The analysis and objectives of "Understanding and Imagination before Designing", a course that I recently taught, was a way for me to implement in design Gadamer's claim that "in language and only in it, can we meet what we never ‘encounter’ in the world, because we are ourselves and merely what we mean and what we know from ourselves." This knowledge from ourselves also involves emotions, which represents another way in which we should connect with space and environment. More specifically, based both on the traditional architecture of a village of a Greek island and the structure of the city, the course analyses life in each place. This happens primarily through the creation of files and through the understanding a new architect needs before imagining and creating a new piece of architecture in a village’s traditional structure or a city’s contemporary environment. What should an architect know beyond the structure of a building in order to analyse and understand an existing spatial and social situation in depth? In architectural theory, tools of interpretation are given through
different approaches, so that architecture can be understood as a set of practices traditionally used to connect people with their community, place, religion, and environment but primarily with themselves. The course invited students to understand this relationship between traditional or contemporary life and the complexity of architecture, place and environment. This was achieved and revealed through their own fictional narratives as a synthesis of their historical, social, ethical, spatial and urban perception of a place they had never been to before. Reality emerged through a fictional/imaginary plot which helped them anchor their experience. They became part of the chain that is inherently connected with emotions, ethics and solidarity.

• Author(s) Biography (200 words each):

Insert 200 biography here – Century Gothic Font only / Justified both sides

Maria Vidali studied architecture at Portsmouth and Kingston University. She holds an MPhil degree in History and Philosophy of Architecture from Cambridge University and a PhD from the University of Thessaly in Greece. Also she has been a research trainee at McGill University with interest in Architecture and Narrative. She has been participating in conferences in Greece and abroad. Her research work: Village and Land, The outlying chapels of the island of Tinos was published as book in Greece, in 2009. Since 2007 she runs her own practice Maria Vidali Architect. She has taught at the Drury Centre in Greece, the flagship programme for Drury University of Missouri extensive Study Abroad offerings. Since 2017 she has been teaching in CYA (College Year Athens, an educational institution based in Cambridge, Massachusetts) the Contemporary Urbanism course: Athens through Time, Space and Narrative. In February 2019 she started teaching at the University of Thessaly, school of Architecture as well.