

MASTER OF ENVIRONMENTAL DESIGN DEGREE PROGRAM

RESEARCH-BASED THESIS PROGRAM

Keller Easterling, Director of M.E.D. Studies

The Master of Environmental Design program is a two-year, tuition-free research-based program of advanced architectural studies culminating in an independent project. This full-residency program leads to a degree of Master of Environmental Design (M.E.D.)—a nonprofessional degree that does not fulfill prerequisites for licensure.

The program is intended for students, including postgraduate and mid-career professionals, who seek an academic setting to redirect their practice, acquire rigorous research skills, build interdisciplinary activist coalitions, craft a voice for advocacy, implement experimental design forms, and research pointed episodes in the history and theory of architecture and urbanism. The program provides the foundation for careers in design, writing, teaching, curatorial work, or critically informed professional practice, and may, in some cases, provide a basis for future Ph.D. studies in architecture and related fields. During their studies, students are encouraged to take advantage of resources in the School of Architecture and the university including: teaching, symposia, exhibitions, grants, and other interdisciplinary collaborations and coalitions.

The M.E.D. program is aimed at qualified applicants with a graduate or undergraduate degree in architecture or other disciplines who exhibit a strong capacity for independent research. The main criterion for admission to the program is a well-defined research proposal for independent study that engages one or more of the study areas listed below. The proposal should outline a study plan that the candidate can accomplish in four academic terms with the faculty support available to students in the program.

For more information on the M.E.D. program, its history, and current and past thesis projects, visit “M.E.D.” under Academic Programs at <http://architecture.yale.edu>.

Areas of Study

Environmental Design addresses the aggregate of objects, networks, and socio-political influences that shape spatial environments. The program supports research at the intersection of research and practice. Those studying in the M.E.D. program are encouraged to position their work within both deep histories and contemporary cultural milieus. The M.E.D. program fosters an interdisciplinary approach to architectural research which takes advantage of the extensive array of resources at Yale University. Students are encouraged to engage in a wide array of methodologies, tools, and topics. The four areas below reflect recurring research interests:

SPATIAL ACTIVISM AND ADVOCACY

Developing documents and modes of organizing to support activist partners in the field, crafting an advocate’s voice for opinion and long-form journalism pieces that foreground spatial practices, studying the impacts of cultural persuasions on political climates.

DESIGN ECOLOGIES

Studying contemporary and historical forces shaping climate change, inequality, racial injustice, land tenure, socio-technical infrastructures, and environmental justice; developing and advocating for innovative forms of design to reverse environmental/social abuse.

HISTORY, THEORY, AND CRITICISM OF ARCHITECTURE AND URBANISM

Studying the history and theory of architecture, urbanism, and landscape and their intersections with broader cultural aesthetics and politics; developing a voice for architectural criticism and public scholarship.

MEDIA STUDIES AND DESIGN

Contributing spatial evidence to studies of media and infrastructure; using digital tools for mapping, visualizing data, and fabricating building components; developing exhibitions and curatorial strategies.

Course of Study

In course titles, *a* designates fall term, and *b* designates spring term. The school reserves the right to change the prescribed course of study as necessary.

The program of study is a combination of required classes, electives, and independent research. A total of 72 credits is required for completion of the M.E.D. program, allocated as 18 credits each term. A minimum of 21 credits is assigned to electives and 6 to the required M.E.D. courses. A maximum of 45 credits is assigned to independent research (ARCH 3092). The electives and course distribution are determined in consultation with the student's primary adviser and the director of the program.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE M.E.D. PROGRAM

M.E.D. students are required to take a course in research methodologies (ARCH 3091) in the fall term of their first year and a course in architectural theory (ARCH 3012) in the spring term of their first year. With approval from the director, these requirements may be fulfilled by courses taught within the university. All other course work is distributed among electives chosen from School of Architecture and other Yale University courses. (See descriptions of courses in the M.Arch. curriculum as well as in the bulletins of other schools of Yale University and online at Yale Course Search, <http://courses.yale.edu>.) All M.E.D. students are required to take ARCH 3092 each term to develop their independent project. Requirements for this course include regular meetings with advisers, participation in three workshops per term, and presentation at a roundtable discussion each term. Graduating students defend their final project during the fourth term of study.

Note: Design studios offered in the M.Arch. program are closed to M.E.D. students. Exceptions are considered only if the design studio is directly related to a student's research, and are subject to approval by the M.E.D. program director, the dean, and the studio instructor.

M.E.D.: Total Requirement: 72 credits

First-Year Required Courses**Fall**

ARCH 3091	Methods and Research Workshop	3
ARCH 3092	Independent M.E.D. Research (and Electives)	3

Spring

ARCH 3012	Architecture and Modernity: Sites and Spaces	0
ARCH 3092	Independent M.E.D. Research (and Electives)	3

Second-Year Required Courses**Fall**

ARCH 3092	Independent M.E.D. Research (and Electives)	18
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Spring

ARCH 3092	Independent M.E.D. Research (and Electives)	18
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Summer Preparation Courses for Incoming M.E.D. Students

In the week before the beginning of the fall term, the school offers two preparation courses that are required for incoming M.E.D. students.

1. Summer Digital Media Orientation Course. This half-day orientation covers accessing the school's servers, use of the school's equipment, and the school's digital media policies and procedures.
2. Arts Library Research Methodology Course. This course covers research methodologies and tools specific to the M.E.D. curriculum.

Advisers and M.E.D. Program Committee

Students work closely with one or two advisers on their independent project. Advisers are primarily drawn from the School of Architecture faculty; additional advisers are drawn from other departments at the university as appropriate to the field of study. The following faculty members serve on the M.E.D. committee, which reviews all independent work each term.

Keller Easterling, Chair
 Eeva-Liisa Pelkonen
 Alan Plattus
 Elihu Rubin

Academic Rules and Regulations

Four terms must be spent in residence. Under exceptional circumstances, and with permission of the dean and the school's Rules Committee, students may apply for half-time status (9 credits per term), after successful completion of the first term (18 credits). The in absentia tuition fee is \$250 per term. Additional procedures and restrictions for the M.E.D. program can be found in the school's *Academic Rules and Regulations* section of the *School of Architecture Handbook*. This handbook is available online at <http://architecture.yale.edu/academics/school-handbook>.