Course Syllabus – BCT 150 – Fall, 2012

The Built Environment

Instructor: David T. Damery
Office Hours: Tuesdays 10:45-11:30am, Holdsworth 118, Tel. 413-545-1770
E-mail: ddamery@eco.umass.edu

Teaching Assistant: Emma Morzuch
E-mail: emorzuch@eco.umass.edu
Office Hours:

TEXT & MATERIALS:

Online Readings

COURSE DESCRIPTION:
We will explore the issues of sustainability from the perspective of the built environment, our history of construction and expansion, and buildings and how they interact with the natural environment. Students will be exposed to issues of human impacts on natural systems through the built environment and the variety of disciplines that are working to create a more sustainable future.

PREREQUISITES: None, CREDITS: 4, SCHEDULE NO: 73619, GENED: I - Interdisciplinary

MEETS: Mon, Wed 4:40-5:55PM, Thompson Hall, Rm. 102

COURSE OBJECTIVES:
1. To gain an overall understanding of the definition of sustainability in the context of the built environment.
2. To become aware of the ecological, ethical and economic issues that arise from the interaction of the built and natural environments.
3. To become aware of the roles that planning, design, construction and operation of the built environment can have in achieving sustainability goals. To be exposed to the variety of disciplines and major degree study programs that help shape these roles.
4. To enhance decision-making and problem solving skills. Individual and group skills are honed through case studies, in-class discussion and exercises, written assignments and regular quizzes.

GENERAL EDUCATION (I – Interdisciplinary)
This course promotes pluralistic perspective-taking and acknowledging the consequence’s of one’s choices to promote an understanding of sustainability in the built environment. Students explore different perspectives along the three diverse dimensions of sustainability, namely: Ecological, economic and social/cultural/ethical. These multiple perspectives are crucial for understanding issues (and successfully accomplishing sustainability objectives) at the interface of the built and natural environments. Through readings, and assignments students are given an historical perspective on the development of the built environment, the roles that various disciplines play in the design, construction and operation of buildings and infrastructure, and how the current and past states of the built environment are un-sustainable. Students are challenged in-class, through the Socratic method, in written homework and discussion assignments, and through the video term project to define, challenge, and defend their beliefs and viewpoints on the topics discussed.

SPECIAL NEEDS:
All reasonable efforts will be made to meet the individual needs of the student. If you have a learning disability or need special accommodation please contact the instructor to discuss your needs. All discussions will be strictly confidential.

COURSE WORK AND EXPECTATIONS:
Readings, homeworks, in-class work, discussions, written assignments and exams will be given during the scheduled time periods. Keeping up with the complete range of class work and handing in material on time is extremely important in providing the student with the best chances for meeting the course objectives. No make-up quizzes or assignments will be scheduled.

In-Class Assignments (approximately 10) will be scheduled throughout the semester. On those days when in-class assignments are presented students will be asked to pair-up and discuss or solve the topic or problem presented.
Each Learning Module (a total of 13, approximately 1 per week) will consist of some combination of the following:

- A Reading (either from the text or an online link or both)
- A Video Lecture
- An additional Assignment Reading
- A written Assignment – Usually 250 words, unless otherwise noted.
- A Discussion – Each student will be asked to contribute their own thoughts and ideas regarding the discussion topic 50-100 words. In addition, each student is required to write an additional “meaningful response” or “critique” of another student’s submission (25-50 words)

Exams are non-cumulative will be scheduled to cover the material in the preceding Learning Modules. Exams will be administered through MOODLE and will only be accessible for a limited time-window to be announced on the Class Schedule.

Video term project. Students will be assigned to groups of 4 and will be required to work together to produce a 3 minute video on a specific topic (of your choice) regarding sustainability in the built environment. This project provides a hands-on opportunity for students to apply their critical thinking, written and oral communication skills to an aspect of the technical content of the course. They will be asked to select an audience and develop a “Story” to persuade them to act to foster a more sustainable built environment. They will use one (or more) of the core perspectives: ecological, economic and social/cultural in their video production. Elements of the project include: Topic of video, Outline, Storyboard, Technical requirements and online tutorial material, Live tutorial sessions, Draft presentation, Final presentation.

GRADING AND EVALUATION:
Students are expected to have read the text and online material prior to attempting other learning module components. The learning modules are designed to reinforce and expand on the material contained in the assigned, on-line readings. Students are required to participate in class discussions.

The concepts and techniques being studied will be presented in online readings, video, PPT lectures, exercises, and discussions. Real world problems and examples will frequently be used to tie theory with practical issues in the design and construction industries.

Exams and Grades: Your grade will be based on your successful completion of written homeworks, in-class assignments), online discussion submissions and online exams.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Component</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Exams (MOODLE) (3@ 15%)</td>
<td>45%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Written Homework Assignments (MOODLE)</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In-Class Assignments</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Online Discussions (MOODLE)</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Video Term Project</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade Range</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>GE 93</td>
<td>C</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A-</td>
<td>90 - 92+</td>
<td>C-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B+</td>
<td>87 - 89+</td>
<td>D+</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>83 - 86+</td>
<td>D</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B-</td>
<td>80 - 82+</td>
<td>F</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C+</td>
<td>77 - 79+</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

ACADEMIC HONESTY:

The University requires honesty of all its members in their academic work. Honesty is necessary to the learning process, and is integral to the atmosphere of genuine inquiry and intellectual curiosity which the University seeks to foster. Academic dishonesty not only contradicts the expectations of a community whose central purpose is the pursuit of intellectual endeavor, it violates University rules and regulations, a fact of which all students must be aware. For a more complete definition visit the University Academic Honesty Policy.