ARCH 4/584 Hydro-Logical Design as Community Development
University of Oregon Architecture 484/584 Spring 2019 Urban Design Studio
Professor Brook Muller • Dr. Jill Bambury • Michael Singer Studio • Many Other Friends*
With Generous Support from TVA Architects and the Jeffrey Cook Trust

Project Description
This studio will focus on a multidisciplinary urban design initiative that combines community
development, economic redevelopment (with a focus on food-based and complementary
industries), habitat restoration and mitigation of floodwater risks associated with increasingly
severe storm events in an era of climate change. Our geographic focus will be the Foster Road
area in Portland’s Lents neighborhood east of I-205 and adjacent to Johnson Creek.

We are interested in understanding diverse histories and identities of Lents and Powellhurst-
Gilbert and surrounding neighborhoods in East Portland from which new opportunities can
emerge that help build community. We seek to gain a watershed-scale awareness in generating
a vision of a portfolio of micro-urban design interventions (our project would be one of several)
that celebrate water management as central to expression.

This systems-based approach builds upon the work of the Oregon Solutions Lents Stabilization
and Job Creation Collaborative and many other efforts. The studio seeks to work with
community members as well as economists, artists, landscape architects, planners, hydrologists
engineers, and others in conceptualizing urban design and community development challenges
synergistically. While the hydrological conditions of Lents and Powellhurst-Gilbert
neighborhoods are unique (flooding is a function of Johnson Creek overstepping its banks and
rising groundwater associated with severe rain events and a granular geology), the approach is
intended to translate to other contexts. Ultimately, this endeavor asks what an ROI looks like
that prioritizes community benefits. It also reimagines the functionality and civic identity of urban
landscapes by contending with realities of climate change.

Learning Outcomes
• Ability to engage in a systems oriented design process, one that engages communities,
economies and ecologies, in order to devise effective, integrated urban design proposals
• Understanding of how successful urban design interventions require meaningful dialogue
with stakeholders representing a diversity of perspectives and aspirations
• Understanding of how regulatory requirements can both constrain design decisions and
foster new and innovative design approaches
• Understanding of how basic understanding of hydrology and what constitutes a functional
watershed can positively inform design decision making at the project scale
• Ability to tell narratives through combinations of words and drawings that communicate
complexities as they exist across urban, cultural, community, ecological and other domains
• Ability to adjust and assimilate new knowledge and ideas as the design process unfolds.

*A very special thanks to Sabrina Ortiz Luna for her effort helping to organize this studio
Site Information
The +/-12 acre triangular-shaped “Pick-n-Pull” site we will focus on holds promise given that it is the nexus point of several (very different) uses. Johnson Creek and Foster Floodplain Natural Area are to the south on the other side of Foster Road. Beggar’s Tick Wildlife Refuge lies to the north, on the other side of Springwater Corridor from our site. To the east and west are other light industrial uses, and a residential neighborhood lies to the northwest. Note all of these areas are subject to flooding during major rain events!

Preliminary Resources
In addition to Sabrina’s report (Lents: Hydro-Logical Design as Community Development), we will begin the quarter by accessing two other critical resources: Lents Flood Mitigation Matters, and Recap of the Oregon Solutions Lents Collaborative Charge (all available on Canvas)

Project Contributors (a short list)

Michael Singer Studio (Michael Singer and Jason Bregman)
http://www.michaelsinger.com
Renowned artist who works on infrastructure and community engagement projects

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Engaging in an Explicit Design Process
People entering 484/584 studios come from a diversity of backgrounds and have different needs and expectations as far as their approaches to design problems. I have the responsibility to strike a balance between offering specific suggestions as to how to proceed, and letting individuals and design teams pursue their own trajectories. To that end, I will offer a series of thematic design and research assignments over the course of the quarter that focus on issues and conditions I believe are essential to investigate in arriving at successful design solutions. I will also offer recommendations for how to explore those themes (for example what media approaches may be helpful). However, as critical thinkers and designers, you are encouraged to challenge my recommendations and develop your own tactics, and most certainly build from successes in previous studios.

The graphic representations ('artifacts') we make are always at once studies and for presentation. The quality of the discussions, learning, and final design outcomes depends on the quality of process work.

An Inclusive Studio Culture
The University of Oregon community is dedicated to the advancement of knowledge and the development of integrity. In order to thrive and excel, this community must preserve the freedom of thought and expression of all its members. The University of Oregon has a long and illustrious history in the area of academic freedom and freedom of speech. A culture of respect that honors the rights, safety, dignity and worth of every individual is essential to preserve such freedom.

The School of Architecture and Environment (SAE) is a community that values inclusion. We are committed to equal opportunities for all faculty, staff and students to develop individually, professionally, and academically regardless of ethnicity, heritage, gender, sexual orientation, ability, socio-economic standing, cultural beliefs and traditions. We are dedicated to an environment that is inclusive and fosters awareness, understanding, and respect for diversity. If you feel excluded or threatened, please contact your instructor and/or department head. The University Bias Response Team is also a resource that can assist you. Find more information at their website at http://bias.uoregon.edu/index.html or by phoning 541-346-2037.

If there are aspects of this course that create barriers to your participation, please notify me as soon as possible. You may also wish to contact UO’s Accessible Education Center at 541-346-1155 or https://aec.uoregon.edu

The design studio is a unique educational setting, and we all must strive to build a cohesive environment that promotes communication, respect and open engagement. Environmental Design is both a personal journey and a social act. Our design studio honors this multifaceted reality.
Week 1 Monday, April 1
• Introduction & studio organization
• Read and discuss key excerpts from Sabrina’s report; where in the watershed
• Introduce EX01 Programmatic Research
• Organize research teams
Wednesday, April 3
• Field trip with Marie Walkiewicz, Senior City Planner, Portland Bureau of Environmental Services and JoAnn Vrilakas, Education Coordinator, Leach Botanical Garden
Friday, April 5
• Community Conversation prep with Michael Singer and friends: what are the questions?
• Work day: contact experts (preliminary conversations)
Sunday, April 7
• Community Conversation at Leach Botanical Garden (12:00 n – 3:00 pm)

Week 2 Monday, April 8
• Recap discussion: implications for urban design; how this folds into team research
• Receive draft memos from Reed College Environmental Economics class
• Creative Solutions event w/ Michael Singer, Maria Cahill, Josh Cerra & Sabrina Ortiz (6:00-9:00 pm)
Wednesday, April 10
• Work day
Friday, April 12
• Discuss/review EX01 Programmatic Research
• Intro EX02 Speculative Briefs
• Work day
Saturday, April 13
• HOPES PDX!

Week 3 Monday, April 15
• Work day / tax day: guest visit by Noelwah Netusil, Professor of Economics, Reed College
Wednesday, April 17
• Work day
Friday, April 19
• Discuss/review EX02 Speculative Briefs
• Team formation
• Introduce EX03 Program and Midterm Requirements

Week 4 Monday, April 22
• “Portland Radical Transformation Strategy” presentation by George Crandall of Crandall Arambula
• Post presentation work session; discuss next steps
Wednesday, April 24
• Work day; Thuy Tu to visit
Friday, April 26
• Work day

Week 5 Monday, April 29
• Work day
Wednesday, May 1
• Work day
Friday, May 3
• Work day

Week 6 Monday, May 6
• Midterm Review
Tuesday May 7th through Thursday May 9th Urbanism Next Conference
Wednesday, May 8
• Work day
Friday, May 10
• Discussion with Reed Environmental Economics class (1-3 pm)

Week 7 Monday, May 13
• Introduce final requirements
• Work day
Wednesday, May 15
• Work day
Friday, May 17
• Work day

Week 8  Monday, May 20
• Work day
Wednesday, May 22
• 85% Set Pin Up LA 206; Thuy Tu to visit
Friday, May 24
• Work day

Week 9  Monday, May 27
• Memorial Day – No Class
Wednesday, May 29
• Work day
Friday, May 31
• Work day

Week 10
• Thursday, June 6: Final Review