In the fall of 2015, the Black Student Task Force published a plan outlining twelve demands to "ensure that current and future Black students have a culturally appropriate and welcoming campus climate". As a result of their activism and labor, the University of Oregon will welcome a new Black Cultural Center to campus with construction slated to begin the summer of 2018. The goal of this studio is not to mimic the actual project in process or scope (though rich lessons may be learned from it along the way). Our aim is to envision a UO Black Cultural Center situated to support both the campus and the region 50 years from now.

Our studio’s proposed Center will fulfill dual needs: to be a nucleus for black student life on campus, and offer support to community groups who provide critical programming for the study, preservation, and advancement of black traditions and heritage. Our studio will work from an expanded site and program with a focus on university-community partnership. In addition to student support and event space, the Center will include community gathering rooms, permanent exhibit space, a rotating gallery, reflection space, and a studio/office for a scholar in residence program. Our studio project is a multiuse civic building located on a college campus. However, the purpose of our studio is to investigate the ways in which architectural design acts as an extension of cultural production. Specifically, our work will probe the intersection of black aesthetics, architecture, and identity.

This studio project is inherently political. The ordering of space always is. However, this project will likely test the limits of our training, identity, and experience. We will operate from the notion that every building is a thesis. Therefore, students will be invited to place a great deal of intention into forming their rationale and design approach based on knowledge gained from assigned readings and case studies.

The mode of the studio is collaboration centered. Group proposals are welcome. The intellectual terrain of our project is vast—we will need each other.