As an introduction to Complex Projects, the MSc1 design studio “Dutch Change” is focusing on the ground of the Netherlands. By introducing the cultural and built environment of the Netherlands to new MSc students, this design studio aims to help students to get familiar with the multiple aspects that define a building.

The Dutch architectural culture that grew from its complex natural environment, attaches great importance to the relationship between urban planning and architecture. The notion of urban influence is expressed in the position, composition, and details of a building. Students will be guided to discover the tangible layers of the Dutch context and to understand how history and urban development are reflected in architecture. Students will be working from the large scale of the city itself to the medium scale of the site, to the small scale of the building.

Rotterdam is a city faced enormous changes during the last century. Time has left traces in the changes in urban space as well as architectural identity. Meanwhile, the city is facing great opportunities for urban regeneration. The centre of Rotterdam will be taken as the design site to help students understand the role of the architect in the urban upgrade process.

During the design process, students will explore new architectural concepts and building types and they will build up a narrative supporting their architectural design proposals. By identifying and making decisions on the balance between what to change and what to remain of the Dutch architectural culture, students will be challenged to better position themselves as an architect.