Spatial Composition

It is easy to see why we fail so often. For one thing we do not draw space, but rather plans and sections in which the space lives. So there is a constant temptation to focus on objects rather than on the architectural space they breathe into existence. "drawing board victories"... replace and negate the real pleasures discoverable in space.  
Charles Moore

Catalogue Description
1. Principles of form and composition in the making of architectural space. The study of past and present ideas and principles through which building elements are given order and meaning.

2. Credits: 4

3. Prerequisites: Arch 182 for undergraduates
   Arch 680 for graduates

Meeting Time/Place
4. Lectures: Tu Th 2:00-3:20
   Section times and place TBA

Teaching Methodology
5. Illustrated lectures and weekly discussion section meetings of approximately 18-20 students.

Discussion Sections
Beginning the first week of class there will be one discussion session meeting per week for a total of eight. The purpose of these sessions will be to discuss assigned readings and issues raised in lectures. In addition, these sessions will be used to introduce class projects and to review the results. Students are required to submit a written response to a required reading each week. For the sake of continuity, it is important that students remain in their section for the duration of the quarter, i.e., transfers to other sections will not be permitted. If a problem arises with your scheduled time please see your GE immediately to resolve the problem. More information about discussion section procedures will be forthcoming from your GE section leader.

Requirements
6. Projects: A series of projects covering issues raised in lecture and discussion sections will be assigned during the term.
   Provisional Class Projects for Fall 2023 are listed below:
   1. Spatial Definition within a Field
   2. Spatial Analysis of a Threshold
   3. Design of the Vertical Surface (Façade)
   4. Transformation Exercise: from 2D to 3D
   More detailed schedule, requirements, and format to be announced. Original drawings and models completed as course requirements are the property of the Department of Architecture and may be retained permanently in the archive for accreditation purposes. Students will be able to access archives for photographs and record taking of their work. Please see your GE for time and place.

7. Course Notebook: In addition to the projects, all students will be required to take notes for this class in a notebook specifically devoted to this purpose.
   As
the topic of the class is visual and spatial, your notes should be weighted towards graphic documentation and investigation. The intention is that you are an active participant during the lectures, analyzing and thinking critically about the information that is being presented. This practice will also give you an opportunity to further develop your drawing and graphic skills. Periodically during lectures, specific analytic problems will be presented and should be documented in the notebooks accordingly. These notebooks will be turned in to your section instructors once during the third/fourth week of the term and then again on the last day of class, Tuesday, November 26. The review of your notebooks will be part of your class participation grade.

Notebooks should be unlined either 8” X 10” or 8.5” X 11”
• Drawing media can be ink (fountain pen) pencil or fine felt marker: NO ballpoint pen media will be accepted.
• Recommended notebook available at the Campus Store:
  Pentalic “Black” wire bound 8” x 10” 80 pages (medium weight)
  Pentalic “Black” hard cover 8.5” x 11” 110 pages (medium weight)

8. Reading Response: Each week, all students will submit a reading response to their GEs that discusses the readings for that week. This response should not be a rote summary of the readings, but instead should engage the issues brought up in the readings and should thoughtfully probe these issues further. GEs will discuss the format of this assignment in section.

9. Exam: There will be one comprehensive exam given during week 8. There will be one practice or ‘mock’ exam during week 7 that will not be collected; it will be a means for you to become familiar with some basic testing methods used for the comprehensive exam. There will be no final exam although there will be a final review of your last project scheduled during exam week. All students must attend the final review for the entire time period scheduled in order to pass this course; there will be no exceptions granted. Incompletes are not allowed except for medical emergency; students should notify instructor as soon as possible should a conflict arise.

Grading/ Evaluations
10. Grading and evaluations will be returned as promptly as possible.

The graded weight for each required portion of the course follows:
Projects 40%
Exam 30%
Notebook/Class Participation 30%

Every effort is made to grade fairly for each individual student and maintain consistency among sections. If you have any question about your grade, please see your section instructor for resolution in a timely manner.

Reading
11. All required reading is on reserve in the College of Design Library. In addition, required and recommended readings are available on Canvas.

There are two required texts:
  Spatial Composition "Reader" as collected PDF essays
  The Mathematics of the Ideal Villa by Colin Rowe

In addition, there are several recommended texts:
  Experiencing Architecture by S. E. Rasmussen
  Precedents in Architecture by R. Clark and M. Pause
Attendance

12. Attendance at both lectures and discussion sections are critically important. Students are permitted one unexcused absence for lectures. There will be no unexcused absences for discussion sections. Absenteeism and/or tardiness and early departures will adversely affect your final grade.

13. Students with Documented Disabilities:
If you have a documented disability, and anticipate needing accommodation in these courses, please meet with your instructor to make arrangements to facilitate your participation in all course activities. You will also need to request that the counselor for students with disabilities at the Accessible Education Center https://aec.uoregon.edu/ sends a letter to your instructor verifying your disability. Please start by contacting Professor Hagenlocher or Professor Tice by email the first week of class.

14. Academic Dishonesty:
Students should be familiar with the university policies regarding academic integrity and consequences of dishonest conduct. While all work should be your own and all sources cited, the results of individual critiques and /or group critiques should be considered a part of your own work. Questions about how specific assignments should be handled with respect to collaborative work, citations, or any other issues can be raised in class.

15. Cell Phones/Computer Use
As a courtesy to fellow students and faculty, NO computer or cell phone use (barring emergencies) will be permitted during the entire lecture and section class period; this includes both voice and text messaging.

Instructors

16. Esther Hagenlocher, Associate Professor
Office: 264 Onyx Bridge, Email: ehg@uoregon.edu
Office Hours: 10:00 –12:00 Tuesday or by appointment

James Tice, Professor of Architecture
Office: 319 Lawrence Hall, Email: jtice@uoregon.edu
Office Hours: 10:00–12:00 Wednesday or by appointment

GE Policy/ Roles:
The GEs will conduct discussion sessions under the direct supervision of the professor. These sessions will be conducted according to protocols that have been approved by the professor and that are common to all sections of the course. The professor will meet with the GEs on a weekly basis to coordinate material and ensure that sections are being run consistently and according to the course specifications. The professor will have ultimate responsibility for determining and entering grades and the GEs will assess work under his direct supervision. All grading will be done according to clear criteria determined by the professor. The professor will regularly monitor the grading activities of GEs with respect to accuracy and fairness. Graduate students have the option of having their work graded only by the professor.
Course Required
17. This is a required course for undergraduates enrolled in 383, and Track 1 Students enrolled in 681. The first of three required Design Arts courses, Spatial Composition will engage fundamental issues of architectural space, its design, meaning and its relevance to architects, interior architects, designers, and society at large. It will run parallel to Architectural Design studios and will set the stage for the other two subject areas of the Design Arts Curriculum, namely, "Architectural Context: Place and Culture" and "Human Context of Design".

Objectives
18. The "Sense of space" is the fundamental framework of architectural experience–inhabitable space is the unique concern of our art. Composition deals both with the (a) TECHNIQUES of organizing the various elements to form space, as well as with the (b) CONTENT of the experience itself.

(a) TECHNIQUE describes the particular mode of spatial perception as well as the principles which the designer uses to organize and relate the elements and spaces.

(b) CONTENT informs us about the nature, quality, and character of the place. Content is the IDEA expressed through the spatial structure. It is the composite of all the various sets and patterns of perceivable relationships.

Spatial Composition, then, is the study of the organizational principles in the patterns and structure of architectural space and as such, is the MEANS to the CONTENT of experience.

The "Shape of Content" theorists constantly debate the interrelations of space/form and meaning. An architectural structure exists within, and is defined by, the existing socio-cultural structure. Thus the study of architecture is inextricably related to the studies of philosophy, sociology, anthropology, economics, science, etc. But in architecture the expression of an idea must be through visual media— it must be formed and interact with space. Visual space/form and the circumstances of formation can be analyzed. Although it may be difficult to analyze the relationship of space/form to meaning (as is the relation of sign to symbol and denotative to connotative meaning in language), it is the presumption of this course that the dichotomy can be individually examined to advantage. Through the process of abstraction of principles in relation to their complex historical and cultural contexts, the revealed differences between "pure principles" and "applied principles" will become the basis of discussion.

Thus, an important intention of the course is to demonstrate and explain principles of design, which are transcendent for many cultures because they derive their meaning from inherent and thus stable, formal characteristics related to basic human biological and psychological traits. Built examples extracted from the reservoir of history will be used to demonstrate these principles.

The course is intended to be complementary to your design studio experience. The course material and the method of its treatment by instructor and student are intended to develop the ability to translate visual information into intellectual concepts and vice versa.
19. Learning outcomes include: applying the elements and principles of design to two- and three-dimensional design solutions; communicating and analyzing theories and concepts of spatial definition and organization.