BACKGROUND
The transformation and evolution of the LA River reflects the changing values and civic aspirations of Los Angeles County over the past 100 years. The city grew on its riverine banks as future residents disembarked from Union Station not far away. As settlements grew, it taxed the river’s capacity to supply adequate water and the city embarked on an ambitious plan to create aqueducts to source water from Northern California and from Colorado State. As the river waned in its role, disastrous floods struck in the early century, securing its fate as a tamed and concretized channel by The US Army Corps of Engineers. However, in the last decade, a combined grassroots and civic activism has taken hold and the potential of returning the LA river to its eponymous name has become a slow reality.

INFRASTRUCTURE
The 51 mile long Los Angeles River threads 14 separate cities and is divided into 6 parts, called Reaches. Each Reach has a relationship with the city or cities it hosts. The Studio Teams will be organized by these Reaches.

Reach 1: Long Beach
Reach 2: Vernon, Commerce, Maywood, Bell, Bell Gardens, South Gate, Lynwood, Compton, Paramount, Carson
Reach 3: Los Angeles (Downtown)
Reach 4: Glendale
Reach 5: Los Angeles (Canoga Park / San Fernando Valley)
Reach 6: Burbank
STUDIO
The first Module’s aim is establishing a positional strategy for the purpose and the raison d’être of architecture and technology within a contemporary urban environment. Therefore issues such as economics, demographics, ecology, policy and infrastructure are analyzed and integrated into a heterogeneous narrative that offers context and purpose for a variety of interventions and implementations.

The civic infrastructure of the LA River holds great promise as a connective armature for commerce, recreation and transportation for Los Angeles County. As with the freeways and the Pacific Ocean coastline, the LA River offers a linear bloodline that can unite and assemble a comprehensive cultural corridor that is unrivaled in its scale.

The studio will begin by asking what challenges and opportunities exist within each of the cities. What were their aspirations and disappointments? What are their strengths and weaknesses? Ultimately, can any of these issues be resolved by the River or through the River’s access to the other cities?

Organization:
Each Reach is envisioned as a stand-alone urban project that will react and respond to the neighboring reaches to recreate a holistic strategy for the County.

Studio Teams:
6 teams (each managing a Reach) of 7 students will analyze, document and offer a strategy for the development of the River. The implementation of these strategies will continue in Episode 2 and 3.

5 Topics of study per Reach:
- Built Environment
- Natural Environment
- Infrastructure
- Demographics / Culture
- Economy / Governance

All students are required to purchase COMBINATORY URBANISM: The Complex Behavior of Collective Form by Thom Mayne. Each student will be asked to analyze and diagram urban strategies for 3 projects. The collective summary of these diagrams (21 per team) will be a guideline for establishing each Reach’s urban strategy.

Schedule:
Mon Aug 5  Orientation. Teams Formed. Assignments Given.
Fri Aug 9   Mill / lasercutter Tutorial
            Problem Formation. Mid-review.
            Review of Combinatory Urbanism Analysis projects
Mon Aug 12 Application of Combinatory Strategies
Wed Aug 14 Pin-up
Fri Aug 16 Final Review

Final Deliverable Model: Large-scale physical site/conceptual mapping model constructed through the use of CNC mill and laser cutter.