



ARC 588

Atmospheric Architectures

Assistant Professor Mark Shepard

Tuesday/Thursday 11:30–12:50pm

302 Hayes Hall

Fall 2009

When it is raining in Oxford Street the architecture is no more important than the rain, in fact the weather has probably more to do with the pulsation of the Living City at that given moment. – Peter Cook

This seminar will explore weather as a model for the design, analysis and interpretation of constructed environments. We will examine both how natural atmospheres influence how we relate to and interact within architecture and urban space, as well as how thinking of architecture as a synthetic weather system enables conceiving the construction of situations in terms of ambient conditions and atmospheric qualities. At a micro-scale, this involves the sensory qualities of space in relation to bodily perception. At a macro-scale, this involves emergent spatial organizations of uncertain predictability. Course readings will address how art, science and architecture have understood weather as both natural system and cultural phenomenon. We will study not only how artists and architects have drawn inspiration from the weather in their approaches to the conditioning of space, but also develop an understanding of how atmospheric parameters such as temperature, air pressure, and humidity produce spatial phenomena such as rain, snow and fog. Accompanying these readings will be a series of design explorations that focus on developing techniques and methods for modeling weather systems and related atmospheric phenomena. Tutorials will be conducted in Processing [a simple visual programming environment created for artists, architects and designers] and Arduino [a low-cost, easy-to-use physical computing platform], enabling the production of digital and physical models of complex environments. This is an introductory course. No prior expertise in computing required. Curiosity about how things work is a must.