What makes a building sustainable? In the first half of the class, we discussed the energy consumption of buildings as a primary metric of environmental impact and we examined advanced methodologies for determining energy use during building design, construction and occupancy. We looked at several rating systems and frameworks for sustainable buildings in the classroom, and we observed these ratings in person through field trips.

We’ll continue trying to answer the question of what makes a building sustainable in this second half of the course by looking more closely at the systems and parts of a building that contribute to its energy consumption. We’ll also continue exploring energy modeling tools and applications to further develop students’ skill sets, and we’ll compliment the use of tools with observations of technology in use through field trips.

In this two-part course sequence (2 credits each in Winter and Spring terms), students may fulfill their Advanced Technology requirement.

Course Objectives
1. Allow students to develop a working definition of what constitutes sustainable buildings.
2. Deepen the students’ skill sets with energy modeling tools and applications, in order to inform and enhance their design process.
3. Contribute to the students’ functional knowledge of building systems through discussion and observation.

Emily Kemper earned her B.Arch. from Univ. of Cincinnati in her hometown and a Master’s of Building Science from USC, where she sought a deeper understanding of energy efficient retrofits and net-zero energy architecture. She is an avid biker, amateur photographer, blogger and has written extensively for Archinect.com.