**Premise**

The final year of the MArch degree is a capstone experience where master’s students bring closure to their professional program. It consists of a faculty-led diploma research project that focuses on one theme with several branches of related discourse. Different from the normal topical studio, this studio makes use of established research that underpins student design activities. Flexibility within the studio theme will allow three options to be pursued under one guiding topic whose foundation is anchored in the *theories of architectural space*.

**Method and Content**

The research theme covers the formal, social, and theoretical focus of *architectural space*. This inquiry stems from 20th century theories of modern psychology and phenomenology where secular and democratic factors in architecture have redirected design toward empirical and human perception. In order to widen the research investigations of the determinants of architectural space, students will self-select on one of three (3) branch investigations according to their interest. Each investigation will comprise of a team of students investigating individual projects of a specific branch of the overall studio inquiry.

**Diploma Branch A. Size is not a Factor – Illusions of Spatial Grandeur**: The design of micro-habitations that are arranged so as to allow impressions of space greater than their physical limits. Such design inquires shall include, but are not limited to, micro-dwellings in housing, aggregate design components for larger structures, etc.

**Diploma Branch B. The Craft of Spatial Form Making**: The design of spatial morphologies, types, practices, etc. which stand as alternatives to common object-based design methods. These may occur as isolated investigations governed by testing spatial taxonomies, space perception, systemic spatial componentry, space syntax, etc. Such design inquires may be abstract or material, incorporate various spatial programs, and/or create in itself distinct spatial morphologies.

**Diploma Branch C. Social Determinants of Space**: The design and interpretation of human action upon spatial, architectural configurations. Event spaces shall be the primary factors for determining the design approach. Such conditions may include: spatial necessities based on human occupation, conditions of informal habitation/settlements, and/or hybrid programs; etc.

**NAAB Criteria**

This course satisfies criterion A.1: Professional Communication Skills and C.1 Research as part of the National Architectural Accreditation Board (NAAB) requirements for an accredited professional degree.

**Evaluations / Grading**

UNCCharlotte Graduate grading scale applies (A, B, C, U). External reviewers will assess work produced in the studio at multiple points during the semester, including mid-semester, final, and award reviews.