

2012 PRE-COLLEGE SUMMER DESIGN ACADEMY NOTES FOR PARENTS

This hands-on program introduces students to architectural design. Broad discussions, site visits and lectures will include landscape and architectural contexts, while small-scale projects lead students through a full design process, from site observation and analysis to design development and presentation.

Who should attend?

The Summer Design Academy serves several student audiences. Some are those students who already know they want to become design professionals. Some students are deciding whether to pursue college-level education in a design field. For these students, we aim to provide a solid and creative introduction to the discipline.

The non-professional audience is equally important; those are the students who will go on to become doctors and politicians, teachers and lawyers, carpenters and scientists, members of neighborhood design review boards or school planning committees. "Design-thinking" is critical for all students, regardless of their academic or vocational interests. Design involves synthesizing disparate information to resolve complex problems. Our goal is to encourage students to be active shapers of the built world around them, regardless of their eventual profession.

Is This Architecture?

Students will work abstractly and literally; some exercises will be very practical, others more far fetched. In so doing, students will discuss/address **issues** of architecture: site, program, context, concept, materiality, and structure. Students will work in the **vocabulary** of architecture: plan, section, elevation; scale; measured and freehand drawings and models; describing three-dimensional space two dimensionally. Meanwhile, students will experience the **processes** of architecture: questioning, inventing multiple solutions, critical thinking, making (in model and at full scale), revising, revising, revising and review.

This is not a drafting course. The Summer Design Academy will intentionally encourage creative exploration in many different media. We frequently use "humble" materials in our work, such as old magazines for collage or common household products for model making. Imagining a different meaning to an everyday material is part of teaching creative thinking, and is normal for architecture programs at all levels – college and graduate school included.

Some Practical Considerations

Work will primarily take place in studio but students should dress comfortably for model making and outdoor drawing. Good solid shoes will be needed to visit sites under construction and for walking around campus. Students should prepare for some sun with hats and sunscreen. Students will eat lunch as a group at the dining hall with box lunches provided when necessary.

Digital media and computing are not the main focus of the Summer Design Academy. However, a computer lab will be available and workshops on portfolio and presentation skills are part of the curriculum. Students will not have a complete portfolio at the conclusion of the program but they will have material for a portfolio and knowledge about presenting their work. The Summer Design Academy is not offered for course credit and does not assign grades to the student work. Students do receive verbal feedback from instructors, peers and guest design critics during the program.

The Summer Design Academy meets from 9:00 am to 4:00 pm. All work is designed to be completed within program hours and there will be no homework. Students may not stay and work in the UMass studios after program hours.

The program includes individual work, group projects, field trips and walking tours. While we maintain a fun and creative atmosphere, this is an academic program for mature, self-motivated high-school rising juniors and seniors. Supervision is provided during the studio courses and field trips but students will have some free time for meals and relaxation. The ability of participants to follow program, university, state and federal laws, and to act independently in a supportive college setting is required.