

An Investigation of Appropriate Development: The Haiti Idea Challenge



Funeral Procession10/10

Port-au-Prince from Botellier viewpoint

Hillside neighborhood earthquake destruction

Architectural Design ARCH 572: Behavior and Environment

Studio Critic: Lynne M. Dearborn

This studio will take on The Haiti Idea Challenge¹ as a vehicle to understand and engage the processes and products of a culturally and technologically appropriate long-term development strategy for the country. While the January 2010 earthquake brought to the outside world vivid imagery of a country struggling to address basic human needs in the context of this disaster, the Haitian people have, throughout much of the country's history, grappled with fractured social, economic, political and ecological systems. The island country of Haiti has a unique and turbulent history. It was the first independent nation in Latin America and the first black-led republic in the world when it gained independence as part of a successful slave rebellion in 1804. Despite having common cultural links with its Hispano-Caribbean neighbors, Haiti is the only predominantly Francophone independent nation in the Americas. Officially known as the Republic of Haiti, the country shares the island of Hispaniola with the Dominican Republic. Haiti is currently distinguished as the poorest country in the Americas.²

Using one of Port-au-Prince's urban hillside communities as a site, this studio will look beyond the aftereffects of the 7.0 magnitude earthquake that struck Haiti and devastated the capital city in January 2010. In this studio students will address the design of future Haitian communities as permanent, holistic environments, which speak to the aspirations and advancement of Haiti not just to the country's survival. In preparation for and during the design process, students will examine and integrate geographical, geological, climatic, cultural, economic, social and technological background material that is critical to the development of long-term sustainable and culturally appropriate redevelopment of Haiti. Students will work in teams of two to engage the opportunities presented within the target neighborhood. Teams will propose designs that focus on a range of scales and that address long-term needs for neighborhood infrastructure and housing. Proposals will be expected to incorporate the redesign of the neighborhood as well as individual structures, sustainable construction and infrastructure, and innovative material use. Proposals will be expected to embrace and balance cultural, environmental, and economic sustainability; respect and acknowledge the importance of Haiti's culture and historic urban fabric; and create universally accessible designs that accommodate the needs of all who will encounter and occupy the proposed environments.

Students interested in this studio are encouraged to examine the competition brief posted at <https://www.acsa-arch.org/haiti> for information and reference materials.

¹ The Haiti Idea Challenge is one of the current ASCA (Association of Collegiate Schools of Architecture) design competitions. Competition dates run from February 9 through the June 1 submission date. All students in this studio will be expected to submit an entry to this competition. See <https://www.acsa-arch.org/haiti> for competition parameters.

² Noted in the Human Development Index, United Nations Development Program's Human Development Report released, 4 November 2010