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The design studio is part of the initiative
[bioregional.community/tuscany](#)
by the [bioregional.agency](#)

Design Studio ● 253.094 ● 15 ECTS ● SS2026
Kick-Off ● Wed 11.3, 13:00 ● GBL TU Wien
Weekly meetings ● Thu 14:00-19:00 ● Office GBL
Course will be held in English/German

The course is linked to the excursion:
'Bioregionale Architektur, Toscana' 253.097

Today's extractive material practices demand a paradigm shift in how we design, build, and inhabit territories. Architecture can no longer be understood as the production of isolated objects, but as the systematic assembly of relationships between material flows, ecosystems, social structures, and cultural practices. The built environment is a shared resource, where working with what already exists is the norm and constraints become generative conditions. Transitioning toward bioregional building practices requires reorganising how materials are sourced, processed, assembled, maintained, and disassembled, rooted in the territories and communities they ultimately depend on.

The [bioregional.community](#) is a growing platform to cultivate locally interdependent and globally interconnected communities. They consist of shared resources – material, knowledge, and infrastructure – as human and more-than-human systems spanning landscapes, ecologies, species, climates, and cultural and economic realities. Over time, their aim is to provide a globally applicable template that facilitates locally rooted practices, creating the necessary conditions for bioregional models of living, building, and governance to emerge, while developing tools and strategies that support the transition into a more locally-rooted, regenerative economy.

This course positions architecture as a situated, relational, and regenerative practice embedded in the bioregion in and around Tuscany, Italy. Following a territorial analysis of Tuscany's ecologies, economies and material cultures, the course will focus on establishing a bioregional hub at Castello di Montarrenti in Sovicille. Originally constructed in the 12th century as a fortified outpost controlling routes between Siena and the countryside, the castle later evolved into an agricultural estate integrated into the rural fabric of the region. Today, the site offers a unique opportunity to be reactivated as a contemporary commons – a place for experimentation, gathering, production, and exchange – giving the castle a renewed civic role within Tuscany's bioregion.

The course unfolds through three stages: *situation*, *assembly*, and *ferment*. In the *situation* stage, the Castello and its surrounding territory is mapped and visited to assess material, knowledge, and infrastructure in their social, economic and ecological context. In *assembly*, prototypical connections between these resources are paired with studies of best-practice case studies to derive site-specific concepts. Finally, the *ferment* stage focuses on the development of site-specific architectural interventions.

Together, all interventions will constitute a collective strategy for the long-term development of the Castello and its premises into a bioregional hub.