Context of the studio
Past pedagogies in architectural design positioned architecture in opposition to the natural world with buildings operating as autonomous, formal objects. In this introductory design studio, we build on 20th and 21st century work to recouple the design of the built environment with its ethical function in terms of social and ecosystem ramifications (both ethos and ethics). In this studio, we ask: How should architectural designers operate within this expanded field of influence in which buildings are inseparable from their global impacts? In this context, how can we connect the traditional elements of Cartesian space making—point, line, and plane—with the elements and phenomena—sun, atmosphere, earth, and water—that make up the physical world? And, how can we use architectural design to shape the human experience of earth, atmosphere, sun, and water in the context of the built environment?

Description of the studio
In response to this challenge, we offer an introductory design studio that positions the fundamentals of spatial design within the natural history of the region. Students will have instruction in design processes and tools for the critical development of design exercises. This design work will be conducted in the context of lectures, readings, and discussion on topics in geology, forestry, climate, and hydrology. The studio will be organized around four material and experiential elements—earth, sun, atmosphere, and water. These four elements will structure design problems in the context of related phenomena. The studio course will be conducted concurrently with seminar courses in design media and in architectural history and theory.

Objectives
Studio participants will develop:

- The ability to understand (projectively imagine) and critique the spatial qualities of design proposals
- Agility in working iteratively and incrementally at various scales and in various design media.
- Critical voices in evaluating design decisions.
- A sense of the role of material and experiential elements—earth, sun, atmosphere, and water—in the multi-sensory experience of space and in regional and global ecology.
- A basic understanding of concepts in the natural history of Oregon.

Advance notices
Please read the following texts in advance of summer term as a foundation to the studio work. There will be additional readings offered during the term.

Juhani Pallasmaa, Eyes of the Skin: Architecture of Senses (any edition)
Junichiro Tanizaki, In Praise of Shadows (any edition)
Francis D.K. Ching, Architecture: Form, Space, and Order (any edition)

- There is a list of required studio supplies on the website (link).
- We will announce field trip dates and times as soon as possible.

“It is necessary to take the word nature here in its widest sense, that is, the one which includes the domain of physical beings, and the realm of moral or intellectual things. … Nature exists as much in what she has of the invisible as in what strikes the eyes.”

Quatremere de Quincy, 1788

“Contemporary ecological theory may provide a parallel here. If the technical, practical, and representational conditions architecture is to sustain take into account not only natural phenomena but also cultural norms, as embodied in urban situations, my sense of “orientation” can be seen to parallel the mandate to think widely and act locally.”

David Leatherbarrow, 2009