Back to School: New Landscapes for Redefining Collectivity

The child starting kindergarten this fall will graduate in the third decade of the 21st century. All we can know about the world she will step into is that it will have challenges and opportunities beyond what we can imagine today, problems and possibilities that will demand creativity and ingenuity, responsibility and compassion. Whether this year’s kindergarten student will merely survive or positively thrive in the decades to come depends in large measure on the experiences she has in school. Those experiences will be shaped by adults, by peers, and ultimately by places, by the physical environments where she does her learning. United in the conviction that environment is our children’s third teacher, we can begin anew a vital mission: designing today’s schools for tomorrow’s world. — The Third Teacher. New York: Abrams, 2010.

Tezuka Architects, Fuji Kindergarten, Tachikawa, Japan, 2007. Photograph by Iwan Baan

Catalogue Description
What constitutes the great centers of learning in the 21st century? What are the new relationships between the individual and the group, between notions of interior and exterior? What role does ecology play, not only in the architecture of the schools themselves, but also pedagogically speaking in a time of unprecedented globalization and climate change? What ideas remain prescient from the architects of the canonical schools constructed during the post war period? In more recent projects what new territories have been staked out? How has an era transformed by cell phones and the internet, by a new hyperconnectivity, altered how we look at these works and what we might draw from them in the future? What role do indoor/outdoor dichotomies play in the future, in virtual time and space? How does a myriad of digital media sit alongside basic needs, the everyday, and fundamental principles of fresh air and light?

Are there potentials for a didactic environmentalism? What is the role of collectivity and the position of the school both physically and conceptually in rapidly densifying cities (internally and urbanistically)? The studio will investigate how the landscape of learning has changed in both concrete and abstract terms and will speculate on and propose new fields for learning and strategies of interrelatedness. What are the points at which a school dissolves and in what ways does it most productively function as a facilitator? In short what is the role of the architectural project in the choreography of learning? Students will be expected to develop strong positions towards the future of the school over the course of the studio and their final projects are expected to support their agendas to the extreme. The term will begin with an in-depth analysis and speculation on canonical schools since 1945 alongside readings of key texts on education from John Dewey to Loris Malaguzzi and Maria Montessori. The studio project for the term will be a new public school in Portland, Oregon.
Credits
(6) Credit units.

Prerequisites
Prerequisite for ARCH 484 is ARCH 384. Prerequisite for ARCH 584 is either ARCH 682 or ARCH 683.

Student Work
All student work will be available for the student’s review but will remain the property of the University of Oregon unless previously agreed to in writing. If you wish to retain copies and images of your drawings, models and any other material, please make duplicates prior to submitting.

Review Schedule, Final Presentation Requirements, and Final Hand-in Requirements
Midterm and final review dates, formats and requirements are to be determined. Assigned presentation format and documentation will be the same for all students unless otherwise noted. All assignments should be submitted electronically to the course folder (at a high resolution format but within reasonable file size limits). Hardcopies of all presentations should be carefully saved through the end of the term.

Evaluation Methods
Continuous evaluation of work during in-class desk critiques, evaluation of design work during in-class and public reviews, and individual end-of-term discussions with professor on strengths, weaknesses, and overall recommendations.

Grading
Performance will be graded on a pass/no pass basis only. Grading will be at the exclusive discretion of the studio critic based on rigor of design process, graphic representation, level of improvement, intellectual engagement in studio, and overall project quality throughout the course including the midterm and the final, where special weight will be placed on the material presented.

For exit interviews, student work will be evaluated for achievement in all areas listed in the Department of Architecture’s Studio Evaluation Form.

Students are expected to achieve better than satisfactory performance in the analysis of precedents, rigorous engagement with the studio theme, and the ability to develop both a critical and contemporary position towards this theme. It is essential that the final projects address site, program, spatial organizations, and technical aspects with a clear overall position and that this position be thoroughly articulated both verbally and graphically.

Late projects are not acceptable, including in class pin-ups. A deferred grade will be given only in accordance with the rules and regulations of the University and will not be given for incomplete projects. Extensions of due dates will be considered only in extreme cases and with prior written approval. In the case of illness, a written explanation by your doctor will be required.

Students with Disabilities
If you have a documented disability and anticipate needing accommodations in this course, please make arrangements to meet with your professor the first week of class. Please bring a copy of a letter from the UO Counselor for Students with Disabilities that verifies and outlines your disability to this meeting so that arrangements can be made to accommodate your needs.

Attendance
The class will meet on Mondays, Wednesdays, and Fridays from 1:00 to 4:50p unless otherwise noted. Attendance is required for each studio day for the entire class period. If you will be absent from studio one day—either in full or in part, please notify me by email. The University of Oregon and Department of Architecture have no provision that allows for unexcused absences or tardiness. Repeated unexcused absences or tardiness will not be tolerated and may result in failure to pass the course. Students with two unexcused absences will need to immediately schedule a private conference to discuss options.
Email and Communication
Please send emails from your uoregon email account. Your name should be clearly visible in the “from:” header so that your email can be distinguished from spam. Course announcements will be sent to your uoregon email address and/or may be found in the course folder. Please address all emails to both my work and uoregon email addresses to ensure timely responses. Limit using my personal phone number to emergencies and other urgent matters as required.

Ethics
Misrepresenting someone else’s work/ideas as one’s own, or in any way contributing to such a misrepresentation, will be taken seriously. Clearly indicate all the resources that you use for the assignments. Students should understand University policies related to academic integrity and consequences for dishonest conduct.

Community Standards
The University Community is dedicated to the advancement of knowledge and the development of integrity. In order to thrive and excel, this community must preserve the freedom of thought and expression of all its members. A culture of respect that honors the rights, safety, dignity, and worth of every individual is essential to preserve such freedom. This includes at all times not playing any music except with a personal earphone. Phones should be used outside of the studio. Alcohol in the studio is prohibited. All participants in the course are expected to conduct themselves in a manner that respects the rights and well-being of others. Failure to do so may result in the lowering of your final grade and/or possible removal from the class.

Studio Critic
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