

University of Oregon. Architecture 407/507. Seminar. Gerry Gast. Fall 2024.

## Seminar: “The Architecture of Education”

*This is a multi discipline Seminar open to all students in the University. There are no prerequisites. The course also serves as the research and preparation seminar for the Winter+Spring 2025 Advanced Architectural Design Studio (Gerry Gast)*

*Credit: 3 units. Additional research credits are possible through independent studies.*

*This is an In-Person class on the Portland campus. Meets Tuesdays 12:30-15:20 PM*

*CRNs. Arch 407: 10330. Arch 507: 10399*



Children at the Lomas del Peyre school in Cartagena, Colombia.  
A new public school in the barrio of Lomas del Peyes. Supported by the Pies Descalzos (Bare Feet) Foundation of Colombia. Photo: Gerry Gast

### Preamble

This seminar is founded on the conviction that *building human capital* through education is the most important mission of cities. Due to poverty, racial segregation, and family conditions, the future of many children is determined before they are born. Education is considered as the foundation of equality, opportunity and social justice.

Excellent public education is central to the health and regeneration of cities. A city performs many functions and offers a wide range of essential services. None are more important than the quality of educational opportunities offered to citizens of all ages.

## **Seminar Format**

The seminar is a mix of instructor lectures, readings, class discussions, guest speakers, student research projects and presentations.

## **Seminar Content**

### ***Education Theories, Learning Cities and Innovative Educational Programs***

The seminar will begin with a focus on how people learn, differences and different needs among learners, educational theories and innovative programs of education.

Links between *education* and *community development* will be examined with focus on model programs around the world.

Historical precedents of educational programs:

The research and writing of prominent educators and movements in history such as Maria Montessori (Montessori Schools), Rudolf Steiner (Waldorf education), John and Evelyn Dewey (The University of Chicago Laboratory School), The Reggio Emilia Approach (the school environment as “The Third Teacher”).

Contemporary innovative educational program precedents:

Academy for Global Citizenship, Chicago

BRICK Avon Academy, Newark

The Finland Education System

The Harlem Children’s Zone, New York City

High Tech High, San Diego

Leadership Academy for Girls and African Leadership Academy, South Africa

Malcolm X Shabazz High School, Newark

Pies Descalzos Foundation, Colombia

### ***Contemporary Architectural Precedents***

Innovative architectural precedents of learning environments throughout the world will be studied and compared through class discussions. Precedent studies will be conducted by teams of students.

We will study learning environments of all types: Schools, higher education, and other places of learning such as centers for early childhood education, environmental education and adult education.

Research products may be individual or team-generated, or a hybrid of individual and team depending upon student choice.



Lomas del Peje School. Cartagena, Columbia.

The school was built by the Fundacion Pies Descalzos, a non-profit organization founded to provide public education for children in Colombia's most marginalized neighborhoods.

The shaded central courtyard offers social space while providing respite from the hot, humid Caribbean climate. Architect: Giancarlo Mazzanti, Bogota.

## “Learning Cities”

A “Learning City” is defined by the United Nations Education and Social Organization (UNESCO) as a community which mobilizes the resources of every sector to promote an inclusive learning culture for all ages throughout life.

The “Learning City” extends its resources to families, schools, workplaces and public life through programs and environments which range in scale from the city as a whole to individual dwellings. The concept of the “Learning City” has potential to inform design at every level of the environment from urban design to architecture – neighborhoods, individual sites and buildings.

UNESCO's Learning Cities Network includes cities from every continent in the world.

## Two Seminar Tracks

**Track A** is for all students taking the Seminar.

**Track B** is for students who are also taking the Advanced Architectural Design Studio in Winter and Spring 2025.

Assignments for the two tracks may be different.

## **Research Credits.**

Students are invited to register for additional research credits under Independent Studies with the instructor.

## **Track A Final Project**

Students select an innovative educational philosophy and program of their choice, then develop a conceptual environmental design based on their chosen educational program.

## **Track B Final Program Document**

The Track B product of the term is an Architectural Program which will serve as the research foundation for each student's selected studio project which starts in Winter term.

The Architectural Program will be documented in an illustrated monograph containing project research, background, goals, context and design program.

**Instructor.** Gerry Gast

Feel free to contact me at any time during the Summer at the address below. I am also available by Zoom conference prior to the start of classes in September.

[ggast@uoregon.edu](mailto:ggast@uoregon.edu) or [geraldgast@gmail.com](mailto:geraldgast@gmail.com)

## **Instructor Bio**

Gerry Gast is an architect, urban designer and member of the University of Oregon Architecture faculty where he teaches Architectural Design Studios and Urban Design. He previously served as Director of the Portland Architecture Program.

Professor Gast taught for several years as Visiting Associate Professor in the interdisciplinary Program on Urban Studies at Stanford University, where he developed the two core courses in urban design.

As a founding principal of Gast Hillmer Urban Design in the San Francisco Bay Area, Professor Gast has directed public urban design and urban architecture projects throughout California and the western states.

Recent research focuses on education and schools. Professor Gast has been active in the Portland Public Schools (PPS). He served as a member of the Master Plan Committee and Design Advisory Group for the new Lincoln High School in Portland's central city, the first new public high school to be built in Portland in over 60 years. The new Lincoln HS opened in Fall 2022.

Professor Gast is currently working with the Pies Descalzos (Bare Feet) Foundation of Colombia on schools in marginalized neighborhoods of the country, including new schools in Cartagena and Barranquilla, Colombia. In another international project, he authored the Master Plan for the new Ukrainian Catholic University (UCU) in Lviv, western Ukraine, and continues to work with the University in its design and development program. Five new buildings have been completed. The war in Ukraine has slowed development although the campus-building and

classes continue. The campus residence halls are serving both students and refugees from eastern Ukraine.

Other professional work includes School Site Redevelopment Studies for the San Francisco Unified School District; “Uptown District”, a mixed-use urban development of 313 dwellings and neighborhood retail center in San Diego’s Hillcrest neighborhood; The San Diego County Administration Center on the downtown waterfront; and the Oregon Science and Technology Park (OSTP) in east Multnomah County (Portland), Oregon.



Students at the Rosa Parks Elementary School, Portland, Oregon. The award-winning school, part of the New Colombia neighborhood redevelopment in North Portland, has a diverse student body comprising children who speak 21 different languages including many new immigrants. The school is co-located with a community recreation center and after school club. Architect: John Weekes, FAIA. DOWA/IBI Group.