Practice Critics:
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Summary
With its vast oil wealth, Saudi Arabia has one of the highest concentrations of super rich households in the world. But an estimated 20 percent of the population, if not more, lives in crippling poverty. Beggars panhandle in the shadows of Riyadh's luxury shopping malls, and just a few kilometers away families struggle to get by in the capital's southern slums. While the government has finally acknowledged that poverty is a problem in the kingdom, the world of the Saudi poor is largely hidden from sight. The transformation of the Saudi health care system since 1970 has been astonishing. In 1970, there were 74 hospitals with 9,039 beds; by 2005, there were 350 hospitals with nearly 48,000 beds. Yet issues of health access and health disparity continue to grow for those people living in poverty. This Studio will design a hospital intended to serve the poorest residents of Riyadh.

Program
In response to the need for hospital care and ambulatory care for the Saudi underserved, this studio will design a Western style hospital in Riyadh. The hospital program will include inpatient care; diagnostic and therapeutic services; administrative and public areas; support services; and outpatient clinics accommodated in approximately 450,000 GSF.

Site
Riyadh is the capital and largest city of Saudi Arabia. It is situated in the center of the Arabian Peninsula on a large plateau, and is home to 5.7 million people, and the urban center of a region with a population of close to 7.3 million people. The climate is classified as “Hot Desert” with extreme temperatures in the summer months and frequent dust storms. With climate change the Arabian Peninsula will continue to become hotter and dryer.

Issues
Students will learn contemporary hospital design best practices with emphasis on the specifics of clinical flows; patient safety; access to nature; the place of advanced clinical technologies; and evidence based design interventions. Additionally, the implications of gender segregation will be examined within a culture of growing economic inequity.

Teams
Students will work individually or in teams of two (2).

Deliverables
Mid-term reviews will be held in the offices of VOA in Chicago with multiple healthcare architects acting as reviewers. Final deliverables for the studio will be a self-published book. The book will be distributed to all Practice Critics and healthcare architecture firms assisting in the studio.