



Arkitektur- og designhøgskolen i Oslo
The Oslo School of Architecture and Design

Oslo, Dec 21. 2023

Review of Kharkiv School of Architecture's Bachelor Programme

I am delighted to write this review of KhSA's Bachelor Programme based on our collaborative effort through studio teaching with the Oslo School of Architecture (AHO) during the fall semester, 2023. I write in the capacity as Associate Professor at the Institute of Urbanism and Landscape at AHO, where I teach the masters course Global Urbanism and masters elective course Rethinking Development and Sustainable Futures. I also teach public spatial design at the bachelor level. Trained as an architect, I have practiced as a planner and consultant for 10 years in the interdisciplinary nexus between urbanism and the social sciences in Norway and East Africa. I hold a PhD in urbanism focusing on mapping and analysis of complex urban settings in East Africa, where most of my current research focuses on urban crisis, governance, histories and futures.

Our collaboration with KhSA was initiated by Oleg Drozdov in 2022 on his visit to Oslo, where we discussed the possibilities of institutional collaboration between KhSA and AHO. KhSA was interested in collaboration with an institution that merged the focus on urbanism and landscape. At AHO our institute serves both Architecture and Landscape Architecture programmes, and we believe studying the relationship between the built and natural environment is a crucial focus for future sustainability. From this shared conceptual starting point an agreement was drafted with Oleg Drozdov and Daria Ozhyhanova for running a parallel semester course between bachelor students at KhSA and Masters students at AHO. At AHO this was carried out through the Global Urbanism course, which pedagogically speaking introduces AHO students to urban crisis and challenges outside of Norway. We do this to prepare our students for crises that are to come; mainly the climate crisis but also the social, political, and economic upheavals that may follow in its wake. Through Global Urbanism our students are encouraged to build new networks across disciplines, institutions, and national borders. We believe this will make them better equipped to working internationally, but also to bring home knowledge from other places that have far more experience dealing with and solving crises than we do in Norway.

Through the joint planning of parallel courses at different levels, and with different obligations to curriculum, I have found the KhSA academic staff to be amazingly flexible and solution oriented. They were also very clear in their focus on securing learning objectives for their students, while keeping an open mind and being curious about how we implement our teaching models. Our collaboration came to fruition during the fall of 2023, when we jointly investigated what sustainable futures might mean in Ukraine, with a specific focus on Lviv Oblast. We looked into issues of urban and ecological sustainability; envisioning alternative

futures for human habitation, ecologies, agricultural production, and socio-economic stability. With the ongoing war, Ukraine is faced most acutely with humanitarian issues, and a collapse of built environments. But beyond this lies another crisis; that of climate change and the degradation of habitats. For this studio asked whether the devastation of the war can be used as a starting point for critically reassessing the way we build cities, how we live in them, use environments, and interact with landscapes. What can we bring with us into the future in terms of spatial practices, cultural heritage, social norms, and structures, what will be left behind, what will have to be different, and how will it all need to be (re)assembled?

In module 1 at AHO we produced a database of historical and current trends that have shaped Ukraine and the Lviv region. This part of the course enabled the students to immerse themselves in a very different situation from what they are used to; an area in crisis and constant flux, where the complexity of information can be overwhelming. The KhSA students also conducted investigations and collected data on Lviv, and joint lectures were held. In module 2 at AHO we focused our attention on imagining future scenarios for Lviv, 50 years from now. A joint workshop was held with students from AHO and KhSA. Because none of the students could travel to see each other, the workshop was held digitally, although the AHO students were based in Przemyśl on the Polish side of the border at the time. Through the workshop we got to work closely with both KhSA students and academic staff, gaining a greater understanding of their teaching modalities and the level of student work at the bachelor level. The discussions that ensued between our masters students and the KhSA bachelor students was enlightening and the insights and suggestions from KhSA students was vital to AHO students development of their understanding and their projects. Towards the end of the workshop we were provided presentations of the KhSA students' work, which was certainly par with what we see at our bachelor level in Oslo.

From my experience collaborating with KhSA on developing the pedagogy for the courses, the administration of running two parallel courses at different levels in two different countries and curriculums, the academic discussions with staff and students in the workshop, and the presentation of student work around mid-term in the semester, I would heartily recommend the Kharkiv School of Architecture's bachelor programme be accredited.

Sincerely,



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