“City as Building / Building as City”:
Old Town / Chinatown Arts+Education Center

Sendai Mediatheque. Toyo Ito. Sendai, Japan. Elevation and Section

**Architecture 683.** Design studio for incoming graduate students in the 2-year [Option II] graduate program. Design as exploration of theoretical ideas and their translation into architectural and urban spaces. Building tectonics are developed as they support and reinforce design concepts.

**Studio Introduction**

This design studio is an introduction to the Portland Option II Graduate Architecture Program. It combines aspects of architecture, urban design and the design of public spaces, all essential ingredients of what we define as “urban architecture”.

In addition to its focus on a current project in Portland, the studio emphasizes collaborative design and communication skills. Contemporary urban projects require effective interpersonal and team relationships among professionals, public officials and the community.

**Educational Themes of the Studio**

**Neighborhood-Scale Civic Architecture.** The project focuses on a participatory arts and community education center to be located in the Old Town / Chinatown neighborhood of Portland. The location of the project, Portland’s Old Town – Chinatown, is one of the city’s most diverse neighborhoods, a reviving community representing people from all walks of life.

The project has been the subject of recent discussion as a potential “catalyst” to further Old Town / Chinatown’s revitalization. The building will combine an older existing building and new component, integrating a “re-cycled” structure with a modern addition.
The Arts+Education Center will be a grass-roots civic building and meeting place accessible and open to all community residents, emphasizing the diverse nature of the community, including persons with special needs.

Precedents for this project, although larger scales, are the Fort Mason Center for the Arts in San Francisco, and the “Cultural Brewery” in Berlin.

**The Spaces Between: Collective Space / Social Space.** The studio will focus on issues of “collective space and social space” as discussed in Herman Hertzberger’s book *Space and the Architect*, a series of essays on architecture which explore “in between space” and the city.

**Creative Design Inquiry.** As a graduate design studio, participants are expected to engage in rigorous design research and inquiry, seeking sources beyond those assigned. Students are encouraged to expand their design skills to explore the conceptual “boundaries” of the project, developing an experimental design process.

**Comprehensive Design.** The University of Oregon’s Graduate Program emphasizes a comprehensive design process: the integration of studies in theory, history, design skills, human factors, sustainability and tectonics (structure, construction and environmental systems) in design studio work. The studio organization and project will be guided by this philosophy.

**Environmentally Sustainable Design.** The studio places high priority on sustainable design that conserves energy, reduces carbon emissions and promotes the use of non-toxic and recyclable building materials. Students will be expected to document the sustainability performance of their proposals with a LEED evaluation.

**Information/Questions:**

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