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 research-based program of advanced architectural studies culminating in a written thesis or 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 improve scholarship and research skills, to explore a professional or academic specialization, and to sharpen critical and literary expertise. The program provides the foundation for careers in 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 the School’s programs and resources, including teaching; symposia; and curatorial, editorial, and archive research projects.

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 capability for and interest in 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 and that can be supported by faculty expertise available to students in the M.E.D. 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 is broadly defined as the study and research of the aggregate of objects, conditions, and influences that constitute the constructed surroundings. Those studying in the M.E.D. program are encouraged to understand the larger cultural and intellectual factors—social, political, economic, technical, and aesthetic—that shape the environment. The M.E.D. program fosters an interdisciplinary approach to architectural research, which takes advantage of the extensive array of resources at Yale University.

The program supports research at the intersection of theory and practice. The three areas listed below indicate recent research topics as well as the scholarly expertise of students and faculty in the M.E.D. program. Students are encouraged to engage in a wide array of methodologies, tools, and topics.

History, Theory, and Criticism of Architecture and Urbanism: History and theory of architecture and urbanity; architectural criticism; history of building types; study of design methods; contemporary architectural culture.

Ecologies and Economies of the Built Environment: Study of the ecological, economic, and cultural forces that shape the environment; globalization and its effect on built landscapes; infrastructures and settlement patterns; urban geography; notation and mapping techniques.

Multimedia Research: Digital media as a tool and subject of research; use of digital tools in fabricating building components and visualizing data; study of network geography and infrastructure.

Visual Studies: Visual communication and representation; exhibition technologies and curatorial strategies; role of various media in shaping architectural culture; notation and mapping techniques; design research.

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. 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.

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) 15

Spring
ARCH 3012 Architectural Theory 3
ARCH 3092 Independent M.E.D. Research (and Electives) 15

Second-Year Required Courses

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

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

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.