The study and design of the urban building is an essential part of the Urban Architecture Program in Portland. The development of cities as social, cultural and economic entities has gone hand in hand with the development of characteristic or typical buildings that have enabled private and public institutions to function and contribute to the complexity and varied life of the city. Urban buildings have always embodied both cultural ideas and functional organization and have changed over time in ways that have mirrored other changes in society.

The last 200 years have seen a proliferation of new and transformed building types connected with the growth of industrial capitalism and associated social change. In the second decade of the new millennium we are experiencing further changes connected to globalization, the emergence of the information technology, climate change and the need for sustainable buildings. With these changes, it seems essential to look at the urban building in ways that can help us to understand historical tradition and those aspects of buildings that do not (or should not change) as well as the need for a pragmatic and creative approach to the development of new forms and new buildings.

The purpose of this course is to develop understandings of urban buildings as meaningful and functional artifacts, and of the relationship between the building and the city. The course will investigate several characteristic types, looking at basic configurations, meanings, functional order, and the buildings’ contributions to the economic, social, and formal aspects of cities. Each will be looked at through its historical (and technological) development, exemplary contemporary examples, and future prospects. Emphasis will be on American and European architecture and new urban buildings in Asia will be included. New tendencies in global urban development, or what Manuel Castells calls the “space of flow,” such as global capital development and global social development, especially urban migration, are part of the discussion.

It is hoped that this course will provide both a general historical and cultural background to students interested in the architecture of cities, as well as specific understandings that might be more immediately helpful in the design studio.

Understanding the urban building within the urban context can be approached within the framework of urban building typology and urban structure morphology. The building
types to be examined have been chosen because of their fundamental difference in basic configuration, and the ability for that difference to help illustrate both basic theory, and the rich variety that cities embody.

The emphasis in the instructors’ presentations will be on historical and 20th century material; the emphasis in the student projects will be on contemporary urban buildings and hybrid building types that grow out of the historic building types. Projects will include design speculations in addition to documentary research.

**FINAL PROJECT:** The final Project will be a refined and finished version of the project presented during week 4, 6 or 8. It will be presented in purely graphic format, and as a multi-media presentation.

**TENTATIVE TOPICS FOR EACH WEEK:**

**Week 1:**
TYPE: CONFIGURATIONS, MEANINGS AND FUNCTION. THE URBAN BUILDING AND URBAN SPACE.

**Week 2:**
URBAN TYPE AND URBAN LOCATION (Howard Davis)

**Week 3:**
THE TOWN HALL, MARKETS AND RETAIL STORES – PDX CITY WALK

**Week 4:**
HOUSING AND THE MIXED-USE BUILDING

**Week 5:**
HOUSING AND HOTELS – STUDENT PRESENTATIONS

**Week 6:**
SCHOOLS, HOSPITALS AND PRISONS – PDX CITY WALK

**Week 7:** OFFICE BUILDINGS – STUDENT PRESENTATIONS

**Week 8:**
WAREHOUSES AND OFFICE BUILDINGS

**Week 9:**
THEATERS, STATIONS, TERMINALS AND AIRPORTS

(Please note that this calendar is general and may be adjusted according to the needs of the seminar by the weekly more detailed calendar.)

**COURSE FORMAT AND REQUIREMENTS**

There will be a one 3-hour session per week, to include presentations by the instructor, discussions of readings and presentations of student projects. These projects will include both analysis of historical and contemporary buildings and short design exercises intended to help understanding of building configurations and their relationship to urban space. All students are required to do the weekly readings, to participate in class discussions, and to develop an interim presentation, and a final presentation.

**READINGS**
There will be several books:
1. Thomas Markus, *Buildings and Power*;
2. Nikolaus Pevsner, *A History of Building Types*;
3. Aldo Rossi, *The Architecture of the City*;
4. Howard Davis, *Living over the Store*;

**NOTES:** The course can provide additional credit for thesis projects, and is required for H. Neis’ thesis studio students.

**Dr. Hajo Neis, November 2012**