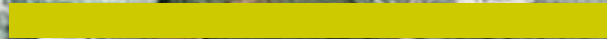




*elope*

**Architecture & Health  
Human Centred Medicine  
Project Spring 2009**

**Bern University of Applied Sciences**  
Architecture, Wood and Civil Engineering





## Human Centred Medicine

For years, the building industry has been demanding to see educators in architecture «teach the fundamentals» of global enterprise engagement and skilled use of information and communication technology. The reason for this request lies in the dramatic change process which the entire industry currently is undergoing. In a global environment, new processes and organizations with partly virtual collaboration schemes gain in importance.

At the universities, innovative design curricula start to recognize the significance of trans-disciplinary practice and organize student teams in such a way that different functions associated with key disciplines of design projects are represented. Rather than asking students to wear another discipline's hat for the duration of a project, the embedded learning-oriented project environment (*elope*) integrates students and faculty from different professions and from an international network of universities and industry partners in a common effort to build a knowledge pool and a space for interaction and learning.

The intrinsic crisis of today's health care system doesn't root so much in financial limitations but has its cause in a deficit of spiritual embeddedness in our modern society. Therefore, the «idea of man» on which our culture bases its actions gains importance. The theme of *elope*'s project in the spring 2009 addresses this finding by aiming at the transformation of the concept of Human Centred Medicine<sup>1</sup> into an architectural setting by designing a vision for a Swiss regional hospital which puts the wholeness of body, mind and soul of human beings into the centre of all planning activities. The engaged student and faculty teams for this project will come from the areas of architecture, sociology, medicine, psychology, landscape architecture, ecology, hotel industry, management and the arts.

<sup>1</sup> Hess, Christian & Hess-Cabalzar, Annina, *Menschenmedizin*, Suhrkamp, Frankfurt am Main 2006  
Title Page: Chorlton, Windsor, *Kunstwerk Körper: Reise ins Innere des Menschen*, München 2005  
Poster: *Hygieia*, 1615, Peter Paul Rubens - reproarte.com, *Cherry Blossom* - free-background-wallpaper.com, *Aulonocara Baenschi* - safhl.net

## Contact & Applications

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Architecture, Wood and Civil Engineering

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### **Participants**

Students of the following disciplines are welcome to apply:

- Architects
- Artists
- Civil Engineers
- Ecologists
- Hotel Experts
- Medical Scientists
- Process Managers
- Psychologists
- Landscape Architects

### **Application Documents**

Students interested in a participation submit

- Curriculum Vitae
- Letter of Motivation

not later than December 1, 2008 to: [elope.ahb@bfh.ch](mailto:elope.ahb@bfh.ch)

# *elope*

**Context** Nowadays, students are increasingly challenged within their specific core disciplines; in addition however, they are also supposed to develop skills in order to apply this particular knowledge in practice. This ideally goes hand in hand with a sense of maturity of the individuals' characters vis-à-vis the social, cultural, and economical environment. The practical application of theoretical knowledge can thus only be implemented successfully, if these three basic elements are taken into account. The curricula for studies in Architecture and Architectural Process Management at the Bern University of Applied Sciences are fundamentally based on this comprehension.

In addition to students' disciplinary knowledge, the ability to work efficiently within multicultural environments has become increasingly important. This cognition has led to universities becoming more proactive with regard to networking and offering joint courses, which is where *elope* is actively involved.

*elope* sees itself as a learning system cooperating in a network of international universities and industry partners. It does so within a reflexive context, taking into account the various cultures involved in order to create new methods of resolution regarding teaching and learning. The students are at the core of this concept, and are given the opportunity to develop process-oriented expert knowledge through interdisciplinary teamwork as well as the use of information and communication tools. Furthermore, *elope* respects the paradigm shift from supply-pushed to demand-pulled learning, i.e. to replace the swatting of facts by process knowledge. A further characteristic of *elope* is an increasing tendency for the overlapping, or even amalgamation, of various lines of work in order to give way to new, holistic and transdisciplinary perspectives.

*elope* is a comprehensive platform which offers students the chance to contribute their full potential. Each individual's attitudes, characteristics, and abilities are taken into account in order to allow as much space as possible for independent development of students' responsibilities and skills. A contribution to the concept of «campus in mind» is made by *elope* in providing the multi-disciplinary teams with learning facilities that are based on experimental and interactive technologies.

*elope* is not only about to significantly remould the landscape of teaching and learning at universities, but it also intends to yield substantial influence concerning decision-making and the creation of practical work processes. In association with university teaching staff, the mentors are instrumental in contributing expert knowledge and regular feedbacks to the teams, while they are also actively involved in the evaluation of processes and related products. The latter will be of increasing importance in the future, as scientific research has been initiated in connection with reflections of certain PBL (Project Based Learning) methods. It is the intention of this kind of research to support students with regard to the awareness of their personal learning styles. The findings will then be made accessible for future work in a broader context.

Design innovation, which essentially means the definition, development, and creation of new concepts and their successful launch, is the driving factor for a powerful, competitive economy and the prosperity of society. Therefore, the education of professionals at universities and the continuous development of architects, engineers, urban designers, etc. in the wide field of design innovation are of central importance in particular, when we are trying to cope with the global challenges to jointly develop and implement sustainable processes which have to respect efficiency (in the use of limited resources), sufficiency (by reducing the wishes to the necessary) and congruence (by fostering and reinforcing recyclable products).

**Pedagogic Model** The students are in the centre of *elope's* working model. They build multi-disciplinary teams with one (or two) student(s) coming from each profession. Since they originate from different universities around the world, they have access to an attractive set of faculty coaches. After a kick-off week, the students work in non-located, distributed, interdisciplinary teams – as they would do in practice each administering his/her disciplinary contribution but also taking responsibilities for the entire process and product as a team member. The faculty members of the partner universities and the mentors from the industry act as consultants and coaches on call of the teams.

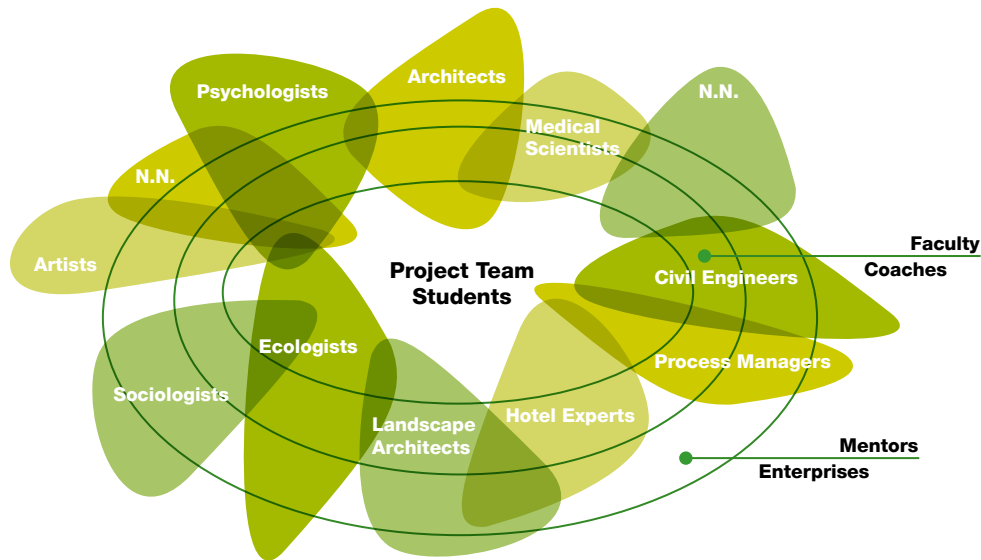
Experts and mentors from the building and construction industry who are not part of the university are an additional and essential part of *elope* courses. Their participation contributes a high degree of practical knowledge to the projects, pointing out the actual «state of the art». In this manner, *elope* manages to link academic education and professional practice. The intensive interaction between these two elements guarantees a rapid transfer of technology, while at the same time ensuring that the students involved are highly motivated.

The evaluation of the project results are in the duty of an international jury, which consists of one member of each discipline. Each team receives a jury report with an acknowledgement of the contributions according to initially specified criteria. *elope* puts a strong emphasis on the assessment and self-assessment of the processes by systematically requesting the students to reflect on the lessons learnt keeping Søren Kierkegaard's statement in mind that life is lived forwards, but only understood backwards.

**Responsibilities of *elope* and its Partner Universities** *elope* considers itself as a learning platform which enables and facilitates interdisciplinary processes. It has also proven to offer a test bed for research in the field of modern teaching and learning as well as in the field of evaluation of novel learning spaces. At the same time it is important to put on record that the responsibility for the disciplinary supervision of the students remains with the home universities. This relates also to the grading of the students' contribution. *elope* on the other hand will provide a qualification on the team processes and on their interaction patterns. (It is suggested that students who successfully participate in *elope* projects receive academic credits based on the ECTS.)

The experience of former courses has revealed that this double responsibility of the student towards his/her team and towards the home university and professors, respectively, may also bear conflicts. *elope* demands that team decisions be respected as far as the approach and the objectives agreed on are concerned; *elope* leaders are convinced that within this frame work there is still ample tether to adhere to high academic standards in the disciplinary work.

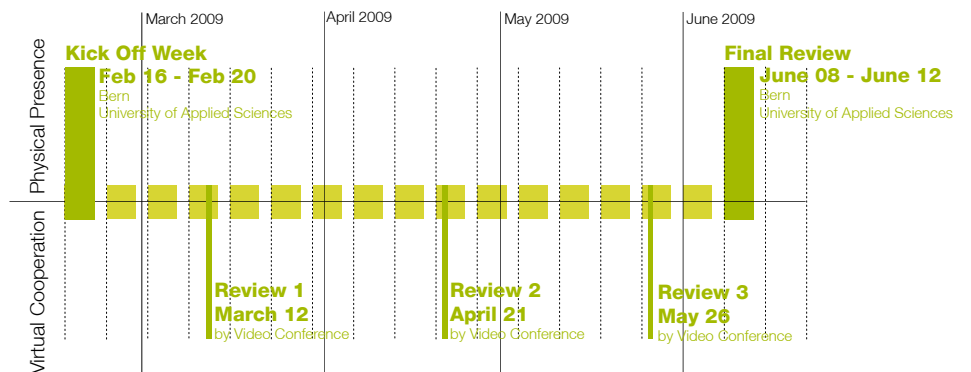
Saying this makes it obvious that a close accompaniment and monitoring of the project by the faculty of the partner universities is essential and highly welcomed by *elope*. The involved faculty will receive full access to all documents of the *elope* project. Their participation during the kick-off events, the reviews and the final presentations will add to the interdisciplinary depth and thus to the quality of the project and to further developments of *elope*.

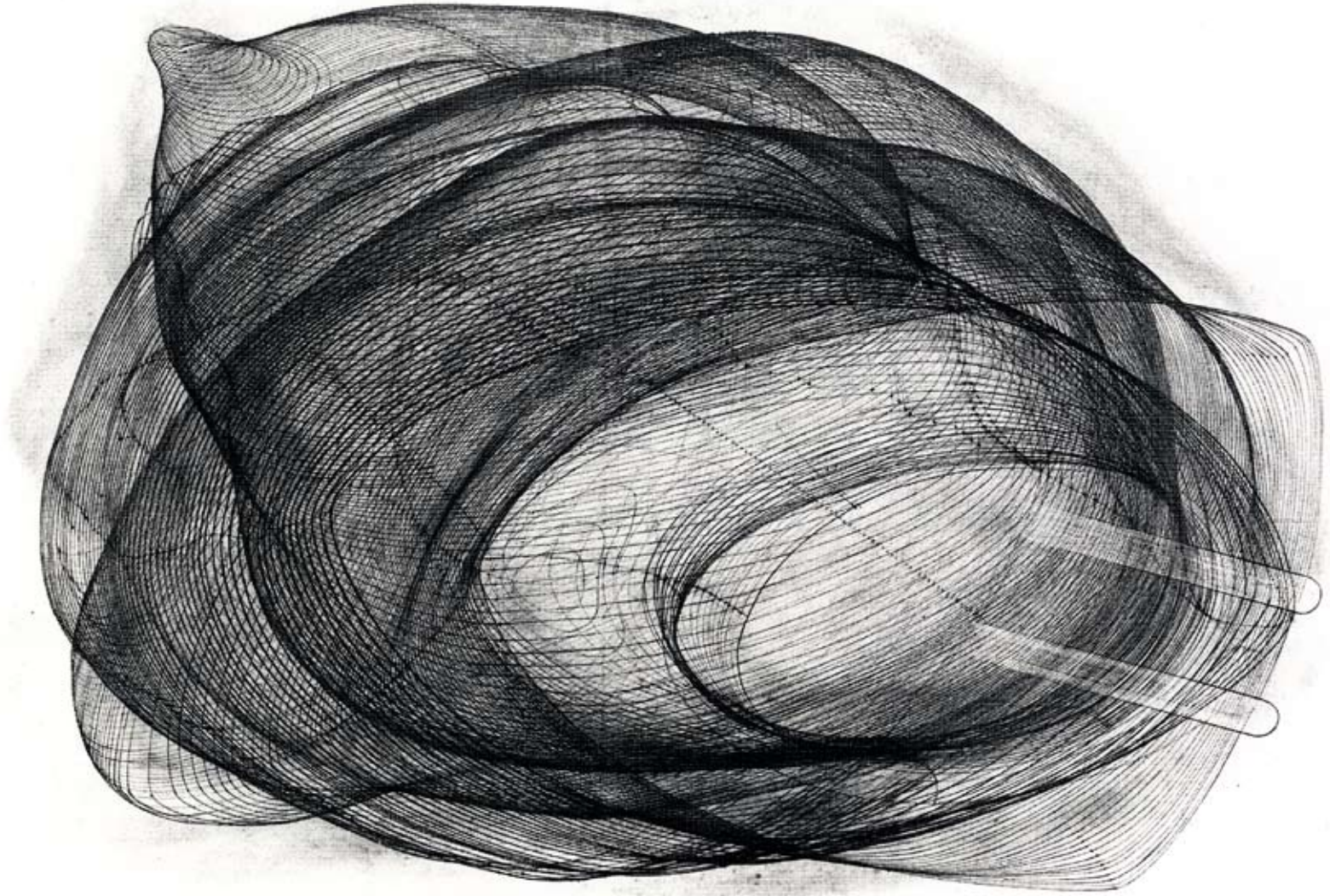


**Structure of the Course** The project is segmented and starts with a seven day kick-off week with physical presence at the Bern University of Applied Sciences in Burgdorf Switzerland, where all students and faculty members come together mainly for the following purposes:

- Team formation: It turned out to be extremely important to build a profound social link among the students as the basis for a solid collaboration during the course of the project.
- Instructions on ICT: The teams can only communicate through ICT (Information and Communication Technology) during the whole development process after the kick-off week. Therefore, all students attend a workshop on using the communication tools (video conferencing for review meetings, exchange of documents, design process management).
- Lectures on specific topics: Several lectures are given to facilitate the start-up for the project with respect to a common nomenclature. Critical aspects of the project are addressed by the lectures, given by faculty and also experts from the construction industry.
- Definition of the project's process outline/plan: At the end of the kick-off week the teams are to present a project plan including work packages, timeline, definition of milestones, resource planning, schedule of further activities, etc. The presentation of the project plan to faculty, mentors and experts from industry concludes the kick-off week, dismissing the students to their home universities with comments and recommendations for the further course of the project.

After this introductory week, the students return to their home universities. At the same time they form local teams at the different locations to exchange basic information useful for all project teams. The planning as well as the manufacturing of models or project documentations are managed over *elope*'s information platform. For the final presentation the students, faculty and industry coaches again meet physically in Switzerland.





Max Matter, Kopfraum wechselnd. 1982, Crayon on paper. Collection Kunsthau Aarau

# Human Centred Medicine

*The Soundness of Integration*

*The crisis in modern health care systems is spiritual in nature rather than financial. Therefore, the idea of the «human being» whose actions are extended by society and its public health system gains importance. This understanding forms the basis of Christian Hess' and Annina Hess-Cabalzar's publication, «Menschenmedizin», in which they explain that an individual destiny also necessitates an individual process of medical treatment and care – Human Centred Medicine.<sup>1</sup>*

The term Human Centred Medicine describes a broader and more humane understanding of being sick and suffering; a principle which is at the center of the holistic view of the human being and encompasses the body, mind and soul, and interprets «being healthy» and «being sick» as inseparable and complementing poles of the human condition. Even though the two poles are manifested in specific ways in the body, the mind or the soul, they always affect the wholeness of the person. It is just a matter of perspective which aspect of this polarity ostensibly prevails. The principle of polarity provides that perspective: superficial dichotomies are interpreted as complementing poles of an inseparable reality, which often cannot be perceived at the same time or at the same location in its wholeness. In medicine, similar polarities exist between body and mind/soul, between birth and death, between being born and dying, between being healthy and sick, and ultimately between the natural sciences and the humanities. Building on this observation, one can argue that perceiving just a single «mode» of any given polarity constitutes a type of «sickness».

Interpreting this polarity as the fundamental principle of life, finding the «great health», happiness, etc. means to repetitively find and refine the equilibrium between the poles. Therefore, the hypothesis that natural sciences, humanities and the arts complement one another applies in the sense that both must be embraced during medical treatment. Only by respecting this understanding a comprehensive therapy of a person/individual can be offered and thus healing can occur. Healing is an individual process: «The shoe fits one person, the other it pinches.» (C.G. Jung)

Contrary to the tendency towards (mono-functional) specialization and to symptom-focused diagnosis, Human Centred Medicine does not call for a series of disjoint treatments, but for a combination of different complementary approaches, which allows for a diagnosis that respects and encompasses the entire existential orientation of the person. This multi-modality is understood as a way of life, as an attitude and mentality to take care of oneself and the environment. Despite all the scientific, psychological and religious knowledge and insight, the human being may never reveal the secret of life in its entirety. In Human Centred Medicine, this mystery is to be respected and shall be reflected in the actions and treatment.

At the hospital Affoltern, this unique holistic idea of the human being is put into the center of all actions, and consequently influences the interaction with patients and personnel in all areas. Such an approach poses new requirements for the institution as a hospital: its function, duty and standing in the society, its operations, and internal and external spaces.

# Architecture and Health

In our continuously growing urban society the health of human beings is increasingly influenced by the built environment. Therefore, the dependence of health and architecture shall be investigated: health-related and design-relevant indicators will be described and made available for the architectural design process.

Strategies of change are sought which enable a (re-)design of the built environment in such a way that negative influences can be reduced or avoided and positive elements are fostered and strengthened. A continuously growing kit of architectural elements, socio-cultural measures and trans-disciplinary methodologies shall support and allow for an adequate development of design processes which have the «healing building» as their objective.

An existing framework in today's context shall form the focus of our investigation with the aim to identify potentials for change and to develop effective strategies towards a sustainable, health-driven architectural design.

«Life can only be understood backwards;  
but it must be lived forwards.»

Søren Kierkegaard

<sup>1</sup> Hess, Christian & Hess-Cabalzar, Annina, *Menschenmedizin*, Suhrkamp, Frankfurt am Main 2006





## Project Task

**Introduction** «Human Centred Medicine» has proven its value as an innovative and sustainable concept over the past twenty years. It has been applied successfully and most consistently at the hospital Affoltern in Switzerland. However, the existing ensemble of buildings does not reflect the concept of Human Centred Medicine yet because the hospital has continuously grown over the last decades into a dense conglomerate of scarcely related premises, built primarily on the basis of economic and functional parameters.

**Challenge** The present *elope* project aims at the search for a translation of «Human Centred Medicine» into an adequate concept of space and organization. Different scales of research and reflection will be required, both thematically and as regards content, to compose a multidisciplinary understanding of the task, e.g. of «What is a model-type hospital for Human Centred Medicine?», «Is there anything like healthy architecture and how is it characterized?», «How can such a concept be transplanted strategically, organizationally and spatially to the site of the hospital Affoltern?»

**Vision** *elope* is trying to promote the understanding of the relationship of spatial structures and organizational information and to bring these aspects to a synthesis. The challenge will be to creatively bring together the collective and heterogeneous activities of human beings with the coordinates of space and time. *elope* is expecting the accomplishment of a sensitive programmatic development with an articulation of architectural form, design of inner and outer spaces, and a formulation of spatial typologies for the chosen site, respecting social, urban, medical, economical, and ecological aspects.





Hospital Affoltern am Albis, Zurich Switzerland



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