

University of Oregon . Portland Architecture Program
Arch 407/507. Research and Thesis Preparation Seminar. Gerry Gast. Fall 2020.
Credit: 3 units.

Research and Thesis Preparation Seminar: Linking Education and Architecture



Lomas del Peque School. Cartagena, Colombia. The school was built by the Fundacion Pies Descalzos, a non-profit organization founded to provide public education for children in Colombia's most marginalized neighborhoods. The program integrates education of children with nutrition, counseling, classes for families and community development for the barrio's primarily Afro-Colombian residents. The shaded central courtyard offers social space while providing respite from the hot, humid Caribbean climate. Architect: Giancarlo Mazzanti, Bogota.

Introduction

This course is a research seminar for students enrolled in the Advanced Architectural Design (Thesis) Studio: "Linking Education to Architecture". Gerry Gast, Winter + Spring 2021.

Studio projects may focus on schools of all types, higher education and places of learning such as centers for early childhood education, environmental education and adult education.

The instructor will work with each student individually during Fall term to select a project that best meets the student's individual goals.

More Detail about the studio is given in the studio course description.

Emphasis of the Seminar and Studio

This studio and accompanying seminar are founded on the conviction that *building human capital* through education is the most important mission of our cities and communities. Due to poverty, racial segregation, family conditions and the inequality of communities, the future of many children is determined before they are even born. Education is considered as the foundation of equality, opportunity and social justice.

Excellent public education is central to the health, equality and regeneration of cities. A city performs many functions and offers a wide range of important services. None are more important than the quality of education and schools to serve its young citizens.

Lifelong opportunities are shaped by the experiences gained in education. Healthy cities are not possible without thriving places of learning, dedicated teachers and community workers, active parents and supportive learning environments.

In the United States and other countries around the globe, contemporary urban development has not lifted all citizens equally. A healthy city accommodates families and children of all cultures, races, ethnicities and income status.

Fall Seminar Organization

Education Theories and Innovative Programs

The seminar will begin with a focus on educational theories and research about how children learn. Students in the seminar and studio need to be conversant with the most recent creative programs of education before approaching building programming and design. Influential and innovative programs will be reviewed.

Historical precedents:

The research and writing of prominent educators and movements in history such as Maria Montessori (Montessori Schools), Rudolf Steiner (Waldorf education), John and Evelyn Dewey and the University of Chicago Laboratory School, The Reggio Emilia Approach (the school building as “The Third Teacher”).

Contemporary precedents and examples:

Academy for Global Citizenship, Chicago

BRICK Avon Academy, Newark

The Finland Education System

The Harlem Children’s Zone, New York City

High Tech High, San Diego

Leadership Academy for Girls and African Leadership Academy, South Africa

Malcolm X Shabazz High School, Newark

Pies Descalzos Foundation, Colombia

Contemporary Architectural Precedents

Innovative architectural precedents of learning environments throughout the world will be studied and compared through class discussions. The precedent studies will be conducted by teams of students.

Architectural Program and Context Analysis

With a strong foundation of educational theory and innovative programs in place, the seminar will move to defining architectural spaces and buildings for each project. Students will select a project and site, conduct an analysis of the urban social and environmental context, define an architectural and site program, and investigate how the project may contribute to building the *human capital* of its community.

Research and products may be individual or team-generated, or a hybrid of individual and team depending upon student choice.

Students are encouraged to look well into the future, not be limited by what can be built at the moment. Cities and architecture are changing rapidly. Anticipate change through your project and make your project a precedent for others to study.

Seminar Format

The seminar format is a mix of instructor lectures, readings, class discussions, guest speakers, site visits (if feasible) and student presentations. At the moment of this writing we do not know what physical protocols will be in place in late September when classes begin. Within the framework provided by the State and University, the students and instructor, together, will work out the specific class format with educational goals and safety in mind.

Seminar Products

The product of the term is the "Thesis Statement and Design Program". This is an illustrated monograph that documents your research, project background, goals, context and design program. It's purpose is to serve as a resource and reference for the studio work which begins in January. The monograph provides a basis of discussion with student colleagues, the instructor and visiting professionals in critiques.

Questions

Feel free to contact the instructor during the summer months:

Gerry Gast
geraldgast@gmail.com or ggast@uoregon.edu

Instructor Bio

Gerry Gast is an architect, urban designer and member of the University of Oregon Architecture faculty where he teaches Architectural Design Studios and Urban Design. He previously served as Director of the Portland Architecture Program.

Professor Gast taught for several years as Visiting Associate Professor in the interdisciplinary Program on Urban Studies at Stanford University, where he developed the two core courses in urban design. As a founding principal of Gast Hillmer Urban Design in the San Francisco Bay area, he directed public urban design and urban architecture projects throughout California and the western states.

Recent research focuses on education and schools. Professor Gast has been active in the Portland Public Schools (PPS) as a member of the Master Plan Committee and Design Advisory Group for the new Lincoln High School in Portland's central city, the first new public high school to be built in Portland in over 50 years, now under construction.

Professor Gast is currently working with the Pies Descalzos Foundation of Colombia on schools in marginalized neighborhoods of the country, including new schools in Cartegena and Barranquilla, Colombia. In another international project, he authored the Master Plan for the new Ukrainian Catholic University (UCU) in Lviv, Ukraine and continues to work with the University in its design and development program since 2008 (five completed buildings, one currently under construction).

Other professional work includes School Site Redevelopment Studies for the San Francisco Unified School District, "Uptown District" (a mixed use urban development of 313 dwellings and neighborhood retail center in San Diego's Hillcrest neighborhood), the San Diego County Government Center on the downtown waterfront, the Oregon Science and Technology Park (OSTP) in Gresham –Troutdale, Oregon.