

Studio Culture Policy

This document was written by the AIAS Student Health and Wellbeing Committee in the **2025-2026** school year.

This document should be revised each year to account for changes in our school.

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2025-2026

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INTRODUCTION

At the Mississippi State University School of Architecture, we strive to create a studio culture grounded in curiosity, integrity, respect, and care for all students, faculty, staff, and administrators. We believe that great design emerges from an environment where every voice is valued, collaboration is celebrated, and well-being is prioritized. Our studio is a space to grow as designers and as human beings while embracing diverse perspectives, challenging ourselves creatively and ethically, and striving for excellence without sacrificing compassion and our wellbeing. Through this document, we commit to cultivating a community that inspires lifelong learning, supports balanced and healthy work habits, and encourages meaningful engagement with each other, our campus, and the built environment. These principles align with applicable university policies, including the Academic Operating Policies (AOPs).

All parties contribute to a supportive studio culture, which can be achieved through the following:

I. COMMITMENTS

Design studio requires the highest commitment from faculty, administrators, staff, and students alike. Through these steps we can accomplish a culture that embraces the curiosity of design while not having to sacrifice healthy work habits.

Faculty & Administrators

- Faculty will provide students with comprehensive course information, including objectives, schedules, deadlines, grading criteria, and performance standards, at the beginning of each term. If there are changes to be made, it must be agreed upon by both faculty and the student body. **AOP 12.03- Course Syllabus Policy**

- Faculty shall offer feedback that is timely, respectful, specific, and designed to support academic growth and professional development. **AOP 12.03- Course Syllabus Policy**

References:

AOP 12.01- Academic Freedom and Responsibility

Establishes the principles of academic freedom for faculty and students while emphasizing the responsibility to maintain professionalism, mutual respect, and ethical conduct. The policy supports open inquiry and expression within a respectful and productive academic environment.

AOP 12.03- Course Syllabus Policy

Requires that each course includes a clearly defined syllabus distributed at the beginning of the term. The syllabus must communicate course objectives, requirements, grading criteria, schedules, and relevant policies, ensuring transparency and consistency in instruction.

AOP 12.09- Class Attendance

Defines expectations for student attendance and participation. Students are responsible for attending classes and completing coursework, while instructors establish attendance policies and procedures for excused absences in a fair and consistent manner.

- Faculty & Administrators shall maintain regular availability for student consultation, advising, and mentorship throughout the duration of the course. As well as attend all scheduled class times, reviews, and meetings. **AOP 12.03- Course Syllabus Policy**

- Faculty & Administrators shall not disclose or discuss individual student grades or performance with other students or unauthorized parties. **AOP 12.13- Privacy of Student Records/ FERPA**

Staff

-Staff shall maintain a safe, clean, accessible, and functional studio environment that supports student learning, collaboration, and well-being. **AOP 12.01 - Academic Freedom and Responsibility**

-Staff shall respond to facility, equipment, and building-related concerns in a timely and professional manner and communicate anticipated delays when immediate resolution is not possible. **AOP 12.01 - Academic Freedom and Responsibility**

- Staff shall ensure that shared equipment, workshops, fabrication spaces, and other facilities are maintained and operated in accordance with established safety procedures and university policies.

Students

- Students are encouraged to manage their time effectively, maintain a healthy work-life balance, and seek support when needed to sustain academic and personal well-being. **AOP 12.01- Academic Freedom and Responsibility**

- Students are expected to attend all scheduled classes, reviews, Harrison lectures, and meetings unless an absence is excused in accordance with Mississippi State University policy. **AOP 12.09- Class Attendance**

- Students shall arrive at their classes on time and prepared with required materials and completed work that reflects their best effort and engagement with the course content. **AOP 12.09- Class Attendance**

- Students shall contribute thoughtfully and respectfully to critiques, discussions, and collaborative activities, creating a productive and inclusive studio environment. **AOP 12.01- Academic Freedom and Responsibility**

- Students shall communicate in a timely and professional manner regarding any confusion, delays, challenges, or absences that may affect their performance or participation. **AOP 12.09- Class Attendance**

- Students shall uphold the highest standards of honesty, originality, and ethical conduct in all academic and creative work. **AOP 12.12- Academic Misconduct**

References continued:

AOP 12.12- Academic Misconduct

Outlines standards of academic integrity and prohibits behaviors such as plagiarism, cheating, and unauthorized collaboration. The policy provides procedures for addressing violations and reinforces the importance of honesty and originality in academic work.

AOP 12.13- Privacy of Student Records/ FERPA)

Protects the confidentiality of student educational records in accordance with federal law. It restricts unauthorized access to or disclosure of student information and ensures responsible handling of academic records by university personnel.

Shared - Faculty, Staff, Students, & Administrators

- Collaboration shall be conducted in a manner that supports and uplifts peers, never undermining, appropriating, or sabotaging another individual's work or ideas. **AOP 12.12- Academic Misconduct**

- Members of the architecture school community shall offer critiques that are thoughtful, supportive, and solution-oriented, and shall receive feedback with openness and professionalism. **AOP 12.01- Academic Freedom and Responsibility**

- Studio spaces, materials, and equipment shall be used with care and consideration for others, maintaining an environment conducive to collective productivity. **AOP 12.01- Academic Freedom and Responsibility**

- All faculty, staff, students, and admin shall actively promote a culture of equity, inclusion, and accessibility across studio spaces, programs, and activities. **AOP 12.01- Academic Freedom and Responsibility**

- The studio community shall celebrate and learn from the diversity of backgrounds, perspectives, and design approaches that enrich the creative process. **AOP 12.01- Academic Freedom and Responsibility**

II. ACCOUNTABILITY

We believe accountability strengthens our community, protects well-being, and sustains a productive and respectful studio environment. Every member of the studio community shares responsibility for upholding this culture. Accountability begins with open communication, mutual respect, and a willingness to address concerns directly and constructively. The goal of accountability is not punishment, but learning, fairness, and the protection of a healthy studio culture.

- All members of the architecture school community should address conflicts and misunderstandings with empathy, professionalism, and

Mental Health Resources

<https://www.counseling.msstate.edu/>

The MSU Student Counseling Center is the primary campus provider of mental health services. The center offers free and confidential counseling sessions to enrolled MSU students. The focus of the initial consultation, or intake appointment, is to determine the nature and impact of the presenting concerns and to identify which options for addressing these issues are most appropriate. If additional treatment is indicated, a clinician will recommend the most effective mode of treatment, which may include individual counseling, group counseling, workshops, career exploration, or a referral to an off-campus mental health provider for long term or higher level of care. In some cases, the intake appointment is sufficient for identifying ways to address the problems, and no follow-up appointments are necessary.

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a willingness to listen and learn. **AOP 12.01- Academic Freedom and Responsibility**

- Honesty, professionalism, and respect for shared values are essential to maintaining the integrity and trust that define the studio community and our studio culture. **AOP 12.12- Academic Misconduct**

- All individuals share responsibility for upholding equitable opportunities, fair treatment, and ethical conduct within the studio environment. **AOP 12.01- Academic Freedom and Responsibility**

- Concerns should be addressed directly and constructively whenever possible, with the goal of achieving understanding before making judgments or assumptions. **AOP 12.01- Academic Freedom and Responsibility**

III. MENTAL HEALTH AND WELL-BEING

In the Mississippi State University School of Architecture, we recognize that academic success and personal well-being are deeply interconnected. Students are encouraged to utilize campus academic and wellness resources as needed. Faculty, staff, administrators, and peers are expected to help guide students toward appropriate support services when concerns arise. Sustaining well-being is a shared responsibility; success in studio depends on caring for oneself and fostering a culture that values balance, empathy, and mutual respect.

Well-being

-Faculty should strive to work with students to develop courses that are rigorous and balanced to maintain the high standards and expectations of the profession while allowing time for rest and self-care. **AOP 12.01- Academic Freedom and Responsibility**

- Students are encouraged to strive for a healthy work-life balance; all-nighters and unsustainable work habits are strongly discouraged. Plan workloads thoughtfully, communicate challenges early, and seek guidance before issues become overwhelming. **AOP 12.01- Academic Freedom and Responsibility**

- The studio community should actively check in on one another, offering encouragement and compassion when peers experience stress or difficulty. **AOP 12.01- Academic Freedom and Responsibility**

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- Studio spaces shall remain safe, accessible, and inclusive for individuals of all abilities, backgrounds, and identities. **AOP 12.01-Academic Freedom and Responsibility**

Healthy studio practices

- Approach reviews and critiques as opportunities for learning and professional growth, never as sources of hostility or undue stress. **AOP 12.01- Academic Freedom and Responsibility**

- Participate in school and community events outside Giles Hall to build a well-rounded, connected academic and creative life. **AOP 12.01- Academic Freedom and Responsibility**

IV. DESIGN CULTURE

In the Mississippi State University School of Architecture, we celebrate a design culture that is creative, collaborative, rigorous, and respectful. The studio is a shared learning environment where experimentation is encouraged, diverse voices are valued, and each designer's vision contributes to the collective pursuit of excellence.

Critique culture

- Feedback shall address the design itself rather than the individual, promoting professional and respectful discourse. Feedback should also be accepted with openness, reflection, and commitment to growth. **AOP 12.01- Academic Freedom and Responsibility**

- Critiques should be clear in design reasoning, offering insight and guidance that improves the learning outcomes and course objectives determined at the beginning of the semester. **AOP 12.03-Course Syllabus Policy**

Creative culture

- All parties shall strive for originality in creative work, avoiding plagiarism, imitation, or unethical replication of ideas. **AOP 12.12-Academic Misconduct**

- Deep inquiry, experimentation, and engagement with new ideas and methods shall be central to the design process. **AOP 12.01-Academic Freedom and Responsibility**

- Designers shall consider the environmental, cultural, and social implications of their work and aim to create equitable and sustainable outcomes. **AOP 12.01- Academic Freedom and Responsibility**

V. PHYSICAL BUILDING CARE

The stewardship of our building, equipment, and studio spaces reflects the collective respect we hold for one another, for our shared environment, and for the legacy of design education at Mississippi State University. By maintaining clean, safe, and well-cared-for facilities, we preserve a culture of professionalism and ensure a supportive environment for current and future students.

Shared spaces

- Keep personal and shared work areas clean and organized to ensure safe pathways and accessible workspaces. **AOP 12.01- Academic Freedom and Responsibility**
- Trash, food, and scrap materials shall be discarded in designated receptacles, and recyclable items should be sorted appropriately. **AOP 12.01- Academic Freedom and Responsibility**
- Unauthorized access to studios, workshops, or building facilities shall not be granted to individuals outside the program or without proper approval. **AOP 12.01- Academic Freedom and Responsibility**

Noise

- Sound should be kept at a level conducive to focused work and collaboration. **AOP 12.01- Academic Freedom and Responsibility**
- Headphones should be used for personal listening; disruptive activities or loud conversations are to be avoided. **AOP 12.01- Academic Freedom and Responsibility**
- Courtesy shall be extended to surrounding classes, meetings, reviews, and studios by minimizing noise and distractions. **AOP 12.01- Academic Freedom and Responsibility**

Facilities

- Cutting shall not occur directly on studio tables or on the floor. Writing or marking on surfaces is prohibited. **AOP 12.01- Academic Freedom and Responsibility**
- Spray paints, solvents, and other potentially toxic materials shall only be used in designated, properly ventilated areas; preferably outdoors. Under no circumstances should spray paint be applied on

sidewalks, indoors, or in unauthorized spaces. **AOP 12.01- Academic Freedom and Responsibility**

VI. ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE

AI is not a substitute for individual effort, critical thinking, or the development of design skills. Unless a staff member clearly states they allow it in course guidelines, use of Artificial intelligence is strictly prohibited. All academic and creative work must remain the student's own.

Guidelines

- Work submitted for evaluation must be the student's own. Reliance on AI to produce or complete assignments constitutes a breach of academic and ethical standards, resulting in suspension. **AOP 12.12- Academic Misconduct**
- If allowed, students are encouraged to critically assess AI outputs, refine or reinterpret suggestions, and use them as starting points rather than finished solutions. Any use of AI should be clearly cited by course guidelines. **AOP 12.01- Academic Freedom and Responsibility**

CONCLUSION

This Studio Culture Policy reflects a shared commitment to excellence, integrity, and well-being within the School of Architecture at Mississippi State University. By aligning our practices with university policies and shared values, we cultivate a studio environment that prepares students to become thoughtful, responsible, and innovative designers.

Hail State!

