Micro Living:
Inserting Multiple Small Living Spaces into an Existing Urban Condition

Studio Adjunct Instructor: Brian Murtagh

The interior architecture studio is open to Interior architecture and architecture undergraduate and graduate students. This studio will mostly meet twice a week. Studio will be taught on a Monday and Wednesday schedule, noon–5:50 p.m. (6 hours per session). Occasional MWF weeks (4 hours per session) may occur at the start, middle and end of the studio quarter. Students with classes that minimally overlap the start and end times will still be able to take this studio. The full schedule for the term will be presented and explained on the first day of studio.

Project Introduction
For years, residents in Tokyo, New York, and San Francisco have understood that by living efficiently in small spaces they can meet their goals of living where they want to for a price they can afford. In recent years the small or micro living movement has grown to mean not only cost-effective living but also a way to simplify complex lives. The desire to live simply, especially in the Northwest, can take many forms—it could mean living without a car, aggressively reducing expenses and debt, or be as simple as reprioritizing one’s time. For a growing number of people, this correlates to simple living in a small space and making conscientious decisions regarding what they can live with and what they can live without. Designers play a key role in helping to determine the quality of these small, micro spaces. By offering flexible solutions to both unit design and furniture design, we can help improve the lives of people seeking a simpler and more sustainable living experience.

Studio Summary
In this studio, we will focus on adapting an existing urban building into a multi-unit micro living apartment complex (6–10 units anticipated). The apartment designs will look at incorporating micro living trends that can be found throughout the world. The studio will have two design phases: phase 1 will be the larger-scale design investigation into the building renovation/adaptation and apartment layout (through midterm review); phase 2 will involve looking at a single unit and the elements of this unit for a more detailed investigation (through final review).

Along with researching and exploring trends of micro living, students will also be asked to formulate their designs based on considering, developing and writing-up their sustainable and environmentally healthy set of concerns. Student solutions will define what this means: for example considering the full design layout, the consideration of how the existing building is redesigned, the use of natural light, and the selection of materials as well as going beyond these interior issues to further define their own goals.

Methodology
Phase 1: The studio will take a day trip to Portland to look at recently completed apartment micro spaces and tiny houses. In studio, students will work to adapt/renovate an existing urban structure into a multi-unit micro-living apartment building. Students will initially work in groups to discuss the challenges and advantages of micro living. From these discussions, students will develop tenant scenarios and define tenant common spaces. Students will then work individually or in pairs to work on spatial planning for the complex.

Phase 2: Students will be asked to take a more detailed look at individual aspects of the unit design. Using the tenant scenario, students will work to enrich the apartment spaces with personalized design solutions. For instance, this can take the form of efficient kitchen design, multipurpose furniture design, or an integration of both. Design solutions at this phase will also look at lighting, material, finish, and color selections. These will be integrated with the original studio and student goals for sustainable living defined.
**Portland as a Resource and the Site**

During the course there will be one field trip to Portland to look at small living spaces. We will visit architecture and adaptive re-use projects and meet with tiny house enthusiasts to get a look at real-world applications of micro living. The site for this project may be located in Portland or Eugene. As-built plans, exterior elevations, and site information for the project will be provided.

**Useful References** (full reading list and assignments for research to be provided during the studio)

http://gizmodo.com/10-japanese-kyosho-jutaku-micro-homes-that-redefine-l-504374362
http://home2s.com/2013/05/tiny-micro-loft-apartment-in-manhattan/
http://www.businessweek.com/articles/2013-03-14/micro-apartments-in-the-big-city-a-trend-builds
http://www.nydailynews.com/life-style/real-estate/living-large-article-1.1244903

**Instructor Bio**

Brian Murtagh graduated from the University of Oregon with a Masters in Architecture in 1996. Prior to moving to Oregon, Brian lived in Boston, where he worked in the construction field and as a sculptor. Brian came to the study of architecture through a desire to learn architectural presentation techniques for public art competitions. While taking classes at the Boston Architectural Center (BAC) and Wentworth Institute of Technology in Boston, he realized that the core design elements of sculpture, space, light, form, and material selection were a strong foundation for the study of architecture. As Brian has a background with a range of spaces, scales and materials, he is excited to teach from the perspective of interior architecture.

Brian is the design principal and owner of Studio Coop Architecture, LLC, in Portland. He is a Licensed Oregon State Architect with sixteen years experience in residential remodels and new construction, working with various firms as well as developing his own. Studio Coop brings an understanding of ecology to modern living by integrating energy efficiency and natural and alternative materials in comfortable, well-scaled environments. Whether it is a new design with the clean, simple lines of midcentury modernism or a remodel with traditional detailing and craftsmanship, Studio Coop’s goal is to achieve simple, elegant design solutions. Brian works with clients to help them turn their desires into exceptional living experiences.

The following examples are relevant to envisioning the micro or small habitation design...