The Portland International Urban Architecture Summer Session 2009
University of Oregon Portland
Department of Architecture

CITIES WITHOUT CITIES

Professor Dr. Christopher Alexander, England
Professor Thomas Sieverts, Germany
Professor Dr. Hajo Neis – UO Portland, US
Professor James Pettinari – UO Portland, US
Professor Boris Sieverts, Germany

The International Architecture Summer School in Portland will offer its second session in 2009. The summer studio will take up the concept of ‘Cities without Cities,’ or ‘Zwischenstadt,’ developed by Thomas Sieverts in his seminal book with the same name. One of the main points of the book is to attempt to understand, respect, and work with the large part of the anonymous surrounding city, the city of sprawl or the marginal city, in contrast to the more clearly understood and accepted inner city. Professor Sieverts delivered a lecture in Portland as part of the ‘grand opening’ of the new Portland UO facilities in September of 2009, where these concepts were discussed.

Concepts, ideas and systems of rules developed in ‘A New Theory of Urban Design,’ by Christopher Alexander and Hajo Neis will be applied to situations described in Cities without Cities. These concepts see the city and parts of the city in their wholeness and try to create a physical and sustainable structure of the city that celebrates life also in unusual and difficult circumstances.

**Summer Studio - Arch 484/584:** The summer studio will focus on projects in the ‘Zwischenstadt,’ fringe city or marginal zones of the city. These may include projects around transit stations, or projects such as refugee camps or transitional farm worker housing, and still other new projects that can be found and invented in this new city, such as projects of infrastructure including water treatment facilities and recycling facilities as well as projects along the Tigard Highway W99 corridor. (Instructor: Hajo Neis)

**Theory Seminar Arch 407/507** The architecture theory course on ‘Cities without Cities’ will examine the marginal city around the traditional city that will include several exploratory walking tours through these areas, led by an experienced instructor in fringe city tours. We will walk the Portland Urban Boundary and the Portland Metropolitan Urban Growth Boundary in search of the new urban landscape, architecture, and the city. (Instructor: Thomas Sieverts)

**Media Course - Arch 423/523:** A media course will support the studio efforts. Digital media will include Sketch-up and Photoshop programs; hand media will include ink drawings and watercolors. Graphic work on mapping the fringe city, and graphic design for the individual studio projects will be part of the media course. (Instructor: Jim Pettinari)

**Workshop 401/601 Walking the Fringe City.** Walking and discovering the fringe city along the city boundary and discovering intervention possibilities will be the first assignment of the studio and
seminar class. The workshop will be taught by an experienced instructor possibly in connection with the UO Portland Academy (Design Camp). (Instructor: Boris Sieverts)

**Practicum Arch. 409/609.** The practicum class will give students the opportunity to combine academic work and professional experience in one of Portland’s renowned architecture firms or in the Portland Urban Architecture Research Lab PUARL as 409/609 or 4/601 – 4/606. (Instructor: Hajo Neis)

**Note:** Professionals and qualified students enrolled in architecture programs outside of the UO can apply to the Portland Summer Session and will be admitted on a space-available basis.

Summer University starts on June 22 and ends August 12.
Cities Without Cities’ investigates the social, economic, environmental and formal/structural characteristics of today’s built environment: no longer simply a city but increasingly large conurbations made up of a number of development clusters, linked by transport route… The book formulates a fundamental critique of the ideal of the compact city as not feasible any more, but it also sketches an optimistic outlook on the challenge of planning and designing the urban landscape. From ‘Cities Without Cities.’

1. The Nature of the Studio Indicating the Topics to be Explored and the Teaching Approach
The International Architecture Summer Studio 2009 in Portland will work on design projects in the ‘Zwischenstadt’ or ‘Cities without Cities.’ The outer areas at the edge of the city will be the focus of our investigation and studio designs. We will take up the concept of Cities without Cities or Zwischenstadt, developed by Thomas Sieverts in his seminal book with the same name. One of the main points of the book is to try to understand, respect, and work with the large urban part of the anonymous surrounding city, the city of sprawl or the marginal city, in contrast to the more clearly understood and accepted inner city. Professor Sieverts delivered a lecture in Portland as part of the ‘grand opening’ of the new Portland UO facilities in September of 2009, where these concepts were discussed and appreciated. Currently, several of our advanced design students are using concepts from the book in their final self-selected design thesis work. We intend to use basic concepts from this versatile topic in our international summer studio 2009. The International Summer School consists of three coordinated classes that are taken simultaneously. All three classes are part of the summer studio and contribute to the overall topic of Cities without Cities.

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Portland Urban Boundary and the Portland Metropolitan Urban Growth Boundary in search of the new urban landscape, architecture, and the city.

It is important to us to make the international summer studio known nationally and internationally so that more students from other schools and countries will join the new urban architecture school in Portland. It is for that reason that we also include preparation and advertising items in our budget.

2. Preparation Work in the Spring Quarter: Connection with Berkeley, Minnesota and Cologne

Preliminary discussions with faculty members of several universities have resulted in a proposal for a combined approach to this topic of the of the new outer city and ‘where we live now.’ The idea is to start with design classes and modules in the spring quarter of 2009, and carry the results of the design modules into the summer studio in Portland. It is anticipated that the three different schools will take on particular aspects of the ‘Zwischenstadt’ at a large scale:

Portland Focus: Wildlife in the City – Climate Change – Urban Design and Transportation.
Minnesota Focus: Water – Energy – Public Health. (Professor Lance Neckar)
Berkeley Focus: Land-use – Transportation – Urban Design. (Prof. Peter Bosselmann)

Modules or classes will be given in April and May in the three different schools associated with particular projects within the above mentioned topics. One of the design modules will be co-taught with Professor Pettinari. Information exchange between schools will be handled through inter-net and faculty exchange. Professor Sieverts from Cologne will initiate the modules or the studio or both with charrette work. The Spring Quarter in Portland starts March 30 and instruction ends June 5.

In Portland the work will be continued with a summer studio and subject seminar as well as a media-seminar. Students from different universities can enroll in the Portland Urban Architecture International Summer School. The eight-week summer studio in Portland starts June 22 and ends August 12.

3. Benefits for the University of Oregon Architecture Department and A&AA

The benefits for the University of Oregon Architecture Department and A&AA are considerable given the fact that we are starting with a new international architecture summer school that wants to be known nationally as well as internationally, starting to make Portland a focus of attention.

Also for UO students from Eugene the new international summer studio presents new opportunities for studying in Portland during the summer. Part of our preparation for the summer will include logistic preparation for renting student accommodations in Portland during the summer season.

Students will also participate in the preparation of the final report and web-site presentation. The studio report will become a valuable resource in the work of our new research lab and will support teaching and continuing research on urban architecture in Portland including lectures and publications and new research on the ‘Portland Urban Block Atlas.’ Furthermore the summer school will permit students to take summer classes from digital arts and product design that could be coordinated with the international summer studio.

4. Specific Plans for how the Funds will be used

Travel/lodging and honorarium for invited scholars (T. Sieverts et al) $ 6,000
Graduate Student Assistant: $ 2,000
Studio report power point and web-site: $ 1,000
Local Travel and Support Material for Walks (including meals): $ 1,000
Instructor Support and Air Travel (Germany, Minnesota and Berkeley) $ 2,000
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Dr. Hajo Neis, University of Oregon Portland, November 25, 2008