CRAFT & STRUCTURE UNIT

INDEPENDENT STUDIES

YOUR OWN INDEPENDENT STUDIES

Tutors: Cornelia Faisst, Martin Mackowitz

As part of the Independent Studies program, students will investigate a self-selected topic related to earthen construction, developed in consultation with the supervisors. Depending on individual interests, the work may address questions concerning the use, design, performance, or application of earth-based building systems.

The study is embedded within the earth HUB, a platform dedicated to consolidating and advancing regional expertise in earthen construction. Throughout the seminar, students may engage with different projects and partners, such as the Denkraum at the University of Liechtenstein (an innovative clay-wood structure designed, planned, and built on campus in collaboration with local craftspeople and experts from various disciplines), the Gabera Foundation, a non-profit organization in Niger currently developing an earthen campus focused on sustainable education and community-oriented development or the FFG research project Missing Link, which aims to establish guidelines defining the legal, economic, logistical, and infrastructural requirements for regional earth construction systems, including a clear process and supply chain from material extraction to installation.

The earth HUB promotes innovative building approaches and interdisciplinary exchange, with a particular emphasis on earth construction as a model for ecological and social sustainability. By connecting regional and international stakeholders, researchers, and students, the platform supports the development of practical solutions alongside scientifically grounded knowledge. It highlights exemplary projects, fosters collaboration between the University of Liechtenstein (LSA) and its partners, and explores the potential of renewable building materials, particularly the combination of earth and wood.

Depending on the chosen focus, the Independent Study may include theoretical research, material investigations, case study analyses, design explorations, or experimental work. Students are encouraged to relate their research to current developments in sustainable architecture and building technology while applying scientific methods and interdisciplinary perspectives. The project should contribute to a deeper understanding of the architectural, technical, environmental, or social potential of earth as a renewable, low-impact building material.

The course concludes with a written assignment and an oral presentation. Depending on the selected workload, the written submission should comprise approximately 10,000–15,000 characters (2 ECTS), 15,000–20,000 characters (3 ECTS), or 20,000–30,000 characters (4 ECTS), including spaces.

2-4ECTS

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