CROSSING THE BORDER
How can a human-centered architecture help break down hurtful borders and reinforce helpful ones? How can boundaries become bridges?

On one hand, boundaries and walls—transitions between inside and outside—are essential to architecture. But “inside” and “outside” may also imply “insiders” and “outsiders”—categories of social, economic and environmental exclusion. In this terminal/thesis studio we will investigate these ideas using an architectural project to show how a divisive or problematic border may turn into one of helpful overlaps and interchange.

Possible borders to cross and projects that might cross them (there are many others):

- the border between Mexico and the U.S. (or another transnational line of contention): a school, or clinic, or soccer stadium, or institute for international cooperation, a place for the humane assimilation of refugees, OR...
- the urban growth boundary around Portland: an area with new housing models to help solve density issues inside the UGB; a prototype agricultural facility to make issues of food production visible to urban dwellers; OR...
- the economic/social divide between Old Town and the rest of Portland: a community theater involving local people in production; a vocational school; a place for homeless people to sleep; (any of these with the possibility of adaptive reuse of a historic Old Town building)...OR...
- the geographic and conceptual boundary between production and daily life: a production facility for food or a manufactured product that brings production back to the city, makes it visible and brings people into a more inclusive economy...OR...

Within the theme of “crossing the border,” each student will develop her or his own project description and project. The common theme will allow for a high level of interchange in the studio, and individual projects will allow for each individual to take responsibility for development of a particular idea. In this way, the studio combines the best aspects of a thesis studio and a studio with a common program. The studio will begin with the development of a strong social/conceptual idea and end with a thoroughly-developed work of architecture.

During a fall-term seminar preceding the studio, each student will develop her/his own approach within the framework of “crossing the border,” including choice of site and developing a specific architectural and urban program. The seminar, also to include a rigorous investigation of architectural precedents, will help prepare for an intense design experience in winter and spring terms. Winter term will result in a complete schematic design, and spring in the development of that design in technical, material and experiential ways, and the preparation of the final presentation. The studio will be conducted with weekly pinups during the first term and the expectation of engaged and professional work. Students will be encouraged to work with consultants relevant to particular project topics. This terminal/thesis studio will synthesize students’ architectural understandings developed to date, applied to important social questions. The premise is that although architecture cannot by itself solve our big problems, it can help provide settings that support and enhance such solutions. Questions? Please contact Howard Davis hdavis@uoregon.edu