UNIVERSITY OF ILLINOIS URBANA-CHAMPAIGN
ILLINOIS SCHOOL OF ARCHITECTURE

ARCH596 | SPRING 2027 | 3 CREDIT COURSE
TUESDAYS 1PM-320PM | RM : TBD

FOR RESEARCH PURPOSES



1 → **POSITION** MUSIC AS SPATIAL INQUIRY

What can music teach us about architecture, geography, and the cultural landscapes of water?

How might sound, lyrics, rhythm, and cultural memory become tools for reading, interpreting, and reimagining the built environment?

This seminar considers music as a cultural and spatial knowledge system through which to investigate the relationships between water, architecture, history, and collective life. As architectural research increasingly moves across disciplinary boundaries, music offers an alternative framework for understanding the built environment, not simply as a physical construct, but as a landscape shaped by cultural memory, social practices, policies, and collective imagination.

SUBJECT NARRATIVE AND AQUATIC GEOGRAPHIES

Drawing from a century of musical traditions—including spirituals, blues, jazz, funk, R&B, and hip-hop—this seminar examines music as a cultural archive of migration, belonging, racialized geographies, access, resistance, pleasure, and collective life. Through a participatory catalog featuring artists from Paul Robeson and Sun Ra to Lauryn Hill, Frank Ocean, and Kendrick Lamar, students will connect musical narratives to the histories, infrastructures, and cultural landscapes of water.

METHOD RESEARCH AND TRANSLATION

The elective combines secondary readings, seminar discussions, guest speakers, student presentations, and short research and design projects. Students will translate their findings through mapping, drawing, and spatial studies, moving between sound, cultural knowledge, and architectural representation. Through these explorations, we will Reveal overlooked histories, illuminate contested waterscapes, and generate alternative spatial imaginaries.

INSTRUCTOR: AKIMA BRACKEEN
ASSISTANT PROFESSOR