

HYPOTHESIS**I POTES I**

1. A proposal intended to explain certain facts or observations.

2. A tentative theory about the natural world; a concept, proposition, or set of propositions, that is not yet verified but that if true would explain certain facts or phenomena, either asserted merely as a provisional conjecture to guide investigation (*working hypothesis*) or accepted as highly probable in the light of established facts. "a scientific hypothesis that survives experimental testing becomes a scientific theory."

THESIS**TES I**

3. A message expressing an opinion based on incomplete evidence.

1. a proposition stated or put forward for consideration, such as a premise in an argument, esp. one to be discussed and proved or to be maintained in the face of objections.

2. a subject for a composition or essay.

3. a dissertation on a particular subject, and advancing a new point of view resulting from original research usually a requirement for an advanced academic degree.

SYNTHESIS**S INTESI**

1. The combination of ideas into a complex whole.

2. Reasoning from the general to the particular (or from cause to effect).

As one might begin to surmise from the above definitions, it is probably fairly presumptuous to assume that we will develop a 'satisfactory' program for each of your subsequent design theses. Since no two individuals seem to agree on what a *thesis* is — especially in the context of a professional program in architecture — what might be an appropriate thesis investigation for some students and faculty members might be considered wholly inadequate for others. While this might at first seem to be a somewhat cynical beginning to the problem of thesis development, one might instead interpret it as indicative of the divergent complexities that are endemic to any definition of architecture *per se*. Therefore, rather than attempt to develop a 'satisfactory' program for your *thesis*, it is perhaps best for us to attempt to develop a set of 'satisfactory' *theses of program*, assuming that we can at least end up with some provocative tools for the commencement of your thesis semester.

As initial points of discussion, let me put forward the following hypotheses regarding the particularity of architectural theses:

An architectural thesis occurs as a contention, as a phrase with the implicit beginning 'I think architecture is ...,' 'I think architecture can be ...,' or 'I think architecture should be able to' Because an architectural work can contain an extraordinarily complex set of potential meanings, the work that manifests a thesis will resonate with accumulated theses and counter-theses.

Once a work is motivated by a thesis, the visibility of the thesis in the work provides the most tangible measure of the designer's intentions. The sophistication of the thesis determines the radius of ensuing criticism.

Once the designer is no longer present, the work alone must speak to its thesis; the changing contexts of the perceivers will guarantee that, with time, the thesis will either disintegrate (taking the work with it) or continue to evolve.

The work that occurs without a thesis at its nucleus is centered on a void. At best, such a work can demonstrate technical virtuosity, but it is a virtuosity that serves no end: it mimics the attributes of speech but says nothing. The work that has not been motivated by a thesis is merely phatic: a sonorous, throat-clearing 'A-HEM' ... followed by silence.

Coursework/Grading

Because this is a seminar class, there will be in-class discussions and presentations for which you will be asked to prepare a number of written and graphic assignments that will help you identify the specific disciplinary question(s) your thesis will examine. (See the calendar for the specific topics and schedules.) These assignments will be assembled in a log/notebook that will document and narrate the connections between your original intentions, the known facts, your provisional questions, and your anticipated conclusions. Ultimately, this will serve as a personal guidebook for your thesis semester.

In addition to the written/graphic assignments for all sections (Ithaca, NYC, and Rome) will include:

- √ A 17"x34" thesis panel poster to be posted in Sibley (Due Wednesday, April 15).
- √ A two page "thesis proposition" a thesis proposal distributed to be distributed to the entire faculty just prior to the advisor selection process. (Due Wednesday, April 22)
- √ A final pre-thesis log book (Due Thursday, May 14).

The log book should contain the following sections:

1. A 250 word Thesis abstract
2. A description/analysis of the following three subjects, with at least 500 words and relevant illustrations for *each* of the following subjects:
 - A. Thesis statement (an elaboration of the thesis abstract articulating the disciplinary issues that are most important to the thesis).
 - B. Site
 - C. Program
3. Any additional material as may be required, e.g. typological analysis, analysis of precedent, etc., including material culled from the course log/notebook
4. Bibliography

Because this is a seminar, attendance is mandatory. In addition to attendance, the following will constitute the final grade:

Weekly projects	30%
Class participation	30%
Thesis panel	5%
Thesis proposition statement	15%
Pre-thesis log book	20%

Course equipment/materials:

- Course log/notebook
- All equipment required for Arch. Design.

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