ISSUES IN CONTEMPORARY ARCHITECTURE

Course          Architecture 607
Term           Fall 2015
Instructor     Professor Mark L. Gillem, PhD, FAIA, AICP
Credits         3
Time           Thursdays 2:00-4:50pm (LA 206)

Course Objectives. This course is a seminar for new Master of Architecture Track 2 graduate students. Students will engage in active inquiry into issues of contemporary architectural theory and practice focused on sustainability. Course objectives include the following:

- To initiate critical discussion of sustainability theory among new M.Arch. Track 2 graduate students, which builds upon the variety of experiences each student brings from her/his own life and past education through an analysis of sustainability in practice and theory as well as a critical formulation of definitions of sustainability.
- To introduce the new M.Arch. Track 2 graduate students to the values and themes of architectural education with a focus on sustainability that is central to the University of Oregon curriculum through a review and discussion of faculty publications and departmental focus areas.
- To increase each student’s abilities to work effectively in small groups, to make effective oral presentations supported by visual aids, and to think and write articulately about architectural issues through discussions, debates, formal presentations, and writing.
- To provide a framework for students to begin to question assumptions and establish values for their work and to initiate potential research agendas for their time in the M.Arch. Track 2 program.

Course Structure. The course will meet once a week, so regular attendance is of paramount importance. This is a highly interactive course that requires regular engagement with the material. In-class time will generally be devoted to actions rather than lectures. Students will learn by doing.

The course consists of three parts. In Part I, the focus is on sustainability in practice. Three course sessions will be dedicated to exploring how sustainability is addressed on campus, in the community, and across the globe. In Part II, sustainability in theory is the central theme with three sessions devoted to understanding how sustainability permeates each student’s unbuilt work, the published work of others, and theoretical urban design. In Part III, sustainability defined is the emphasis for one session and for a symposium that will replace the final two sessions. The all-day symposium will be held on Saturday, 21 November.

Course Assignments. The assignments are structured as “Books” and when combined, they will become the course’s “10 Books of Sustainability.” Students will prepare the Books in a manner suitable for publication as a stand-alone document (each Book) and as an Anthology (all books together). Each Book will be accompanied by an engagement activity, supporting task, or other appropriate action. Each Book will have an Editor and Associate Editor that will be responsible for assembling the work in an approved template. The editors will be exempt from the assignment following their Book topic (or in the case of the Anthology editors - they will be exempt from any Book except Book 9). Each Book will be prepared in Draft, Prefinal, and Final form. An overall Series Editor and Series Associate Editor will track completion and schedule of all Books and will be exempt from one Book (except Book 9). There will be no final exam.

1 – Issues in Contemporary Architecture