University of Oregon  
School of Architecture and Allied Arts  

Architectural Design 484-584  
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Project Description  

Thoughtful design solutions recognize the cause-effect relationship between site and building, and between building and program. This studio will explore how these relationships inform the design of a regional arts venue in downtown Portland. The studio project will be located on the existing Nordstrom’s building site, directly across from Portland’s Pioneer Square and diagonally adjacent to Director Park in the Park Blocks. There will be a design directive to exercise adaptive reuse of the existing structure and to optimize the site for a new building typology.  

Students will have the option to design the new headquarters for one of the following arts organizations:  

**Portland Institute for Contemporary Arts (PICA)** is a regional arts organization that promotes the creative explorations of many diverse artists. PICA supports artists working in all genres, including dance, theatre, music, installation, and exhibition. The specific building program may include theaters, artist in residence studios, dining venues, bookshops, resource rooms, administrative offices, or gallery spaces.  

**Oregon Ballet Theatre (OBT)** is a premier dance company with a professional and children’s ballet academy. The specific building program may include theaters, rehearsal studios, administrative offices, dressing rooms, student lounge, library and study areas, costume shops and prop storage, or ticket offices.  

**Portland Opera** is a professional opera company whose goal is to expose opera to an ever expanding and diverse population. In addition to providing several new productions each year, the company has an extensive community outreach program, visiting artist’s network, and training academy. The specific building program may include theaters, chamber music studios, recording facilities, administrative offices, dressing rooms, costume shops and prop storage, or coaching facilities.  

Studio Process  

Complex programmatic projects are typically not developed by sole individuals or singular entities. This studio will emphasize student collaboration. Students will be expected to work in teams which will remain throughout the term and will present final project solutions together.  

**Part I**  
Students will analyze the influences associated with site, critically consider the components of infrastructure, and understand how these factors transform possible design solutions. Students will examine the existing structure and understand what aspects should be promoted, and which aspects need to be mitigated. A fundamental aim is to challenge the default mode of approaching architecture as an isolated creation.  

**Part II**  
Students will analyze a specific building typology to understand programmatic components, cultural associations, historical precedents, contemporary influences, and formal constructs. The pragmatic issues of economy, technology, and constructability further shape the building form. While site context creates external influences, programmatic functions create internal influences that inform circulation, hierarchy, shape, and scale.  

**Part III**  
The final architectural form will allow students to integrate and synthesize what has been studied. The studio is designed to impart basic principles and knowledge of architectural and urban design, to develop visual and analytical skills, and to emphasize creativity to solve given situations in the built environment.  

Studio Objectives  

- Study the role of cultural venues in manifesting larger civic ideals  
- Respond critically to existing circumstances of building and site  
- Celebrate opportunities created when challenged with design constraints  
- Introduce design methods and processes to solve complex problems