Furniture: Theory and Analysis
IARC 444/544

2:00 - 3:20 pm
Tuesday - Thursday
Room: 279 LA
Linda Zimmer (lzimmer@uoregon.edu)

Prerequisites:
3rd year of undergraduate study in Interior Architecture or Architecture. Track 1 students in their second year or Track 2 students in their first year (ARCH and IARCH). Students from outside these programs who are working toward a Interior Architecture minor or students from other majors may enroll with instructor consent. This course provides an excellent introduction to furniture design for Architecture students who are interested in taking IARC 4/586 Furniture Design Studio

Students utilize contemporary readings and lectures along with active design and analysis exercises to examine a wide variety of built-in and freestanding furnishings, from an historical, theoretical and practical viewpoint. Moving from small to large-scale issues, we begin by examining how chairs and other furnishings interact with human bodies and the role of designers in creating healthy products and environments. We study logic of furniture elements and systems, including how theories of behavior, organizational management and cultural context have shaped the development of furniture and visa-versa. We look at furnishings as a part of the larger composition of the room and the building, as a built assembly, a physical expression of materials and as a consumer product.

Expected Format:
This class is a blend of hands-on examination of products and seating, traditional lectures and in-class help sessions. I expect that this course will continue to integrate hybrid learning methods in the fall as it returns to in person. We will continue the practice of taking quizzes remotely outside of face to face time and using Miro boards and other tools to facilitate discussion of projects.

Projects:
Projects change a bit from year to year but always include active design activities. Past projects include analysis of individual sitting patterns through a sitting time sheet, making a model and analyzing a contemporary chair, designing a temporary lectern to fit your own body and speaking style and working to retrofit and furnish a modular house from the 1960's into a bunkhouse. A good grasp of technical drawing skills is needed for success in this course.

Exams:
A series of online quizzes ask students to interpret and/or apply concepts taught in lectures and readings. These are generally untimed and can consist of short answer questions, diagrams, uploading of images, and short essays related to conceptual/practical problems.

Required Readings:
Given the topical nature of this course readings change on a yearly basis. Readings are drawn from contemporary writings on anthropometrics, ergonomics, cultural connections, materials use, and design intention. Readings are available on Canvas.

Grading:
Grades are based on a combination of exams and projects (50% each). This course may be taken graded or P/NP. If taken P/NP Graduate students must earn an equivalent of B- to pass. Undergraduates must earn a C- or above.

THIS COURSE PROVIDES A WORKING KNOWLEGE OF

- Human anthropometrics and ergonomics and their influence on furniture design and placement
- How furniture design influences and is influenced by theories of organizational management
- Flexibility Modularity and the logic of systems design
- Furniture types and typology: Historic and contemporary
- Materials and fabrication and how they effect furniture design
- Life-cycle issues and costing
- Furniture as material culture
- Built-in furniture, how it shapes space and helps to mediate between buildings and people

DEPARTMENT OF INTERIOR ARCHITECTURE
School of Architecture and Environment / University of Oregon

Fall 2022