“Next Generation Urban Schools”:

Designing creative schools for emerging global challenges. Projects for public schools in Portland and other cities.

Lomas del Peye School by Architect Giancarlo Mazzanti. Cartagena, Colombia. Located in the marginalized neighborhood of Lomas del Peye, the school was funded by the Fundacion Pies Descalzos, a non profit supported by the Colombian singer Shikira to empower underserved children. The shaded central courtyard (above) offers relief from the hot, humid Caribbean climate.

Introduction

This seminar focuses on the challenges of urban education and supportive architecture. It is open to all students in the Department of Architecture as well as other disciplines.

This course is a preparatory research seminar for students enrolled in the “Next Generation Urban Schools” Advanced Architectural Design (Thesis) Studio (G. Gast), Winter + Spring 2116.

General Themes and Emphasis of the Seminar and Thesis Studio

Public Schools, Urban Regeneration and Social Equity
Excellent public schools are central to the health and regeneration of cities throughout the world. A city performs many functions and public services. However, none are more important than the quality of education and schools that serve its young citizens. Student futures and lifelong opportunities are shaped by the experiences gained in primary and secondary education. Healthy cities are not possible without thriving schools, dedicated teachers and supportive learning environments.

In the United States, the recent resurgence and popularity of central cities and downtowns have not touched all citizens. A healthy city accommodates families and children, rich and poor, not simply young professionals. We are currently in a situation where families with children often leave cities to live in the suburbs, primarily because of the difference in the quality of schools. This needs to change if we wish to provide social equity and equal opportunity in access to quality education.

**Education and Schools.**

The seminar will begin with a focus on education: the best global thinking about achieving excellence in education, teaching and learning. Students need to be conversant about the most creative ideas and research on education before transitioning to building design.

With a strong foundation in place, the seminar will move to creating spaces and buildings to support creative and experimental educational programs.

**Seminar objectives:**

- To serve as a forum to investigate and discuss urban education and schools, with a special focus on secondary education.
- To study significant design precedents throughout the world.
- For students enrolled in the Thesis studio, to support individual project research, preparation of a thesis statement and documentation of a design program:
  - Conceptual and philosophical foundations of the design project.
  - Historical and contemporary precedents.
  - Urban context and site analysis.
  - Preparation of a site and building program.

**Thesis Projects (for students enrolled in the studio)**

**Environmental Stewardship and Regeneration.**

- Expansive Thinking. You are encouraged to think, frame your research and engage in design that transcends a single building and site, as well as a familiar building typology.
Documentation of the *regional* environmental context of your project and its potential influence on design.

Development of a master plan and urban design framework plan for the larger urban context of the project. This can be accomplished by a charrette, teamwork or workshop. This step starts Fall term and continues Winter term.

You are encouraged to look well into the future, not be limited by what can be built today. Cities and architecture are changing rapidly. Anticipate change through your project.

**Seminar Format**

The seminar format is a mix of instructor lectures, readings, class discussions, student projects and presentations.

**Seminar Products**

- For students enrolled in the Thesis Studio, the primary assignment of the term is the “Thesis Statement and Design Program”. This is an illustrated monograph that thoroughly documents your research, project background and design program.

- For students not enrolled in the Thesis Studio, an illustrated research monograph (without building program) will be completed.

- During the term, teams of students will make class presentations to the seminar and lead discussion of topics.

**Preliminary Bibliography**


Tony Wagner. “*The Finland Phenomenon: Inside the World’s Most Surprising School System*”. Documentary about education in Finland. New School Films. 2013. Four 15-minute segments: [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VhH78NnRpp0&list=PLzsi_E489-gUXFVuciYegO3AyrPMVAjxP](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VhH78NnRpp0&list=PLzsi_E489-gUXFVuciYegO3AyrPMVAjxP)


Anne Taylor. *Linking Architecture and Student-Centered Learning Environments.* TEDxABQ. 2013. [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=AoSMYeAI87Q](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=AoSMYeAI87Q)


Amy Yurko YouTube TED talk.

*Architectural Record.* "A Primer for School Design in the 21st Century". January 2015:

"Crowning Glory: Giancarlo Mazzanti designs a school in Colombia as a beacon and a catalyst for an overlooked neighborhood". Pages 54-58.

"Go with the Flow: A forward-looking design expresses a commitment to collaboration and blurs the lines between work and play". Wilkes Elementary School. Bainbridge Island, WA. Pages 92-97.

"Learning Curve: A charter school in Atlanta unites junior and senior academics in a dynamic expression of imaginative teaching approaches". Pages 104-109.

"Round the Clock: A longer school day prompted the client and architects to rethink the way education is delivered in Germany and how it is housed". Ergolding Secondary School. Pages 124-129.

**Instructor**

Gerry Gast geraldgast@gmail.com

Gerry Gast is an architect and urban designer, and member of the University of Oregon Portland Architecture faculty. For several years he served as Visiting Associate Professor in the
Professor Gast is a licensed architect and founding principal of Gast-Hillmer Urban Design in California. Current and recent projects include design of the new Stryiskyi Park campus for the Ukrainian Catholic University (UCU) in Lviv, Ukraine; the urban design component of the Comprehensive Plan for the City of Redwood City, California, and urban design master plans for several cities in California and the western states.

Professor Gast directs graduate research projects and community outreach through the Portland Urban Projects Workshop of the University of Oregon Portland Architecture Program. For information:  http://architecture.uoregon.edu/content/portland-urban-projects-workshop

Research interests focus on seminal urban design projects and programs in several cities throughout the world, “environmentally restorative” urban waterfronts and “next generation” urban schools.