Public space in the United States is inherently overlapping with private ownership. The Occupy Wall Street movement occurring in Zucotti Square demonstrated the impact of private/public relationships that blur the boundaries of political control. As we consider a design method of public space that seeks to build a framework for participation, embracing systems design that acknowledge external conditions and calibrating material interface that supports this affect is helpful to create an open-endedness that to local identity. Furthermore, the openness of private owners to acknowledge local participation and identity over time, provides a value that breaks traditional notions of functional use of architecture. The Oregon public house type is an example.

The studio course will provide design support for a real-world food market and associated exterior event space in Detroit, Michigan. The studio will test the boundaries of community design and public space. The existing conditions to be optimized for reuse include an existing bank building as built fabric, a possible enclosed addition and exterior event space. The exterior space may serve the uses of an event space, urban farming, market stands, greenhouse for extended growing season, beer garden, vehicle and bicycle parking and other potential uses. The intervention will respond to human and nature conditions systematically deployed inside the existing bank, on the surface between bank, as enclosure for the future addition and as covering element of the exterior space. Parametric design and material affect will be a working method for the project.

Collaboration and technical expertise will be enhanced by the assistance of an architectural designer in New York and via input from the owner in Detroit. A site visit to Detroit may occur. The results of the studio will be assembled into a design book and will be passed along to Digital Media Collaboration in the Winter Term to develop a built prototype. A parallel 2-credit 4/523 Design Communication course may be available to develop computational and fabrication methods to support the studio effort.