities and architectural types, the changes in city development over the last two cities, principles of building design in the landscape as well as in cities, cities and design in the "global south,” modern and contemporary architecture that takes place and culture seriously, and contemporary efforts in place- and culture-based building.