

Mass Timber and New England

SPECIAL TOPICS STUDIO | Tom S. Chung | Fall 2019



Course Description

What are some major challenges we are facing today?

Certainly, there is climate change and we've already seen effects of this in the wildfires in the west and more frequent and stronger storms in the east coast, even here in Boston with recent Noreasters and resultant flooding.

While that is a world-wide concern, what may be even more of a challenge in America is the increasing division in our society, in politics, in culture, and in many ways it runs along the Rural vs Urban divide.

At the same time the population is increasing, with people moving back into cities and a projected 70 million new houses in US that will be needed to meet these needs. The Global Building Industry accounts for 40% consumption of resources, emission of greenhouse gas and solid waste generation, contributing significantly to our environmental situation.

Focusing on the New England region, the Studio poses the question: **How might we as Architects through Mass Timber start to address these challenges?**

We will look at the Region's rural context, its forests and forestry related jobs; we will research sustainable forestry and building products in the Mass Timber category; we will learn about advancements in digital fabrication technology related to Advanced Timber Technologies, and how that is changing architecture and construction in our urban areas and taking the next step towards Green Building.

We will look for inspiration in timber structures of the past and advanced timber technologies of today to create new spaces not possible before.

And imagine the possibilities of Mass Timber to shape our future and start the dialogue as professionals in urban settings to understand the concerns of rural America, research the potential of Mass Timber to re-create economic prosperity in these areas of our region, and maybe, just maybe start to bridge the gap that threatens our Country today.

Travel Overview

We will travel together, have fun, experience exemplary architecture, visit timber mills and fabrication factories, meet with professionals in the timber industry, related disciplines, government agencies and policy makers.

There will be two separate trips (each about 3-4 days in duration) during the travel period in September 2019. Order of trips may be reversed depending on availability of hosting parties.

- Trip 1, from Boston to New Haven and New Canaan, Connecticut. Travel mostly by train. Itinerary to include Common Ground High School by Gray Organschi Architects, Grace Farms by Sanaa, and several other architecture in New Haven.

- Trip 2, from Boston to Amherst, MA to Walpole and Keene, NH to Orono and Millinocket, ME. Travel by passenger van/bus. Itinerary to include John W. Olver Design Building by Leers Weinzapfel Associates, Bensonwood Timber Assembly and Digital Fabrication Factory, Advanced Composites and Structures Lab at UMaine, Orono, Town of Millinocket, ME and nearby timber mill, forest, and planned Mass Timber factory site.

Program Cost

The estimated program cost is \$850 per student, payable to the Department of Architecture. This cost includes all transportation- by van/bus and by train, lodging and entrance fees. It does not include food or personal expenses.