This semester reiterates the critical objectives of first-year studio and extends them through greater site specificity, architectural program complexity, experimental processes, advanced media, and conceptual thinking. An independent and self-critical design process allows students to develop a better understanding of the criteria for meaningful and appropriate architecture. In other words, the training wheels come off.

The primary design themes of the studio are site / context and materials / tectonics. Projects focus on the relationship between architecture and the ground and the understanding of architecture as a material assembly of formal components. In addition, the studio promotes an understanding of architecture as an mediator of complementary systems (structure, circulation, program, formal hierarchy, etc.). Precedent analysis is a critical component of our inquiries into these design themes.

The primary graphic themes of the studio are consciousness of line, digital literacy, and the promotion of complementary relationships between analog and digital methods. The media of the design process are understood not as marketable job skills, but as vehicles through which to learn how to learn. As students interrogate new analog and digital processes, they hone their ability to adapt to new tools. Presentation strategies and new modes of diagramming are particular areas of emphasis.

Design and graphic themes will be explored through the origination, development, and presentation of architectural design projects, precedent analysis projects, and reading projects. The first half of the semester involves three design modules that explore targeted issues relating to our design and graphic themes. Each module is a distinct laboratory of ideas and methods with its own rules and logic. The second half of the semester involves a six-week, section-specific design project that synthesizes the course objectives.

This course challenges students to translate first year ideals into “real” architecture without sacrificing the essential and productive “unreality” of an academic environment. What happens to Form, Space & Order when architecture gets real? How do History and Material impact your design thinking? What is critical thinking, and what are its potential roles in the design process? As an experimental and process-based semester, students are asked to think independently and to look beyond the facts and assumptions they are given.

Presentation skills (both oral and graphic) will be practiced and interrogated throughout the semester, so that students become more agile and responsive in critical environments. Students will communicate their ideas and inquiries both graphically and verbally in small-group wall-crits, informal large-group discussions, and formal design reviews. One-on-one desk-crits will be rare, if not extinct, in 2101, as we seek to promote collective dialogues, not personalized discussions. Reviews may include faculty members and students from UNCC or other institutions, as well as practicing design professionals.

Finally, students are expected to be engaged in the events of the school, including lectures and gallery exhibits, all of which are consider as requirements of this course.