The EU-US International House
Innovation and Re-Generative Design
University of Oregon Portland – Urban Architecture
Fall 2020 - Winter 2021 - Spring 2021
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Illustration: Greetings with European and American Flags over the Water

A New European Union EU and United States US International House

The European Union and the United States are pleased to announce a new cooperative project of exploring global and regional crises and what can be done about those ever increasing problems threatening human existence and are impediments to societal peace and prosperity. In particular, the emphasis in this collaboration is on large scale problems that affect the US and Europe and the whole world and how combined efforts can contribute to solving some of these problems. The current preferred locations for these two pilot projects are considered in Bonn, Germany, and the other in Portland, US. As a gesture of good will the President of the European Union Ursula von der Leyen has announced that the EU will finance the design and construction of the two buildings and also finance the first two years of operation with generous grants to the study of these problems. A committee will develop a first program.

For the first two years of operation, the EU will finance the study of three large problems from the US and three from the EU. The committee has determined that the start of the transatlantic, cooperative work should include a response to the current main triple crisis in the US with 1. Health Pandemic, 2. Socio-economic Crisis and, 3. Discrimination of Race. The three problems for the EU include 4. Climate Change, 5. Migration and Refugee Crisis, and 6. Digitalization, in this initial focus. While problems topics may overlap, problems in this first phase include:

**US: Pandemic**
- Task: Continuing Life under Corona Virus
- Local Agency LA

**US: Socio-Economic**
- Task: Surviving in a Difficult Environment
- Local Agency LA

**US: Racism**
- Task: Correcting an Original Sin
- LA

**EU: Climate Change**
- Task: Protecting Life on Earth – Finding Solutions
- LA

**EU: Refugee Problem**
- Task: Helping People in Need and Integration
- LA

**EU: Digitalization**
- Task: Creating Efficient Networks - People Protection
- LA

Students will work with local agencies to make problems more directly tangible.

**Initial ideas for local agencies include:** Portland African American Leadership Forum (PAALF) Urban League; Sightline Institute and Columbia Riverkeeper on climate and sustainability; Open Signal on digitalization and tech access; Energy Studies in Buildings Lab at the UO, and more…


**Architecture:** The committee desires a new and advanced building that considers studios for all six global problem areas. Foremost, the building has to be a perfect example of excellent design following provisions in the fight against the corona virus and including sustainable objectives. Outstanding professionals, academics, scientists, and thinkers will be selected by the European Union and send to the United States to work on these problems together with their counterparts in the US – and vice versa. Additional studios for Architecture, Art, and Photography, that address
problems in these six areas are also part of the program that may change after two years. Rules for living with the new Covid19 Pandemic will play a primary role in this urban building design.

**Building Type: Hybrid of Academy, Embassy, Think Tank, Research Center, and Housing**

**Urban Architecture in Portland and Purpose of the Advanced Design Studio and Calendar**

The Urban Architecture Program in Portland focuses on urban architecture, urban design, urban sustainability and re-generative process in cities in the US and abroad. This is a thesis studio with the general topical focus and the overall project selected by the instructor. The design studio is preceded by a mandatory fall term thesis preparation research seminar 407/507 with the studios in the winter and spring quarters 2021. Also a few preparatory exercises in the summer of 2020 are suggested. The emphasis of the studio is to design an urban project that contributes to the solution of larger problems in the world, and to develop a comprehensive urban architectural project within this context, backed by rigorous research efforts, theoretical explorations, and creative work. There are three main components to this design thesis project. The first part is a research seminar on the thesis topic and the building project in the fall. The second part is an urban design effort of your project that can be done either in groups collectively or individually, followed by sketch designs for your building project in the winter term. The third component deals with the full design of an individual building project within the developed urban design context. The building will be designed fully and comprehensively by the individual student in the spring quarter.

**Site and Program**

**Sites:** The International House cooperates with the University of Oregon on the level of research and public events. It is therefore desirable that the EU-US-IH is located relatively close to the UO in Portland in a dense urban area. It is expected that the building(s) will be about 5-7 stories high on a minimum site of 100X75 feet, and a maximum half block site of 200X100 feet. The committee has looked at three sites so far, and in the fall of 2020 the students will analyze them and select one site for their particular building design. Areas close to the river are considered desirable.

**Initial Program:** The initial program consists of nine research studios, six for the main research areas and one each for architecture, art, and photography. Each studio includes the director and 2-3 assistants that help with the investigation (including UO students). On the first floor there might be a coffee shop or other retail. There is also a reception and a pleasant lobby for relaxed meetings, plus a lecture hall. Seminar rooms, library, and a computer center are on higher floors. The double story studios are also on upper floors. Apartments for researchers are located close to the top floors. A roof garden with a teahouse for social meetings rounds up the top. On larger sites a courtyard may be included (not necessarily on the first floor), and each building has a basement. In the fall seminar, each student selects a site and develops a full program.

Illustration: Possible Architectural Inspiration by the Newest EU Building in Brussels:
(Re)Generative Design: Seminar Arch 407/507 (Fall 2020 required)
The fall seminar will focus on the theoretical, conceptual, but also practical issues for the studios. The overall design theme is to explore (re)generative processes and their potential application in planning, design and building processes in cities, urban districts and buildings. This includes the study of innovative solutions to problems. All thesis students will participate in the seminar by investigating particular aspects of generative and regenerative urban and architectural design and responsive urban architecture in different experiments, tests, and simulations of design processes following particular principles, rules, criteria, and parameters. Each student will study one particular case and present it in the seminar. A ‘Thesis Design Statement’ including a ‘Program Statement’ is required as part of a short ‘Thesis Report.’

**Generative or Re-generative Design** is an applied form of generative science that tries to understand and conceptualize the world and its complex structure as a generative or regenerative process. Generative Design attempts to formulate limited parameters, principles, and rules that interact with each other to create richness of life and behavior, and variation of form, shape and place. Generative design explores the design process also as an emergent or unfolding process at several levels, including but not limited to physical, artistic, and social cultural factors. Communal or community generative processes are of specific interest here. These kinds of processes might be more and more important in solving our world problems, now and in future.

**Summer 2020** During the remaining summer time students have the opportunity to get familiar with the topic, start looking into some of the literature and possibly start looking at precedents of this hybrid kind of building, that may include the MIT Media Lab Building by the Japanese architect Fumihiko Maki, or the new EU Building in Brussels by Samyn and Partners, or one can take a more local-regional design build-attitude approach with the San Jose Julian Inn Building by Alexander and CES. Most importantly Professor Neis invites students to participate in the PUARL+BB confonline event on September 18 and 19. Here various world problems will be addressed with strong emphasis of developing solutions for the pandemic problem (see below).

**Fall 2020 – Specific Tasks and Assignments** During the fall we will continue the summer ideas and concepts with specific tasks and assignments including the following main tasks:

1. Start reading the literature and discuss large problems, and design methods, i.e. Regenerative Design and approaches to site, program, local connection, and people.
2. Start to contact particular agencies, non-profit or private organizations that handle one of these problems on a local-regional level. And study the connection between large crises.
3. Customizing the program, developing a set of guidelines or patterns with regard to the Covid19 pandemic and other points. Urbanism. Design for Distancing Ideas Guidebook
4. We will study precedents of this kind of hybrid buildings, including new WS Building.
5. We will also study the 3 sites that have been proposed by the EU-US Committee and select a particular site that fits one’s customized program best.
6. Initial test design exercises in urban and building design to get ready for winter quarter.
7. Preparing an initial thesis report as a foundation for the design process in winter.
### Initial Literature Ideas:
In the seminar we will continue to develop a bibliography.

**Architecture**  
Task: Come up with Innovative Architecture  
C. Alexander  

**Urbanism**  
[Design for Distancing Ideas Guidebook](https://www.njurban.org)  
The City of Baltimore – The Neighborhood Design Center (Micro-urbanism)

**Pandemic**  
Task: Continuing Life under Corona Virus  
D. Defoe  
*A Journal of the Plague Year*.

**Socio-Economic**  
Task: Surviving in a Difficult Environment and Finding New Ways  
C. Fuest  
*Wie Wir Unsere Wirtschaft Retten – Der Weg aus der Corona Crisis*.  

**Racism**  
Task: Correcting an Original Sin  
Zerlina Maxwell  
The End of White Politics. Hachette Books, 2020

**Climate Change**  
Task: Protecting Life on Earth – Finding Solutions  
E. Colbert  
The Sixth Extinction.

**Refugee Problem**  
Task: Helping and Including People in Need  
H. Neis et al  
“Welcome City: Refugees…” doi:[http://dx.doi.org/10.17645/up.v3i4.1668](http://dx.doi.org/10.17645/up.v3i4.1668)

**Digitalization**  
Task: Creating Efficient Networks and People Protection  
S. Zuboff  
The Age of Surveillance Capitalism. Public Affairs Book 2019
A more relaxed generative approach to making buildings in design-build with CES examples

Book ‘Battle’ and View on our Beloved Earth from Space - About.com/Images Earth From Space

Repairing the Earth - Repairing the City

Comment on Teaching: In person, on-line or hybrid depends on the situation in the fall and the regulations and guidelines by the University of Oregon and the State of Oregon as well as the safety of the people involved.