

# The Good Life

*“Men come together in cities in order to live: they remain together in order to live the good life.”*

Aristotle

At the core of the project of housing lies the need to create a cohesive community – to bring together a large group of disparate individuals to coexist in a dense, shared, and evolving physical construct in the city that many of us call home. A great deal of housing produced in New York in the past seventy years has been designed in response to family structures and socio-economic frameworks that proved unrealistic and that became detached from the social realities of contemporary urban life. The design for new housing in the city is an opportunity to lessen the gap between the way we live and a built environment that has often been built for others.

Moreover, the separation between home, work and play are becoming less clear – a blurring of the lines compartmentalizing domestic and public life not seen since pre-industrial times. With technology in all its forms, what we do is no longer linked to where or when we do it. This, together with the breakdown of the nuclear family, challenges the very definition of home to become more fluid, less permanent and broadened to encompass a greater range of possibilities. At the same time, the rise of the co.co.co. lifestyle (co-working, co-living, co-everything) reflects a craving for a lost communal aspect of daily life that has been a constant throughout most of human history. These contemporary conditions need an equivalent architectural response to create domestic spaces and common places that better respond to idiosyncrasies of use, a greater variety of relationships, and that can adapt to evolving needs over time.

The studio will reflect on the question of what architecture can actually do, and conversely what it can't. Can it serve as a tool for social organization that helps generate a sense of community? Can architecture define our way of living? What does community mean and should architecture become a



Habitat 67, Montreal - Moshe Safdie

vehicle to contain or produce it? Reclaiming the lost optimism of the modernist project, the studio will explore alternatives for housing that aspire to satisfy more than the base needs of its inhabitants to shape new and novel environments for living.

The studio will ask students to design housing as a project for community. Each pair will define a small community and design an architectural system that, in conversation with its site, can sustain it over time. Through all scales, from part to whole, each housing proposal will demonstrate its design ambitions through three lenses:

1. Inner Life
2. Common Life
3. Urban Life

With a focus on the welfare of its users, projects will construct a new domestic anatomy in the context of New York that explores the needs and potential of collective urban housing now and in the future.

All at once, a housing project is a social project, a structural project, a conceptual project, a material project, a spatial project and an urban project. Issues of affordability, changing demographics, redefinition of the family structures, mixed-use, cross-generational living, new economic paradigms, environmental pressures, privacy, density and adaptability are all concerns to be considered and addressed.

The objective for the semester is to bring together and synthesize all these competing and sometimes conflicting conditions to arrive at a coherent whole that is greater than the sum of its parts – to design collective housing in the city that makes possible the good life.