4.583 Forum in Computation

Fall 2020 | Monday Meeting Time TBD | 3 Units
Meeting Location: Virtual - Link
Zoom Meeting #: 4572653996

Student Organizers:
Rania Kaadan | SMArchS ’21 | rkaadan@mit.edu
Lavender Tessmer | PhD ’24 | ltessmer@mit.edu

Faculty Supervisor:
Terry Knight | tknight@mit.edu

Course Description
Forum in Computation is a student-led class that supports students in navigating the variety of opportunities at MIT and exchanging student-led discussions. The subject offers a process-based approach that utilizes students’ diverse backgrounds, experiences, and schools of thinking and doing. For new and continuing students, it provides a venue for group feedback and opportunities to connect with current students and alumni. Moreover during this period of distance learning, Forum serves as a primary method for students to stimulate conversations and stay connected.

Intended Learning Outcomes
By the end of this course, you will:
● Develop a process-based project learning approach.
● Foster community engagement around research discussions.
● Think critically about your research as you strategize your time at MIT and utilize peer feedback.
● Think critically about your background as a designer operating both inside and outside the discipline.
● Develop effective communication skills around your research interests.
● Solicit peer-to-peer and instructor-to-peer advice.
● Promote academic networking with instructors, current students and alumni.

Completion Requirements and Deliverables
Regular attendance is a requirement of this subject. In addition, Forum requires students to complete a series of light deliverables that center around class participation and their own research planning. Students can expect to respond to surveys seeking input and prepare brief in-class presentations.

Schedule Overview
The schedule is structured in four parts:
I. Introduction to MIT and to each other
II. Strategizing about your time at MIT: engaging in conversations with current students and recent graduates
III. Strategizing about your time after MIT: engaging in conversations with alumni
IV. Feedback sessions for presenting current research and pre-thesis topics
Part I: Introduction to MIT and each other

**Tuesday, September 1:** Discussion of classes and logistics

On the first day of class, students share experiences about various classes at MIT, and discuss questions about logistics of registering, listening, dropping, cross-registration, etc.

**Deliverable:** respond to survey about class meeting time

September 7: Holiday - No Classes

September 14: Introductions Part I - student presentations

September 21: Introductions Part II - student presentations

**Deliverable:** Make a diagram that explains your interests and goals at MIT. Include this in a short presentation about your background (for new students) and updates about your current research (for continuing students). The diagram should explain interest in a sequence of classes, topics, or research you are exploring (or hope to explore) at MIT. A first half of students will present on September 14th, and a second half on September 21. The presentation can be a chance for new students to receive mentorship about how to structure their time at MIT relative to their goals and interests. For continuing students, it is a chance to share your latest work with your peers during the time of distance learning.

Part II: Situating yourself at MIT: hearing from current students and recent graduates

Three sessions are dedicated to hearing from current students and recent graduates about the many research affiliations they have developed both inside the School of Architecture + Planning and in other departments. Each class will feature discussion about the experiences of peers seeking out classes, faculty, and research opportunities in different disciplinary categories. The following classes will have a small panel presentation consisting of current students and/or invited guests and recent graduates.

**Pre-classes assignment:** Learn something about the invited guests and prepare a question for the Zoom chat.

**Post-classes deliverable:** Develop your initial road map while reflecting on discussions and your current classes.

September 28: EECS | Harvard classes

October 5: Media Lab | Biology

**Tuesday, October 13:** Other Architecture Groups | STS | Misc
Part III: Situating yourself after MIT: hearing from Alumni

Four sessions are dedicated to hearing from Computation Group alumni about their experiences after MIT. Invited presenters focus on career directions in Academia, Industry, Entrepreneurship and Architecture, discussing how their background in Architecture and Design Computation enable a wide range of opportunities after graduation.

October 19: Academia
October 26: Academia
November 2: Industry
November 9: Entrepreneurship
November 16: Architecture

Pre-classes assignment: Learn something about the invited guests and prepare a question for the Zoom chat.
Post-classes deliverable: Develop your initial road map while reflecting on discussions and your current classes.

Part IV: Feedback sessions

Students get a chance to draw upon the expertise of peers to get feedback about the current state of their research.

November 23: Holiday - No Classes
November 30: Pre-thesis presentations
December 7: Research Progress

Deliverable: Students in SMArchS pre-thesis present draft versions of their end-of-semester presentations; PhD students present ongoing research. SMArchS incoming students finalize their future conceptual research plans.