PRACTICUM (variable credit (2-4), prereq: ARCH 4/584, pre-auth to register, P/NP)

In this course, graduate and undergraduate students participate in an off-campus learning experience hosted in a professional practice setting. The practicum is an opportunity to explore elements of architectural practice within design firms or organizations that shape the built environment or contribute to environmental design education. A Practicum mentor acts as a teacher for the students, overseeing and guiding their learning by including them in observation of professional activities and/or varied assignments that develop professional skills. Students are not paid for practicum hours. The variable credits fulfill major subject area electives.

Instructor: Amy Miller Dowell AIA, amillerd@uoregon.edu, 503-830-7227 c.

Distance Learning Format
Students submit weekly written reports by email. Up to four meetings with the instructor can take place individually or in a group format in person, by phone or teleconference with times to be arranged. First mandatory meeting of the practicum class will be the first Tuesday of the term at 4pm.

Credit Hours
The appropriate number of credits is determined by each student in consultation with the mentor who is supervising the practicum, and the instructor. Each undergraduate credit hour is equivalent to 30 hours of effort. Each graduate credit hour is equivalent to 40 hours of effort. Approximately ten hours will be applied to written reflection and an interview, the remaining credits will be applied to work at the practicum site.

Practicum Hosts*
The instructor solicits volunteer practicum host firms and organizations that are interested in mentoring a student. Through a preferencing and interview process, students and host mentors may be given the opportunity to initiate a practicum, however a practicum placement is not guaranteed. The student, mentor and instructor must agree upon and sign the Student’s Participatory Learning Agreement (provided the first week of the term) prior to starting practicum hours. The process for receiving a practicum placement takes time and student preparation should begin at least one month before the start of the quarter for practicum placements in Oregon. Out-of-state or international placements may take longer. Graduate students may arrange their own practicum placement. Prior to contacting potential hosts, these students should communicate with the instructor to discuss their practicum goals and coordinate practicum information and arrangements.

ARCH 409: Undergraduate Practicum
Undergraduate practicum work is organized around the day-to-day activities taking place at the practicum site. Students are encouraged to try new skills under the close supervision of their mentors, and learn by observing professionals at work.

ARCH 609: Graduate Practicum
Graduate practicum work is organized around in-depth study of a subject identified by the student that can be pursued in a practice setting. Students can contribute to a project defined by their practicum host or propose their own study topic in consultation with their practicum mentor.

How to Enroll
Interested students should contact the instructor one month prior to the quarter with a resume, sample cover letter and a portfolio or examples of recently completed design work. Prior to the start of the quarter, they should schedule an informational meeting or phone call with the instructor. It is important to pre-register for the course. Those with appropriate background will be authorized to enroll by the instructor and can seek a practicum placement.
PRACTICUM Term and Assignments:
Hours spent in the practicum must occur during the quarter the student is enrolled. The practicum host experience is for the full length of the term through the final review week. One-credit practicums may be approved by the instructor, depending upon agreement by the mentor.

UNDERGRADUATES:
~6 hours/week on-site + 1 hour/week writing+interview = 60 hours total for 2 credits
~9 hours/week on-site + 1 hour/week writing+interview = 90 hours total for 3 credits
~12 hours/week on-site + 1 hour/week writing+interview = 120 hours total for 4 credits

GRADUATES:
~8 hours/week on-site + 1 hour/week writing+interview = 80 hours total for 2 credits
~12 hours/week on-site + 1 hour/week writing+interview = 120 hours total for 3 credits
~16 hours/week on-site + 1 hour/week writing+interview = 160 hours total for 4 credits

No later than one month before the start of the quarter:
Send resume/portfolio to the instructor, begin preparation of draft cover letter and set up meeting with instructor for pre-authorization to enroll. Instructor meetings can be in person or by phone and will determine student eligibility, identify student practicum goals and facilitate host availability.

One week prior to the start of the quarter:
Send final resume/portfolio and draft cover letter to instructor. Some firms and organizations ask the instructor to send student materials prior to interviews. Also, the instructor will contact all prospective practicum mentors to discuss their role and confirm that there is a qualified individual available to fulfill those duties.

First week of the quarter:
Mandatory class meeting – practicum info, host preferencing and interviews. Undergraduates and graduates without practicum hosts participate in a host preferencing process. The instructor will help match students to available opportunities for an interview. If acceptable to both parties, the mentor and student will make a practicum arrangement.

Week 1 at the practicum:
Getting settled (submit agreement for instructor’s signature to start practicum). Meet with your mentor to finalize your practicum agreement. Agreements should specify hours, schedule, number of credits and the types of activities planned for the practicum. Graduate students also submit a statement about topics for their in-depth study work.

Typical practicum week:
Practicum activity log with weekly commentary for the prior week (due Mondays at 5 pm). Prepare an activity log describing duties and hours for each day of practicum attendance. Summarize the week describing your experiences and level of exposure (include lessons learned, observations made or questions that have emerged). – length ½ - 1 page. If appropriate, include one or two images documenting the practicum.

Final week at practicum (during review week):
Mentor completes Employer Evaluation of Student’s Practicum Performance and conducts an exit review with the student. Mentors send the evaluation to instructor.

Final week of term:
Prepare practicum report/appendix (due on the last day of UO scheduled final examinations). The practicum report/appendix is prepared by the student and reviewed by the mentor. Mentors must sign the report/appendix or email the instructor confirming that the report/appendix accurately describes the student’s work. Reports should explain the practicum context, the work undertaken, and what was learned from the experience. Undergraduate reports should be about 2 pages. Graduate reports should be about 4 pages and include a discussion of their in-depth study work.
A separate report cover page should include a brief description of the Practicum and a picture of work and/or the student in the work setting (see example practicum placements below). In an appendix to the report, attach an updated resume showing the practicum experience, a copy of the original practicum agreement, and a compilation of daily logs and weekly commentaries.

**PRACTICUM Grading Criteria:**
Practicum is graded pass/no pass by the Instructor. To receive a pass, students must complete all assigned work by the due dates, submit a weekly practicum log and complete a final report (compiled by the student at the conclusion and signed or emailed by the mentor), and receive a passing grade from the Employer Evaluation of Student’s Practicum Performance.

Weekly logs and final reports must be written clearly and concisely in a style that is appropriate for professional communications. If any scheduled practicum hours are missed due to illness or other unforeseen conflicts, students are required to reschedule this time with their mentor and document any changes to their original agreement in their final reports.

**EXAMPLE PRACTICUM PLACEMENTS:**

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<th><strong>Shanghai Xian Dai</strong> (<a href="http://www.ffadesign.com/">http://www.ffadesign.com/</a>)</th>
<th><img src="image1.jpg" alt="Shanghai Xian Dai" /></th>
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<td>Undergraduate students participated in a six-week summer practicum in Shanghai, China where they experienced the fast pace of Chinese design practice at Xian Dai, a large, comprehensive design firm. During the week they collaborated with young Chinese designers and interns as members of project teams on a variety of project types. Their practicum was supplemented by week-end excursions to architectural and cultural sites. (mentors: Raymond Cheng AIA, and Xian Dai architects)</td>
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<th><strong>Skylab Architecture</strong> (<a href="http://www.skylabdesign.com/">http://www.skylabdesign.com/</a>)</th>
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<td>While developing models for an existing steel framed warehouse building from the 1920’s located in Portland, and illustrations of initial concepts for its proposed use as a 2,000 seat concert hall, a graduate student conducted interviews of architects at Skylab and two other small, “signature,” design firms in Portland to study how design intention is communicated between architecture staff and how design integrity is maintained during the design process. (mentor: Jeff Kovel, AIA)</td>
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<td>The Architecture Foundation of Oregon matches architects and architecture students with 3rd through 5th grade teachers for a 6 week classroom residency that incorporates architecture into an existing curriculum. Practicum students work closely with practitioners who serve as mentors. The program is based on a curriculum guide that uses architectural concepts, including “green” building concepts to teach math, science, social studies, language arts and other disciplines. (mentors: Kim Knowles, AFO members)</td>
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*Many potential practicum hosts, especially governmental agencies or non-governmental organizations, have an application process with specific requirements and due dates. International placements through the University of Oregon IE3 Program require a separate application available from UO campus advising at ie3@uoregon.edu. Students who volunteer for design assistance and education programs, such as Habitat for Humanity or the Architectural Foundation of Oregon’s Architects in Schools Program, can organize a practicum around this work if a qualified professional participant is available to mentor the student.