Media bubbles, Political bubbles, filter bubbles – algorithms have begun to define the boundaries of our experiences. IRL experiences are still more powerful than any computer coding. We, as the original systems architects, can use our tools of space, material, lighting, and circulation to foster collaboration and understanding from opposing views.

This studio will investigate how architecture can transcend the individual and integrate the collective. Overall there will be a three week basis of design study that begins with an individual mapping experience. We will question what elements of architecture bring us comfort and which elements create isolation.

After identifying personal preferences, students will be paired to develop an occupiable communication pod. This temporary space will be large enough to hold two people for the purpose of discussing points of view. As a class, we will examine our theories of the impact of architecture and test how people across the campus interact with our models.

These tools will then serve as the basis of design for individual development of a community center. Gary, IN is a city that has always existed in duality with the steel mills. With automation and the decline of Midwest manufacturing, many of the once iconic structures have been abandoned. Currently, a partnership has been underway between US Steel and the Decay Devils, a Gary based arts collective, to revitalize the city’s former Union Station and the location of our project site. During the semester, we will meet with representatives from both sides to develop a program for our project.

Beyond facing full scale and real world challenges, the studio take away will be a collectively developed short video. This story will document the process and answer the question of how architecture can be used to overcome individual limitations and foster a community.