

ARCH 443 Issues in Contemporary Professional Practice

4 Units, Required Lecture/Discussion Course, Winter Quarters

Catalog Prerequisite: ARCH 342, ARCH 353.

Department Prerequisite: 4th or 5th year standing, or consent of department head.

COURSE DESCRIPTION:

An exploration of topics related to the practice of architecture, including financial considerations, client obligations, project and practice management, leadership, legal responsibilities, ethics and professional judgment, and community and social responsibility, as well as the process and requirements for internship and licensure.

2 lectures, 2 discussions.

OBJECTIVES:

Learning objectives are the things you are expected to have learned after taking a particular course. They align with criteria established by the National Architectural Accreditation Board (NAAB), the organization that promotes and maintains standards of educational excellence in architecture schools across the country, including Cal Poly.

There are two types of NAAB criteria: **understanding**, which is being able to summarize information without necessarily knowing all of its particular implications (you know about something), and **ability**, which is the skill of relating specific information to accomplishing tasks (you know how to do something). In offering professional degrees in architecture, all American universities must adhere to the organization's standards.

NAAB sets out specific learning objectives in 34 different areas. In turn, the faculty of the Cal Poly's Architecture Department attaches certain of them to every course. The intention is that the program has a logical and predictable progression, with each course, quarter, and year building on the ones before it. As human beings are involved, the system is not perfect. In any event, below, in condensed form, are the NAAB objectives for this course:

Financial Considerations

- Understanding the fundamentals of building costs.

Client Role in Architecture

- Understanding the architect's responsibility to elicit, understand, and reconcile the needs of the client, owner, user groups, and the public and community concerns.

Project Management

- Understanding the methods of project management.

Practice Management

- Understanding the basic principles of architectural practice management.

Leadership

- Understanding the techniques and skills architects use to work collaboratively in the building design and construction process;
- Understanding the techniques and skills architects use to work collaboratively on environmental, social, and aesthetic issues in their communities.

Legal Responsibilities

- Understanding the architect's legal responsibility to the public and the client.

Ethics and Professional Judgment

- Understanding the ethical issues involved in the formation of professional judgment.

Community and Social Responsibility

- Understanding the architect's responsibility to work in the public interest, to respect historic resources, and to improve the quality of life for local and global neighbors.

COURSE ORGANIZATION and CONTENTS:

The course consists of two (two-hour) lectures per week. The term "lectures" is a misnomer. In fact, we will have very few traditional lectures, that is, with speakers addressing you, a passive audience: two hours would indeed be too long for that anyway.

Instead, we're going to experiment with something called "active learning." We'll use each time period as a kind of workshop with discussions, group activities, and short, interactive presentations – many of them by guest speakers (see below). The nature of the workshops will vary over the course of the quarter, depending on the topic and the type of activity best suited to convey the material.

Your role in this mode of learning is critical and will be different from most of the other classes you have taken. You are expected to participate – actively, as the name suggests – in the workshops, "engaging" the material by solving problems, questioning each other – rather than us, necessarily – about the tasks at hand.

What would usually pass for lecture content will be posted online. Some of this material is quite dense, dealing with legal, procedural, and financial information, though some of it is more accessible – and actually, rather interesting. In any event, its technical "density" is precisely the reason for attempting a different approach to how you learn it – for this is not material that is easily conveyed in an oral presentation. Therefore, you are expected to prepare for each workshop by doing the readings beforehand; indeed, the success of the workshops, particularly your ability to participate in them as individuals and as groups, depends on it. Pop quizzes at the beginning of several of the classes should help motivate your preparation.

The course is organized into four main sections as described below. Due to the necessity of scheduling the guest speakers at specific times, this organization must be considered an ideal condition.

- **The Architect as Professional:** This set of workshops discusses the idea of a professional identity as well as the pathways to obtaining licensure as an architect, and the responsibilities that come with it.
- **The Architect in the Office:** This set of workshops presents information on the types of architectural firms and their internal structures: how they're set up, how they operate as business enterprises, how they're staffed, and how they market themselves.
- **The Architect and the Project:** This set of workshops will focus on roles and responsibilities of the architect as these relate to a specific project. Topics include contracts, fees, project delivery methods and phasing, construction documents, construction contract documents, and construction administration.
- **The Architect in the World.** This set of workshops deals with the architect's relation to the wider world, particularly in relation to social and ethical aspects of the profession.

In addition to the above, we will also have guest speakers from both inside and outside the College of Architecture and Environmental Design to help present the material and assist with the workshop activities. Several of these speakers are professionals in practice, while others are experts in their particular fields and teach or work here at Cal Poly: from the Construction Management Department, the City and Regional Planning Department, and Disabled Student Services.

These speakers will bring unique perspectives and anecdotes direct from the field or their research; part of our intent is that the information you receive is as current as it can be.

REQUIREMENTS & INSTRUCTIONS:

I. EVALUATION

Your overall grade in the course will be based on the quality of your performance in the workshops activities, pop- quizzes, a final presentation, and your grades on two midterms and one final exam, as follows:

- Pop-quizzes (10% – based on at least five quizzes at 10 pts. each = 50 pts.)
- Workshop activities, including attendance and participation (40% – 200 pts.)
- Final presentation (10% – 50 pts.)
- First midterm exam (10% – 50 pts.)
- Second midterm exam (10% – 50 pts.)
- Cumulative final exam (20% – 100 pts.)

The exams will cover material from both readings and in-class presentations. We will use a straight scale to determine your grade (A=100-90, B=80-89, C=70-79, D=60-69, F=50-59). Make-up exams will be given only when the absence is due to an illness or family emergency, and accompanied by a valid written excuse. The final exam will only be given during the university specified day and time, unless you make special arrangements with us; the reason better be good. If you have a learning disability that requires extra consideration or time for the exam, or any other aspect of the assignments, please let us know.

The final presentation, on the last day of class, is a refined graphical synoptic exhibit of the several workshop activities you will have prepared over the course of the quarter.

II. LETTER GRADES DEFINED

The following describe our understanding of grading nomenclature.

- A Superior work, at the top of the class; exceeding expectations for assignments; no missing or late work; infrequent absences, frequent participant.
- B Good work, above or at class average; meets all expectations of the assignments; no missing or late work; infrequent absences; occasional participant.
- C Acceptable work, below class average; meets most expectations of the assignments; some missing/late work; frequent absences; rare participant.
- D Poor work, but sufficient to pass; barely meets basic expectations of the assignments; much missing or late work; frequent no-show; rare participant.
- F Very poor work, insufficient to pass the course; fails to meet basic expectations of the assignments; missing work; frequent no-show; rare participant.