“...the usefulness of a method...is to provide an adequate way of ‘listening’ to the users, and to the world, in such a way that the new design becomes well fitted to people and to circumstances.” – J. Christopher Jones

**DESIGNING RELEVANT OBJECTS**

Users become attached to an object that has a clear identity because they develop a relationship with the piece. This extends the life of the product. Students will look at chairs through history to study rituals and archetypes that have informed design over time. The class will take a field trip to Portland to tour two modern design stores. Students will look at the most current design publications/sites and discuss relevant issues that affect design today. The focus is on furniture for production.

Research will inform the design of a chair. Each student will determine a need, study human activity, write a clear design challenge, and build a prototype.

**Course Goals:**

Students will gain knowledge of materials through hands-on crafting and experimentation. They will also develop a personal design strategy through debates about:

- the importance of form versus the expression of a story
- whether evidence of the human hand increases a user’s connection to a piece
- how today’s accessible computer-aided manufacturing environment allows the possibility for a designer to think past mass production to mass customization
- how these issues affect the relationship of the postindustrial designer to the user

**Evaluation:**

Students will be evaluated with respect to their ability to take clear positions through design and to the care, thoroughness, and craft of their finished pieces.