GOOD FAST CHEAP

DEMOCRATIZING DESIGN BUILD

COURSE **ARCH 4050 | 6050**
3 CREDITS

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ABSTRACT
The course will consider relationships between designing and building by challenging how project delivery methods can expand innovative possibilities for collaborative design authorship and spatial affects.

"To the extent the profession has used parametrics today, there is very little to instigate complexity other than the mind numbing image of complexity, falling far short of its rich potential to correlate multivalent processes or typological transformations, parallel meanings, complex functional requirements, site specific problems, or collaborative networks." - Michael Meredith

Scripting has captured a new generation of architects' imagination for its capacity as a design tool to quickly produce complex geometries and patterns while incorporating specific "performance" criteria. While many scripting practices operate under a premise of specificity, and even a lack of preconception, the body of work generated is strikingly monolithic, and modes of authorship have remained proprietary. To combat this homogeneity and insularity, this seminar will explore the performance specification as an alternative to the script as a generative design tool in architecture.

The specification is the analog precursor to the digital script, and like the digital version deploys computational rather than compositional logics. Simply put, performance specifications in architecture are the written instructions and criteria to build something. However, despite the fact that the spec's agency lies in tactile reality, (its instructions are directly linked to actions) it possesses the virtuality (open-endedness) of the diagram when considered in the context of design.

This seminar asks the question, what if the design of an architectural project began with the specification in lieu of the drawing or sketch? What does that mean for the role of the authorship in our field? Does the spec open up the possibilities for new forms and affects otherwise unavailable through the conventions of composition?

COURSE DESCRIPTION + FORMAT
In this course we will design specifications, and use those specifications to make things. The semester will commence with a brief introduction to the disciplinary history and conventional structure of the technical specification. In each of the subsequent 10 weeks we will consider issues/resources of project delivery contained in the conventional specification (quality, quantity, coordination, sequence, fabrication, assembly, labor, etc.). Prior to the beginning of class students will be asked to procure the same nominal building material (think 2x4). During each class, students will design a rule based procedure for generating a new object based on the potential of each project delivery resource, but within the limits of material, available tools, and class time. Students will then exchange specifications with a colleague who will make an object from the instructions, documenting the process and outcomes.

In the final 6 weeks, teams will form to design a spatial installation using similar principles learned during the course. Teams will be given 3 weeks to develop a specification as well as prototype and simulate possible outcomes, but visualizations will remain confidential. For the final 3 weeks, students exchange specifications with another team that will construct the pavilion based on interpreting the specification. A review and documentation of the completed work will conclude the semester.