ARCH 4/510 Winter 2020
Building Health
CRN 26466/ 26468 - Tues/Thurs 12:15-1:45pm, on web and in 150 Columbia
4 credits, qualifies for “advanced technical elective”

Instructor: Prof. Kevin Van Den Wymelenberg, kevinvdw@uoregon.edu

Course Description
We are facing a convergence of multiple crises – climate change, institutional racism and a global pandemic. We are in the midst of unprecedented and transformative environmental change that highlights the inequities with our systems of governance. Climate change, which causes dramatic shifts to all of our natural systems, also occurs in a racialized context. Both climate justice and institutional racism relate to the public health emergency brought on by the global pandemic. We spend 90% of our lives indoors, but now congregating indoors is not deemed safe, increasing isolation and division.

The environmental and design fields must amplify voices that have often gone unheard so that environmental and social justice are brought to the forefront of the path that lies ahead. Existing and new buildings must address human health factors to support safe indoor congregation in the near term and robust human immune function and carbon neutrality in the long term. This course will help students begin to engage these broader topics and learn from experts from a broad range of disciplines in exploring these themes. The course will explore questions like: How can built environments define and contribute to a livable and just future and better serve communities and larger components of civil society? What must students of the built and natural environment know to live in this emerging world, and forge a better one?

The format of the course will include instructor and guest lectures, a small number of field trips, discussions based on readings, written and graphic assignments, and oral presentations to community stakeholders and a course expert panel. Th major deliverable for each student is a chapter within in book proposal titled Building Health. Each chapter will address a key aspect of one or more of the converging crises, and will include a summary of existing literature, prioritization of future research questions, and proposed innovative solutions.