

ARCH 4/507 Ecologies of Health

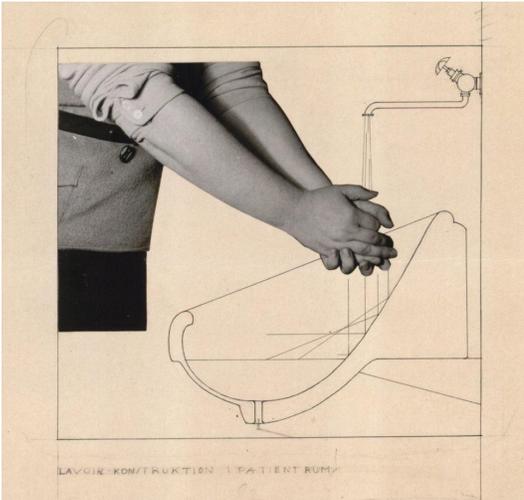
Justin Fowler, Instructor

Winter 2018

Tues / Thurs 10:30am-12:20pm

UO Portland

3 credits



Is architecture ever more than a form of therapeutic care?

This seminar considers modern architecture's historical role as a vehicle of personal and social relief alongside its broad ambitions for systemic transformation. Employing a shared conceptual language of accessibility, equity, and inclusion, this seminar aims to interrogate the wellness metaphors woven into the history of modern architecture and to bridge the rift that often separates the forms and practices of architectural design from those of health care design and the evidence-based endeavors of public health.

Seminar work will consist of project case study discussions and brief reading analysis exercises culminating in a final paper. We will examine how the desire for health has motivated works across scales, from Progressive-era reforms in urban planning and landscape design to care institutions such as Alvar Aalto's tuberculosis sanatorium in Paimio, Lina Bo Bardi's Pompéia Factory Leisure Centre, and the cancer retreat program of Maggie and Charles Jencks, as well as the domestic environments of Richard Neutra, Buckminster Fuller, and Rem Koolhaas, among many others. Further, the seminar will draw on a range of theoretical literature on the "human motor" (Anson Rabinbach) from turn-of-the-century works such as William James' "Gospel of Relaxation," Silas Weir Mitchell's "rest cure" polemics, and Frederick Taylor's Principles of Scientific Management before moving to contemporary material concerning critical disability studies, wellness economies, climate change, healthy cities initiatives, and design for aging populations from authors such as Jedediah Purdy, Rosemarie Garland-Thomson, Dan Goodley, Linda Fried, Timothy Morton, and William Davies. Students will also be asked to contend with the arguments in recent architectural publications such as the CCA's Imperfect Health: The Medicalization of Architecture (2012) and the AD special issue, "Design for Health: Sustainable Approaches to Therapeutic Architecture" (2017).

By the end of the seminar, students will have developed a critical understanding of the vital, yet uneasy means by which built form participates in systems devoted to well-being. They will also become acquainted with the conceptual tools through which to question such political economies and wellness frameworks that often consign architecture to highly visible, yet increasingly limited roles.