This course is an introduction to the Portland Architecture Program through the lens of “Cascades,” a term that describes both the Pacific NW region and an effect chain produced through the nested scales of our built and unbuilt environments. The Cascades study follows the vectors of Justice and Care which, in turn, frame three intertwined threads for design research:

1. Climate Action + Relief
2. Housing + Health Equity
3. Mobility + Inclusion

Students will be introduced to a regional outlook on the effects of anthropogenic climate change by way of a series of sessions arranged by thematic threads for research and action. These threads will be framed by investigations into theories, descriptive methods, and modes of action ranging from design to activism with the capacity to intervene toward an abrupt revision of entrenched extraction logics, structural violence, and political economies of unfettered growth and displacement. Students will also engage with intersections between the region’s New Deal history and its potential to support a robust Green New Deal going forward informed by spatial justice, care, equity, social and environmental health, and the reduction of cruelty. This is the form and content of an urbanism.

The seminar is reading- and discussion-based, with a final project that asks students to develop speculative studio briefs that engage with course material. This proposal is workshopped and reviewed throughout the term.

*Subject Area, Urban Architecture and Design*