

PARIS | Edge Conditions: design at the urban periphery

ARCH 9000-Studio 09 | Graduate Travel Studio
Prof. Ann Borst | Fall 2019



Studio Statement

Paris is a city of legendary beauty, comprised of multiple layers of history, culture, art and design. The city center contains landmarks from many eras - Roman, Gothic, Beaux Arts, early Modern - and countless blocks of dignified Haussmann facades. It is also a place of continuous reinvention, as contemporary architectural language and experimental design create new relationships with historic sites and monuments. The Seine cuts a powerful figure through this urban fabric: the river's meandering form contrasts with the grand boulevards of Paris, registering the transition from its photogenic center to the largely unknown industrial waterfront at its periphery.

This studio will focus on the transformative edge condition, where Paris is expanding by reincorporating its post-industrial landscape through a skillful process of regenerative urbanism. The travel component will include visits to noteworthy urban projects in Paris and Nantes, former industrial enclaves that are emerging as vibrant new districts. These sites are along water - the Seine in Paris, the Loire in Nantes - since river access was essential to their original use. Industrial artifacts introduce dramatic shifts in scale and formal vocabulary, recording temporal change and complex local histories, while the river's presence imparts strong sensory qualities to each locale.

In our travels we will investigate how form, scale, culture, and memory are inscribed in post-industrial sites, studying their latent potential to shape unique landscapes that extend and alter the urban fabric of the city. We will begin with central Paris, using the Seine as a way-finding tool, and work progressively outwards to the eastern districts along the Seine where the city is rapidly changing. A two-day trip to Nantes will focus on the city's former port district, Île de Nantes, whose vast shipbuilding infrastructure is being transformed into a creative arts district. Through urban analysis, on-site observation, and individual research methodologies,

students will develop a design approach in response to the city, the river, and the industrial ensemble. Upon returning to Boston, students will synthesize their travel-based observations and analysis, which will serve as the basis for the studio project: team design proposals for new public cultural interventions at the urban periphery along the Seine.

Travel Itinerary The following list gives a general sense of the range of sites we'll visit (subject to change):

Paris (7 days):

- historic & early modern landmarks: Place des Vosges, Louvre, Garnier Opera, Villa Savoye...
- contemporary architecture: Pompidou Center, Arab World Institute, Louvre Pyramide, National Library, Paris Philharmonie...
- recent urban projects: Parc de la Villette, Paris Rive Gauche, Bercy district

Nantes (2 days):

- historic center, medieval district, site installations
- Île de Nantes port redevelopment, National School of Architecture, Abolition of Slavery Memorial

Prof. Borst has conducted research on contemporary French urbanism for many years, with recent publications on the role of culture, memory, and industrial heritage in transformative urban projects. She has lived in Paris for two years, travelled extensively throughout France, and is fluent in French.

Airfare | Program Cost The airfare cost is \$843, payable directly online to Student Universe travel agency. The estimated program cost is \$1537, payable to the Dept. of Architecture. The total cost is \$2380, and includes hotel accommodation, all local transportation and entry fees. It does not include visa fees, transit to and from Logan airport, meals, shopping, or personal excursions or expenses. Students will be responsible for obtaining any necessary visas if required per your nationality. A visa is not required for U.S. citizens.