CORE 391X:
# Portland and the Public Imagination
Spring 2025 • M/W 4:10–5:35 • Shiley 301

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Office Hours
Hiro (DB 112): T 11:15–12:45, W 2:30–4
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*and by appointment*

# Our Vision for this New Course

## Welcome! We're excited you're here.

In this syllabus, you'll find everything you'll need to understand how the course will work and what things will be like day-to-day. But first, we wanted to say a bit more about it.

As a "Big Ideas" Core Exploration Course, Portland and the Public Imagination will bring together a diverse slate of UP faculty and a few community guest instructors to lead students through a semester of thinking about Portland as not just a metropolitan center, city, or place, but also as a series of ideas and stories that we share (or don't, depending on our positional or historical perspectives). We'll consider questions such as:

DID YOU KNOW?
This course is the result of a project for the 24-25 Public Research Fellows program; it was developed alongside our two Teaching Assistants, seniors Sofia Davidson and Miriam Hamtil.

- What are the stereotypes or "typical characterizations" of Portland today, and what have they been in the past?

- What stories of Portland get circulated most frequently, and why? By the same turn, what stories of Portland are less visible or less frequently heard?

- How is Portland like other cities and how is it different? What is Portland's national reputation and how has it shifted over the decades?

- What story or view of Portland do we end up with when we frame the city through a particular disciplinary or community perspective?

# The Engaged Humanities

Another reason we launched this course? To test what we call "engaged humanities" methods—to see how the approaches of the humanities help us engage with the communities in which we live. For our purposes, engaged humanities approaches include:

- Asking open-ending questions about Portland's past, present, and future

- Thinking about questions of representation: that is, becoming aware of how a city is as much a set of stories as a set of physical spaces —and further, thinking about how these representations/stories get created and circulated

- Close reading and interpreting visual and textual representations of the city to read between their lines and see what lies beneath the surface

- Fostering open-ended conversation— discussions that don't have an intended destination or solution

- Promoting dialectical thinking: making it possible to hold two (or more) truths at once

To sum up: our vision for the course is to use engaged humanities practices to connect a series of disciplinary snapshots of Portland in ways that will help you develop nuanced understandings of the city and your relationship to it.

# Our Goals for the Semester

What do you want to get out of your experience in this course this semester? It's an important question, one that we'll discuss during the first weeks and return to at several points across the term. But let's start here:

As an Exploration course, we will pursue the LITERACY & DIALOGUE goal to "Employ critical reasoning to explore ideas and evaluate information" and the DIVERSITY & the COMMON GOOD goal to "Engage community and social issues with a sense of civic responsibility and shared commitment to human dignity, particularly in the context of the contemporary United States."

Beyond those Core goals, here are a few more; by taking this course, we hope that you'll be able to do the following:

Understand and use the concept of "representation" to interrogate the world around us

Recognize the value of and distinguish among a variety of disciplinary and community perspectives

Understand Portland (and any city or community) not just as a singular place, but as a set of stories

Question received narratives of Portland (or any other city or community)

Connect to local communities and create personal investment in the city UP is situated in

# How the Course Will Work

This is a brand new course and it may work a little differently than your other courses; check out the details below and remember that if you're unclear about anything, just ask!

**Mondays versus Wednesdays**

In general, Monday classes will be led by guest instructors, who will offer a specific disciplinary or community perspective on the city. These classes will usually be comprised of a mini-lecture, some kind of activity, and a Q & A. On Wednesdays, we will meet to delve more deeply into what we've learned by partipcipating in engaged humanities activities, mostly in small groups.

**Okay, but what do you mean by engaged humanities activities?**

Glad you asked, because it gives us a chance to talk about the new and exciting ENGAGED HUMANITIES WHEEL! The engaged humanities use practices like close reading, reflective writing, open-ended discussion, and more to help us deepen our learning and create new connections between course topics, disciplinary perspectives, and each other. Each Wednesday, one lucky student will spin the (literal!) wheel to determine what kind of engaged humanities activity we'll do that day.

**A No/Low-Tech Space**

Studies show—and we can all feel—that having laptops, tablets, and phones out during class serves to distract and make us less engaged. We have intentionally designed this course as a low-tech space, where we can single-task and focus on listening, participating, and reflecting. While we may sometimes use technology for specific activities, as a rule we ask that laptops, tablets, and phones be stowed during class time.

**What You'll Need**

All course materials will be available on our Moodle site. You don't need to buy any books, in other words! What you WILL need to purchase is a folder to store class materials in, and a ruled notebook of some kind that will be devoted solely to this course—you'll use it for reflections on the readings and bring it to class each day for quick-writes, note-taking, and other activities.

# The Work of the Course

Here's a basic breakdown of what you'll need to do to succeed in this course:

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| **Attendance & Participation (25%)** | We'll take attendance each day via a quick "check-out" question that you'll respond to by hand and turn in before you leave. And remember, active participation means not just being physically present, but actively engaging with your peers and the material. |
| **Notebooks (25%)** | You'll use your course notebooks to respond to pre- and post-reading prompts, reflect on guest lectures, and complete quick-writes in class; at several points during the term, we'll collect these to check in on your progress. You can find the full assignment prompt on Moodle. |
| **Assignments (10% each x 3)** | We've created a menu of assignments; you will complete three of your choosing over the term (see due dates on schedule, below). Our goal here is to give you both agency and flexibility in how you engage with the course material. |
| **Final Project & Reflection (20%)** | This project will prompt you to synthesize what you've learned across the semester by asking you to create your own Portland story using materials and perspectives from the course. You can find the full assignment prompt on Moodle. |

**What about AI?:** AI and ChatGPT are useful tools in some contexts, but they won't be all that helpful for this course. Our assignments ask you to participate in a learning process using practices like research, questioning, reflection, synthesis, and being creative—so if you turn to AI, you short-circuit the process and your learning in these areas. As a general rule, then, we strongly discourage the use of AI in 391X. If you do use it to complete any assignment, you'll need to cite your use in a bibliography.

# Assignment Menu

Choose 3 of the following assignments to complete across the term. You'll find a more detailed assignment prompt on Moodle.

### Experience an Iconic Portland Place

Visit the Oregon Historical Society, Powell's bookstore, the Lan Su Chinese Garden, or another iconic place (additional options on Moodle) and write about the Portland that you see from that angle.

### Portland Intersections

Choose a place in the city to observe and report on as many different ways of describing it as you can.

### Portland Pairings

Pair a person, place, or object from one of our Monday lectures/readings with a poem, piece of fiction, newspaper article, song lyric, or film/tv clip and write about how the pairing helps understand the city.

### Design a Billboard or Advertisement

Using one of the course's weekly topics, design a billboard, print ad, or short promotional video that would help introduce an audience to the city from a new vantage point.

### Portland Walking Tour

Design a route on Google Maps that draws on at least 3 themes from across the semester and write about your choices.

### Follow a Headline

Dive into research on a current issue in Portland by reading multiple news sources, expand your understanding by also researching the history of the issue, and then write it up.

### Interview a Portlander

Meet up with a local citizen—someone well-known or not. Develop a series of questions to get at how they experience Portland, interview them, and write up what you learned.

# Schedule

Below you'll find the basic schedule of the course, with guest contributors and topics. See our Moodle page for more detail, including readings and pre- and post-class reflection questions.

**Weeks 1 & 2: 1/13, 1/15 and 1/22**
Course Intro and Portland vs. Portlands: 5 Stories of the City: Dr. Hiro & Dr. McDaneld (ENG)

**Week 3: 1/27 and 1/29**
Bike Culture and Advocacy in Portland: Dr. Kristin Sweeney (ENV)

**Week 4: 2/3 and 2/5**
Kitchen Confidential, PDX Style: Danielle Centoni (Marketing and Communications)

**Week 5: 2/10 and 2/12 (Assignment #1 Due by F 2/14)**
Portland's Water Infrastructure: From Rain to River to Tap: Dr. Jordy Wolfand (EGR)

**Week 6: 2/17 and 2/19**
History: What We Remember, What We Ignore: Taylor Stewart (OR Remembrance Project)

**Week 7: 2/24 and 2/26**
At the Corner of NW 6th and W Burnside: Where Hope & Gratitude Intersect: Fr. Pat Hannon (ENG)
Beyond Tents & Tarps: Humanizing PDX's Houseless Community: Scott Kerman (Blanchet House)

SPRING BREAK: 3/3 and 3/5

**Week 8: 3/10 and 3/12 (Assignment #2 Due by F 3/14)**
Burnside Bridge Replacement Project: Dr. Matthew Barner (EGR)

**Week 9: 3/17 and 3/19**
Portland Music Scene: An Evolving Space: José Velazco (Digital Lab)

**Week 10: 3/24 and 3/26**
Handmade Portland: Cultivating Community through Textiles: Prof. Tim Wagoner (PFA)

**Week 11: 3/31 and 4/2 (Assignment #3 Due by F 4/4)**
Invisible Portland: Dr. Kali Abel (ENV)

**Week 12: 4/7 and 4/9**
Creating Better Neighbors: Formerly Incarcerated: Sr. Maura Behrenfield (THE)

**Week 13: 4/14 and 4/16**
Wheat, Wine, and "Is that Gum!?" Looking at Global Portland: Dr. Blair Woodard (HST)

**Week 14: 4/21 and 4/23 (Final Project Due W 4/23)**
Course synthesis & wrap-up: Dr. Hiro and Dr. McDaneld (ENG)

**UNIVERSITY POLICIES AND RESOURCES**

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**University of Portland's Code of Academic Integrity:** The University of Portland is a diverse academic community of learners and scholars who are dedicated to freely sharing ideas and engaging in respectful discussion of those ideas to discover truth. Such pursuits require each person, whether student or faculty, to present truthfully our own ideas and give credit to others for the ideas that they generate**.** Thus, cheating on exams, copying another student's assignment, including homework, or using the work of others without proper citation are some examples of violating academic integrity.

Especially for written and oral assignments, students have an ethical responsibility to properly cite the authors of any books, articles, or other sources that they use. Students should expect to submit assignments to Turnitin, a database that ensures assignments are original work of the student submitting. Each discipline has guidelines for how to give appropriate credit, and instructors will communicate the specific guidelines for their discipline. The Clark Library also maintains a webpage that provides citation guidelines at https://libguides.up.edu/cite.

The misuse of AI to shortcut course learning outcomes will be treated as a violation of academic integrity comparable to plagiarism or cheating. Faculty are responsible for including a written "Course AI Policy" in their syllabi that clearly states what they consider appropriate and inappropriate uses of AI in the context of their courses. Students are responsible for using AI in ways that do not detract from the established learning outcomes of the course. All members of the scholarly community are responsible for demonstrating sound judgment in discerning when and how to utilize AI in their work, upholding standards of citation, originality, and integrity.

**Assessment Disclosure Statement:** Student work products for this course may be used by the University for educational quality assurance purposes. For reasons of confidentiality, such examples will not include student names.

**Accessibility:** The University of Portland strives to make its courses and services fully accessible to all students. Students are encouraged to discuss with their instructors what might be most helpful in enabling them to meet the learning goals of the course. Students who experience a disability are encouraged to use the services of the Office for Accessible Education Services (AES), located in the Shepard Academic Resource Center (503-943-8985). **If you have an AES Accommodation Plan**, you should meet with your instructor to discuss how to implement your plan in this class. Requests for alternate location for exams and/or extended exam time should, where possible, be made two weeks in advance of an exam, and must be made at least one week in advance of an exam. Also, if applicable, you should meet with your instructor to discuss emergency medical information or how best to ensure your safe evacuation from the building in case of fire or other emergency. All information that students provide regarding disability or accommodation is confidential. All students are responsible for completing the required coursework and are held to the same evaluation standards specified in the course syllabus.

**Mental Health:** Anyone can experience problems with their mental health that interfere with academic experiences and negatively impact daily life. If you or someone you know experiences mental health challenges at UP, please contact the University of Portland Counseling Center (https://www.up.edu/counseling/)  in the upper level of Orrico Hall (down the hill from Franz Hall and near Mehling Hall) at 503-943-7134 or hcc@up.edu. Their services are free and confidential. In addition, mental health consultation and support is available through the Pilot Helpline by calling 503-

943-7134 and pressing 3. The University of Portland Campus Safety Department (503-943-4444) also has personnel trained to respond sensitively to mental health emergencies at all hours. Remember that getting help is a smart and courageous thing to do – for yourself, for those you care about, and for those who care about you. For more information on health and wellness resources at UP go to www.linktr.ee/wellnessUP.

**Non-Violence:** The University of Portland is committed to fostering a safe and respectful community free from all forms of violence. Violence of any kind, and in particular acts of power-based personal violence, are inconsistent with our mission. Together, all UP community members must take a stand against violence. Learn more about what interpersonal violence looks like, campus and community resources, UP's prevention strategy, and what we as individuals can do to assist on the Green Dot website, www.up.edu/greendot. Further information and reporting options may be found on the Title IX website, www.up.edu/titleix.

**Ethics of Information:** The University of Portland is a community dedicated to the investigation and discovery of processes for thinking ethically and encouraging the development of ethical reasoning in the formation of the whole person. Using information ethically, as an element in open and honest scholarly endeavors, involves moral reasoning to determine the right way to access, create, distribute, and employ information, including: considerations of intellectual property rights, fair use, information bias, censorship, and privacy. More information can be found in the Clark Library's guide to the Ethical Use of Information at libguides.up.edu/ethicaluse.

**The Learning Commons:** Students can get academic assistance through Learning Commons tutoring services and workshops. The Co-Pilot peer tutoring program provides students with opportunities to work with other students to get help in writing, math, group projects, and other courses. Schedule an appointment to meet with a Co-Pilot (tutor) by visiting the Learning Commons website (www.up.edu/learningcommons). Students can also meet with a Co-Pilot during drop-in hours. Check the Learning Commons website or drop by the Learning Commons in BC 163 to learn more about their services. Find a tutor at the Learning Commons to get support on your academic journey.