PURPOSE AND PROCEDURE
Architectural decision making occurs at every scale of design, and at every phase of the building process. At the intimate scale of interior space and detail, critical decisions must be made which ultimately determine the overall quality of the architectural statement, as well as the quality of the user environment. In an ideal situation, the designer has control of the relationship between the whole (concept), and the part (conceptual detail), in order to maintain the conceptual continuity between the parts and the whole.

The first stage of our workshop focuses on the design of the intimate environment. These projects allow most students their first opportunity to fully explore the relationship between the part and the whole; between conceptual ideas and their transformation into space, light, color, materials, and details.

In order to achieve this emphasis on detail, the usual architectural design process is reversed. Instead of approaching the subject from the outside to inside, or from the whole to the part, the student designs at the intimate scale and then moves into the larger scale, or from the part to the whole.

“I tried to make my clients see that furniture and furnishings that were not built in as integral features of the building should be designed as attributes of whatever furniture was built in and should be seen as a minor part of the building itself even if detached or kept aside to be employed only on occasion.”

Frank Lloyd Wright

Description:
Architects have long been involved in the craft of fine furniture making. Designers including Carlo Mollino, Jean Prouvé, Charlotte Perriand, and George Nakashima have explored the relationship between form and craft in the design of furniture. The move towards accessibility in architecture and design has largely focused on functionalist notions of performance. This seminar couples accessible design with an emphasis on craft in the production of a piece of furniture. Students will be tasked with the design and construction of a piece of furniture of their choosing. The design of the piece, the craft with which it is constructed, and its usability by its intended audience will be equally weighted. Working in this manner, students will be going against the grain of contemporary consumer culture; they will be tasked with the development and construction of objects that should endure beyond their own lifetimes.

Each furniture project will allow students to examine a series of issues:
- The assembly of multiple elements into a cohesive composition
- An understanding of material properties, strengths, and character
- Questions of function and ergonomics, how each selected projected functions for its intended user

Costs
While there will be no required texts, students may wish to purchase a few select hand tools for their own use. Many of these tools are also available for student use in the School of Architecture Wood Shop. Students will also need to purchase materials for their full scale prototypes and for their final projects. Students should anticipate spending up to $500 on materials, though many will spend less. Students wishing to work in metal in addition to wood will need to pay the facility fee at Art + Design, which is $95.