PRACTICUM (variable credit (2-4), prereq: ARCH 4/584, pre-auth to register, P/NP)

In this course, graduate and undergraduate students are engaged in participatory learning experiences off campus in professional practice setting. The practicum is an opportunity to explore facets of professional practice within design firms or other entities engaged in activities that shape the built environment or contribute environmental design education. Practicum host mentors oversee students and guide their learning by including them in observation of professional activities and/or varied assignments that develop professional skills. Students are not paid for practicum hours. The variable credits fulfill major subject area electives.

Instructor: Amy Miller Dowell AIA, amillerd@uoregon.edu, 503-830-7227 c.

Distance Learning Format

Students will submit weekly written logs by email. Up to four meetings with the instructor can take place in person individually or in groups, or by phone or teleconference, with times to be arranged. The first mandatory meeting of the practicum class will be the first Tuesday of the term at time to be announced.

Credit Hours

Credits are determined by each student in consultation with the mentor who is supervising the practicum, and the instructor. Each undergraduate credit hour is equivalent to 30 hours of effort. Each graduate credit hour is equivalent to 40 hours of effort. (Approximately ten hours of the total hours per quarter are applied to written logs, reflection and a short term paper, the remaining credits will be applied to work at the practicum site).

Identifying a Practicum Host

The process for identifying a practicum host takes time and should begin at least one month before the start of the quarter for practicum placements in Oregon. Out-of-state or international placements may take longer. Prior to contacting potential hosts, interested students should write or meet with the instructor to discuss their practicum goals. Many potential practicum hosts, especially governmental agencies or non-governmental organizations, have an application process with specific requirements and due dates. International placements through the University of Oregon IE3 Program require a separate application available from UO campus advising at ie3@uoregon.edu.

Students who volunteer for design assistance and education programs such as the Architectural Foundation of Oregon's Architects in Schools Program, or Habitat for Humanity can organize a practicum around this work if a qualified professional participant is available to mentor the student.

ARCH 409: Undergraduate Practicum

Undergraduate practicum work is organized around the day-to-day activities taking place at the practicum site. Students are encouraged to try new skills under the close supervision of their mentors, and learn by observing professionals at work.

ARCH 609: Graduate Practicum

Graduate practicum work is organized around in-depth study of a subject identified by the student that can be pursued in a practice setting. Students can contribute to a project defined by their practicum host or propose their own study topic in consultation with their practicum mentor.

How to Enroll:

Interested students should contact the instructor one month prior to the quarter with required materials: a resume, draft practicum cover letter and portfolio (or one or two examples of recently completed design work). Prior to pre-registration and the start of the quarter, they should schedule an informational meeting or phone call with the instructor. Then to begin registration, students should complete a Pre-Authorization form under "Department of Architecture Forms" at http://architecture.uoregon.edu/students/forms and send it to the instructor. Those who have sent in their materials, talked to the instructor, and have an appropriate background for the course will be authorized to enroll by the instructor and can seek a practicum placement.
PRACTICUM Term and Assignments:
Hours spent in the practicum must occur during the quarter the student is enrolled. The practicum experience is for the full length of the term through the final review week. Practicums for 1 credit are often granted for programs such as Architects in Schools; please contact instructor.

UNDERGRADUATES:
5 hours/week on-site + 1 hour/week writing = 60 hours total for 2 credits
8 hours/week on-site + 1 hour/week writing = 90 hours total for 3 credits
11 hours/week on-site + 1 hour/week writing = 120 hours total for 4 credits

GRADUATES:
7 hours/week on-site + 1 hour/week writing = 80 hours total for 2 credits
11 hours/week on-site + 1 hour/week writing = 120 hours total for 3 credits
15 hours/week on-site + 1 hour/week writing = 160 hours total for 4 credits

EXAMPLE PRACTICUM PLACEMENTS:

Undergraduate students participated in a six–week summer practicum in Shanghai, China where they experienced the fast pace of Chinese design practice at Xian Dai, a large, comprehensive design firm. During the week they collaborated with young Chinese designers and interns as members of project teams on a variety of project types. Their practicum was supplemented by week–end excursions to architectural and cultural sites. (mentors: Raymond Cheng AIA, and Xian Dai architects)

Skylab Architecture (http://www.skylabdesign.com/)
While developing models for an existing steel framed warehouse building from the 1920’s located in Portland, and illustrations of initial concepts for its proposed use as a 2,000 seat concert hall, a graduate student conducted interviews of architects at Skylab and two other small, “signature,” design firms in Portland to study how design intention is communicated between architecture staff and how design integrity is maintained during the design process. (mentor: Jeff Kovel, AIA)

Architects in Schools Program (http://www.af–oregon.org/education/architects–in-schools/)
The Architecture Foundation of Oregon matches architects and architecture students with 3rd through 5th grade teachers for a 6 week classroom residency that incorporates architecture into an existing curriculum. Practicum students work closely with practitioners who serve as mentors. The program is based on a curriculum guide that uses architectural concepts, including “green” building concepts to teach math, science, social studies, language arts and other disciplines. (mentors: Kim Knowles, AFO members)