

**University of Oregon
Interior Architecture Program
Department of Architecture**

Fall 2009 CRNs: UG 13127 & G 13135

**Furniture Design IARCH 4/586
Instructor: Sara Huston**

Sara has a BFA in sculpture from the Art Academy of Cincinnati and a MFA in 3d design with an emphasis in furniture from Cranbrook Academy of Art. She worked alongside Derek Chen of Council Design in San Francisco making show ready fine furniture prototypes. She does not distinguish herself as either an artist or a designer, but utilizes both disciplines in her work feeling one can not exist without the other.

**1:00-4:50 M W F in Eugene IARCH Woodshop Building
[Field trip to Portland, TBA]**

Storage: Redesigning Expectations

Furniture has signifiers of utility that indicate specific ways of interaction. Signifiers such as a door, drawer, shelf, etc., are presented in similar ways, directing you to use them in the same manner. When remixed and presented in different and unexpected ways the signifiers create new possibilities. Transformations in a relationship with the body can begin to direct the user's habits. Changes in material, composition, scale, and color can uncover how furniture communicates.

Students will be asked to find and redesign a second-hand piece of storage or case good. They will take it apart and reassign at least one new function. Each student will have a chance to react to the tangible qualities of the piece and learn more about how furniture is constructed. They will be encouraged to look at current publications, books, and blogs for research. Students will also be responsible for looking at the role of art in design and how it can help their design process. There will be two trips to Portland to visit furniture design studios and contemporary furniture stores. Various reading assignments will be given and then discussed as a group on a weekly basis.

Course Goals:

Students will gain knowledge of materials through hands-on crafting and experimentation. Knowledge of safety issues involved in working in a woodshop will be stressed. Each student will develop a personal design process and develop the ability to discuss it with the group.

Other goals and objectives relate to:

- how the history of furniture design, cultural movements and design precedent play into the conceiving of a new piece of furniture
- how the translation of designing and constructing a full scale interior furniture piece relates to design processes used at other scales
- gaining a sense of real materials strengths and weaknesses and how finishes relate to the whole
- how to use color and material in meaningful ways
- better understanding of the construction of furniture by taking it apart and inspecting it
- the ability to select, interpret, and apply appropriate ergonomic and anthropometric information as they relate to the design
- understanding and researching a user's physical relationship with furniture and the preconceived expectations they have with its utility
- ability to communicate and document the design process in simple 2D drawings and 3D maquettes and the final full scale piece
- understand the correlation and importance of considering form, function, poetics, emotion, aesthetics, etc., in the meaning of a piece

Evaluation:

Students will be evaluated based on class participation and their work having a clear and meaningful point of view, consideration of aesthetics, design process, craft of final piece, and consideration for the user.