designBridge seeks civic engagement through participatory design and design/build projects in our community. Small projects are opportunistic, volunteer-based; larger, complex projects are supported by courses. Recent projects include a site & building design for an environmental learning center at Ridgeline Montessori, and The Common Good, a Morse-funded exploration of houselessness, has initiated public conversations and participatory activities to identify needs and propose a small project.

Pre-designBridge initiates a sequence that may include a Winter designBridge Studio or Independent Study and a technical building course in the Spring. The Pre-design course acts as an incubator for teamwork, leadership, and community design; provides a foundation for the topics of Pre-Design; and initiates the design process. The course focuses on learning to partner with community and on conceptualizing and investigating the design of the problem. ANYONE who is interested in working together with others and participating in a designBridge project, regardless of field of study, is encouraged to do so.

Potential projects include: a partnership with the Willamette Valley Cancer Institute Foundation, to re-imagine an outdoor space (a space of waiting, of solace, of entry, perhaps of memory); an active urban intervention that seeks partners (project will require guerrilla can-do energy and relationship smarts); basic “camp” infrastructure for a youth environment. Students will form teams to understand and develop selected projects throughout the term. Your teamwork, mutual accountability, and effectiveness will be the basis for engaging partners, and initiating design, and provides the foundation for design development, construction, or installation during the remainder of the year.

Through lectures, discussions, and work sessions, students will gain exposure to various topics including teamwork and leadership, participatory design methods, pre-design, and project management. Attention will be focused on Project Proposal, Client Interaction, Schedule, Site Evaluation, Environmental Assessment, Early Design Approaches, Legal Organization, and the development of a Program Document and Cost Estimate. A final verbal and graphic Pre-Design/Schematic presentation will conclude the term.

Plan your level of commitment and learning: these are projects with real ramifications. Courses and mentors can support each phase of project work. A few core students are encouraged to commit to a project from beginning to end, making it possible for others who may need to limit their engagement.