

# The Craft of Design

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In recent decades, the emergence of environmental education buildings and interpretation centers has afforded architects occasion to explore the expressive potential and practical realities of materials and details in stunning landscape settings. In so doing, architects have built some of their most exquisite and compelling work.

## Purpose

This studio will emphasize design integration in the context of an explicit intention to craft evocative, aesthetically meaningful buildings. Students will be asked to make buildings of strong character with an identity that derives primarily from the materials and systems of construction they employ. The goal will be to make beautiful space, light, and architectural form using expressive systems of structure, construction, and high-performance enclosures. This studio will be an opportunity to make comprehensive designs in preparation for the terminal studio level. Completion of ARCH 4/562 or other evidence of advanced preparation in systems of structure is a prerequisite for the course.

## Project

The project will draw on the rich typology of outdoor schools and environmental education centers, offering observation stations, a central building, and independent overnight accommodation. A site will be selected in the Steens Mountain Wilderness and Malheur National Wildlife Refuge area in SE Oregon. The buildings must engage the landform and each other to make a series of learning centers, inside and out. Consistent with the overall mission of the school, the buildings must demonstrate an ethos of appropriate technology and environmental responsibility. The principal building material will be wood, with careful use of concrete, steel, glass, rammed earth or others, at the designer's discretion.

## Process

Working through the elements of the program, from small to large, a construction vocabulary will be developed for the school as a whole. The full range of media for design development will be required: sketches and topographic models to explore the site, digital and physical models to test the relationship between space and structure, freehand and measured drawings for generative details in the system of enclosure.

## Field Trip

We will travel to the Steens – Mahleaur area for a site visit on the first Friday of the term, April 3, and into the weekend as schedules allow. By rescheduling the April 6 studio, it may be possible to extend the field trip to include the following Monday. As soon as we know who is in the studio—prior to Spring Break—we will hold a mandatory field trip organization meeting.



Buildings: NK'Mip Desert Cultural Centre (top)  
Pocono Environmental Education & Visitor Center (below)