Considering the Predicament of Change
A MUSEUM OF PORTLAND HISTORY
Instructor: Richard Hisashi Shiga
www.rshiga.com

Course Description
As an advanced architectural design studio this course will focus on the development of a conceptually and tectonically sophisticated architectural design response to issues relevant to the City of Portland's ongoing urban development. Embracing the notion that the critical creative challenge lies in the effort to arrive at a sensitive and appropriate architectural solution, success will be dependent upon each student's ability to utilize architecture as the translation and facilitator of an ideological position, designed and implemented from the experiential point of view. The architectural vehicle for this effort will be a Museum of Portland History, with a vigorous process modeled after the phases of design and development that are typically encountered within an architectural practice.

Course Premise
The City of Portland is widely recognized as a place in which the experiential 'line' that separates the City from the Pacific Northwest's natural landscape seems, at times, deliberately indeterminate. Throughout Portland's history, this character has been galvanized vis-à-vis an ongoing practice of an urban development strategy that attempts to consider the clear character of the environmental, historic and cultural context within which it exists. Ongoing efforts to nurture a relationship between these and other qualities of place - a relationship based on supplemental interconnectivity - have resulted in a potent, self-confident identity. Any reflection upon cultural history, however, will bring to light patterns of both micro and macro scale responses to changing world views. Within varied disciplines and schools of thought ranging from the scientific to the religious, the concept of change as an inevitability is shared. Using the Buddhist definition as an example, change is occurring at all times in that the environment in its entirety is in a perpetual state of flux. To live and to grow is to be aware of and to embrace the impermanent nature of things. As Pema Chodron writes in The Places That Scare You: "That nothing is static or fixed, that all is fleeting and impermanent, is the first mark of existence. It is the ordinary state of affairs. Everything is in process. Everything-every tree, every blade of grass, all the animals, insects, human beings, buildings, the animate and the inanimate-is always changing, moment to moment."

As a relatively young city, Portland does not yet have, for better or for worse, the luxury of calling upon vast experience when addressing change, and, concurrently, is arguably equally limited in its ability to evaluate subsequent responses. Architecturally speaking, this perhaps can be seen in the residential development occurring in the Pearl District of Northwest Portland, in which rapid urban-scale growth has seemingly eradicated the area's historic fabric overnight, leaving the prevailing neighborhood's landscape feeling monotonously disconnected. While efforts should be made to avoid a rush to judgment, a predominantly concerned response has already raised the question: Is there an opportunity to fine-tune an architectural design process which embraces the workings of change in a more sensitive manner?

This course will raise this question within the primary effort of furthering student's abilities to take a design from its conceptual stages through to practical realization, while examining a broader definition of an environmentally conscious design process.

A Museum of Portland History
Museums as an institutional building type play a significant role in the establishment of a culture's identity. The manner in which the Museum of Portland History establishes a specific framing of place will work to embrace change by facilitating the notion of a non-static urban identity. This museum will offer experiences for locals and tourists alike, and will allow visitors the opportunity for not only interaction with informative and engaging installations, but, perhaps more importantly, a more conscious connection with Portland itself. The museum will provide exhibit, educational, gathering and performance spaces, all of which will allow for moments within which to better understand and celebrate Portland as a unique, animated and dynamic urban community.
Considering the Predicament of Change  
A MUSEUM OF PORTLAND HISTORY  
Instructor: Richard Hisashi Shiga  
www.rshiga.com

Course Goals
- To utilize specific phases of the design process, modeled after a professional practice, to develop a conceptually and technically sophisticated design response considering the following issues:
  
  Site Analysis, Planning and Design Development: To continue the development of a rigorous and sensitive set of architectural design skills, particularly techniques of observation, recording, analysis and translation that, when practiced, can result in a sensitive and thorough understanding of context, and play a critical role in the development of a contextually specific design response.
  
  Program Analysis & Development: To focus on the use of programmatic relationships as facilitative & supplementary to qualitative and experiential design goals.
  
  Tectonic and Structural Development: To consider architectonic detailing and structural systems as design decisions that can and must be related back to the project’s fundamental conceptual goals.
  
  Architectural Sustainability: To expand upon the notions of environmental sensitivity and sustainability, challenging the systems and materials definition, via a heightened understanding and respect for the qualities of a specific site context.
  
  Building Codes and the Legal Environment: To engage architectural design’s legal environment and apply design restrictions and criteria to the project’s development.

- To understand architecture as the communicator of an idea, and a designed relationship between ideology, experiential strategy, and facilitating architectonic construct.

- To practice design from the experiential point of view, utilizing a rigorous and spirited rhythm of investigative 3D and 2D, physical and digital media explorations.

- To engage and examine Portland’s unique urban character.

- To consider, and potentially challenge the existing complexion of Portland’s professional architecture community.

Project Site
Students will be assigned a specific site in North/Northeast Portland, close to the Willamette River.

Course Schedule
- There will be three studio sessions held in Portland, during regular studio hours. Exact dates TBD. Students will also be encouraged to make additional site visits as necessary.

- An Instructor-run course website will be utilized for daily presentation of student work and dissemination of regular and supplemental course material.

  Week One  Readings
  Initial Exercise - Definition of Place / Analysis of Experience

  Week Two  Program Development - Qualitative/Quantitative
  Site Visit (Portland Visit)

  Week Three  Program Development - Qualitative/Quantitative

  Week Four  Site Analysis

  Week Five  Site Analysis / Code Review / Schematic Design

  Week Six  Design Development / Mid Review

  Week Seven  Design Development

  Week Eight  Architectonic Development

  Week Nine  Architectonic Development

  Week Ten  Final Review (At the new U of O Portland Center)

  Week Eleven  Portfolio

Course Readings and Reference
The Tao of Architecture, Amos Ih Tiao Chang
Framing Places, Kim Dovey
Round The Roses: Portland Past Perspectives, Karl Klooster
The Interpretation of Cultures, Clifford Geertz
The Image Of The City, Kevin Lynch
What The Buddha Taught, Walpola Rahula
Fundamentals of Building Construction, Edward Allen & Joseph Iano
Façade Construction Manual, Thomas Herzog