ARCH 423/523 Media for Design Development
Summer 2012
Course Description

Drawing is at the core of understanding and communicating about architecture. If you can’t draw you can’t see; if you can’t see you can’t imagine; if you can’t imagine you can’t design. You need to draw what you experience when visiting really great buildings and draw what you imagine when designing them. These drawings use the same neural pathways, the same muscles, and they need to be exercised every day.

However, drawing to see, to discover, and to design is very different from drawing to communicate, and we need to do both. While the former requires an open-minded approach free from preconceptions, utilizing all the senses, memory and intuition, the latter requires careful attention to understand and choose the appropriate convention, and to choose or invent the appropriate technique.

Most students (and architects) are afraid to draw. They want to make beautiful drawings but are so worried they will make ugly ones that they scarcely draw at all. Even when they’ve learned how to draw, they mostly just re-draw what they already know in ever more elaborate or refined ways.

In this class students learn to make bold, powerful drawings and models using a variety of media. Emphasis is on conceptual design drawings and spatial exploration. We use drawing from projected images and from imagination to develop a direct link between early concepts and the space and form they imply - before the distance of more elaborate or computer-based drawings can get in the way. Drawing exercises include abstract and figural studies in addition to more traditional architectural drawings. Students learn to explore freely and quickly, take risk, turn mistakes to their advantage, and ultimately to overcome any fear or hesitancy in drawing or design.

We draw from projected images, live models and imagination in the studio and also from direct experience on-site in buildings and spaces. One or more drawings will be collected at the end of each class. There is no way to make up missed classes and no incomplete grades will be given.

Those students taking design studio will use their projects as the basis for their architectural drawings. Students not taking studio may use a past design project or a famous building as the basis of their work, with approval from the instructor.

The only work done outside of class is a sketchbook that you will be required to keep. You may draw anything you like in this sketchbook - abstract marks, people, buildings, whatever - but you must draw in it every day. I recommend setting an attainable goal of 10 to 20 minutes of sketching per day. I will review the sketchbooks each day in class.
Student Work - Portland Summer Studio