

Junior Research Studio

Syllabus

Fall 2025

DES 3525: Junior Research Studio

Seminar

6 units

MWF 2 - 5pm

Instructor & TA

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TA : TDB

Office Hours: TBD

Hospitality +

This studio course invites students to explore the evolving role of *hospitality* across diverse domains—from healthcare and entertainment to energy, agriculture, and emerging technologies. Rooted in design research and guided by real-world complexity, this will challenge students to investigate how hospitality principles can be extended, reimagined, or reinvented beyond traditional settings.

With mentorship from industry experts, support from a newly formed Institute for Hospitality Leadership, students will conduct field research, analyze trends, define design challenges, and develop concept-driven proposals.

Emphasis will be placed on design research, trend analysis, planning, project management, and compelling presentation building—equipping students to engage critically and creatively with hospitality's expanding frontiers.

About the Institute

The Marriott family, through the J. Willard and Alice S. Marriott Foundation, has donated \$25 million to the University of Utah to establish the J.W. Marriott, Jr. Institute, an initiative focused on developing leadership skills within the hospitality industry. This initiative aims to transform how students across various disciplines learn leadership principles rooted in hospitality. The institute will offer programs and events like workshops, guest speakers, applied research projects, and scholarships. It will also serve as a liaison between students, the local community, and the hospitality industry, with a particular focus on including underrepresented students.

Opportunity

Thanks to the generosity of the J.W. Marriott, Jr. Institute, this course offers students unique access to people, places, and ideas shaping the future of hospitality. The class may include opportunities to meet with leading experts, personally experience best-in-class services, and attend events or conferences that expose students to the latest innovations and thought leadership in the field.

Course Outline

Students will be given the latitude to explore a vast set of areas, as a class we will start by exploring a wide set of subjects related to hospitality and service design, expanding the scope and soaking up the inspiration available to us online and locally.

With the help of industry leaders and experts we will then narrow the scope, form groups around a set of research initiatives and present our insights mid semester.

After fall break we will be creating presentations that can be shared with and validated

by industry leaders. Additionally students will be given the opportunity to travel to BDNY and/or The Urban Tech Summit in NYC where they will be expected to gain new insights and perspectives on the direction of their work.

This course will lay the groundwork for a number of exciting projects, helping inform physical spaces, and be the genesis for speculative projects.

Timeline

Week 1: Brainstorms, orientation, and planning

Week 2: Discovery, precedent research, level setting, and inspiration

Week 3-6: Ethnographic & benchmark research, expert conversations, and field work

Week 7: Mid Semester Presentations

Week 8: Fall Break

Week 9 -12: Focused research, synthesis, and project framing, concepts, opportunities

Week 13: Potential Manhattan visit.

Week 14-16: Final project refinement and presentations

Learning Objectives

Planning, organizing, logistics, professional travel practices, client-facing projects.

Presentation planning, building, and delivery. Executive summaries, Multi-channel design synthesis. Building design strategy as a deliverable.

Formative and summative research, primary and secondary research, both qualitative and quantitative.

Designing and researching in ambiguity, situations with unclear constraints, goals, and objectives.

Craft compelling narratives, experience mapping, speculative design fiction, or immersive storytelling.

Course Goals

Through learning-by-doing students will not only build their personal skills and experience, they will also build a body of work that subsequent students -both CAD students and beyond- will benefit from.

The goals of the course:

- To spark student interest and identify opportunities for design intervention in hospitality, service design, and adjacent fields.
- To contribute to a growing body of research and speculative design defining the present and future of hospitality innovation
- To inform and inspire the development of the Marriott Institute's future hospitality innovation and prototyping spaces.

Grading

Phase 1: Secondary Exploration - **20 points**

Phase 2: Discovery and stream development - **25 points**

Phase 3: Provocation, strategy, & validations, and - **25 points**

Phase 4: Wrap up, story telling and summary - **20 points**

Attendance & Rigor: - **10 points**

What is Expected from You:

Students are expected to be self-directed, comfortable navigating ambiguity, and proactive in pursuing relevant research opportunities. While the course will include structure and guidance at key points, students will collaborate to define and iterate on next steps throughout the semester.

What Can You Expect of Me:

I will be working to provide you with experiences to which you can bring your best self and take advantage of the opportunity to explore, learn, and grow. I will be encouraging dialogue—so that you can take those ideas and questions that arise from the course material, verbalize them, develop them further, and we can all learn more. I will seek to test you, challenge you, encourage you, and hear you out—and I will have an expectation of you that you can develop your best self and contribute in a way that aids others in developing their best selves. I will not discriminate against you on the basis of your identity or well-informed viewpoints. I will strive to be fair. I will provide you with timely and quality feedback. I will be honest with you. Your grade will reflect the quality of your work and nothing else.

Late assignments

You will be expected to be ready to present on the first day of presentations, if you are not ready **you will lose 10% (one full letter grade)**, unless previously discussed.

Attendance

You are expected to attend every class meeting for as long as the class is in session. **Roll will be taken at the beginning of each class period.** You will be considered late if you are not present by the time the roll has been taken. Being late demonstrates a lack of respect and responsibility to both your peers and your instructor—please be on time. **Three late marks will equal one absence.** If you are going to be late, let me know as soon as you can. Three leaving class early without permission will also equal one absence.

You may miss two (2) classes during the semester. **The attendance policy does not differentiate between excused and unexcused absences.** The student is responsible for managing his/her/their absences. Any days missed beyond three (3) will result in a **final course grade deduction of 10% (one full letter grade).** **Absences of five (5) or more will result in failing the class.** Absences for medical reasons (including mental health), family emergencies, participation in U athletics, or military deployment, will be considered as excused absences.

You are expected to provide documentation for all accommodations. Work commitments are not excused absences.

Faculty must accommodate the instructional needs of students who are quarantined or self-isolated due to COVID-19, or who have ADA accommodations. Please do not come to class if you are sick.

Electronic Devices

Cell phones must be silenced during class. No texting, no visible cell phones, and no in-class phone conversations. No surfing the web, no email, no using social media, no headphones or music players during class. Violations are disrespectful, distracting, and rude to fellow students and the instructor.

Class communication

All official class communication **will be conducted in-class or through Canvas**. I will use Canvas to provide additional course readings, share information regarding assignments, and give access to grades. I will assume you have received information posted to the site, and that you take responsibility for the consequences if you choose not to check the site regularly. Modules will open throughout the semester and will contain readings and assignments along with due dates.

University Policies

Updated mandatory syllabus policies regarding the ADA Act, Safety at the U, Addressing Sexual Misconduct, and Academic Misconduct can be viewed at: <https://cte.utah.edu/instructor-education/syllabus/institutional-policies.php>

And finally...

This syllabus is meant to serve as an outline and guide for the course. Please note that the instructor may modify it at any time so long as reasonable notice of the modification is provided to students. The instructor may also modify the General Course Outline at any time to accommodate the needs of a particular class. Should you have any questions or concerns about the syllabus, it is your responsibility to contact the instructor for clarification.

See Canvas for the complete syllabus.