Ebey’s Landing, located fifty miles north of Seattle on Whidbey Island, is a unique place in the northwest, a remarkably varied landscape of prairies, historic farmsteads, woodlands, saltwater beaches and mountain views. To preserve this cultural landscape, Ebey’s Landing National Historical Reserve was established in 1978 as the first national historic reserve administered by the National Park Service. It comprises approximately 22 square miles, with 17 active farms dating to the original donation claims, and contains over 400 contributing structures in the historic district. The center of the Reserve is the historic town of Coupeville, founded by New Englanders in 1853 as a port on Penn Cove on the east side of the island.

As an easy day trip from Seattle, the Reserve attracts many tourists, but can be somewhat ill-defined for visitors; it isn’t a traditional National Park, with big signs, boundaries and park rangers, and normal life continues within its borders, with 90% of the land private property. The Reserve Trust Board and NPS staff are planning to increase opportunities for visitor interpretation, and this studio will undertake the design of a visitors’ center, looking at a variety of sites and conditions, both in-town and in the landscape. The main issues of this studio will be:

- site selection to achieve clearly-stated intentions
- the design of new buildings to fit in a historic context, including compliance with new design guidelines adopted by the town, county and reserve
- the use of the new buildings to reinforce the structure and spatial qualities of the landscape or historic town
- the relationship of new building construction, tectonics and styles to the 19th century vernacular
- design of a building that can serve the needs of both visitors and the residents of this close-knit community

While the driving issues will be large, the buildings themselves will be relatively small with a simple program, allowing students to develop their designs to a very detailed level.

Some sites will entail all new construction, while some others will allow for the incorporation and adaptation of historic structures to the new program. With its emphasis on site selection and design, historic context and re-use of existing buildings, this studio would also be appropriate for Interior Architecture, Landscape Architecture, or even Historic Preservation students.

Field trip
The studio will visit Whidbey Island on a field trip the first weekend after classes begin, October 4-6. Studio members can carpool with a range of departure times and routes, and housing will be provided at the instructor's house. We will meet with officials and tour local buildings and sites. There will be time for individual research and recreation, and exploring the town, the surrounding area, recent contextual designs, and nearby historic locations, such as Port Townsend, a short ferry ride away.

Ebey’s Landing website: http://www.nps.gov/ebla/index.htm