



Lewis Baltz, New Industrial Parks

# THE ARCHITECTURE OF THE FOOD SYSTEM

FALL 2020 SEMINAR - ARCH 3308/6308

Instructor: Caitlin Taylor

Tuesdays, 3:00 pm - 4:55 pm EST

Food shapes the world around us, and setting the table for a shared meal is a powerful force for transformation. This seminar will explore the entangled production of food and our built environment as tangible, material manifestations of our societal and cultural values, and as powerful and urgent drivers of rapidly accelerating climate change. Together the food system and the building and construction industry account for nearly 70% of all global GHG emissions, and any expansive policies to address our warming climate will necessarily include seismic shifts in both. The food system will be the bellwether by which we measure radical transformation in our built and unbuilt world.

Designing a future in which lower energy-state regional food systems are realized by a regenerative architecture movement first requires a comprehensive assessment of the current context. As such, this seminar will survey the spaces and places of the American food system throughout history and today, including its architecture and infrastructure, its inputs and outputs, its embodied energy, and its economic and political dynamics.

Our semester's work will result in a qualitative and quantitative survey of the architecture of our national food system, and the values manifest in that built infrastructure. We will ask how it got this way through a close reading of key moments in architectural, political, and environmental history, and then apply that new understanding to a rigorous analysis of today's current state. We will measure infrastructural gaps, locate regional misalignments and imbalances, spatialize the material supply chains and their embodied carbon, study territories of ecological monoculturalism, and survey architectural disposition. The semester will conclude with a focus on projective and future-facing concepts for radically repurposing the food infrastructure we have, and in doing so set the parameters for regenerative and regional transformation.

This seminar will be animated by our shared curiosity; we will venture into territories not often explored by architects and discover things we don't know about the food system and its architectural presence in space and time. Throughout the semester, groups of students will specialize in a component piece of the food system: land and territory; inputs; production; packing and storage; processing; distribution; marketing; consumption; or waste. Students will prepare short reading responses throughout the semester, and we will compile ongoing research in a series of visual essays. Though not required, students in our Option Studio are encouraged to enroll in this seminar; material will be coordinated and complimentary. Attendees of the first class will be asked to submit a paragraph statement of interest for consideration and enrollment.

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