# bcn 1010: “History of Construction”

**In-class**

#### **3 credit hours**

#### **SPRING 2025**

#### **section: 7852**

**COURSE NUMBER: 10867**

**MEETING TIMES: T: 4,5; R: 4**

Instructor: Dr. R.E. Minchin Jr., PE, ALM

Rinker Hall, 320   
e-mail: minch@ufl.edu   
Office phone: 352-273-1153

Home phone: 386-418-3789

Cell phone (**Text only**): 352-222-4826

Office Hours: T: 12:30-1:30pm; R: 11:30am – 1:30pm or by appt.

teaching assistant: *Morgan Young*

Rinker Hall, 323   
e-mail: young.morgan@ufl.edu  
Office phone: TBD

Cell phone: 904-631-7444

office hours: T: 12:30-3:30pm**,** or by appt.

Course Website: http://elearning.ufl.edu

Course Communications: Office Hours will be held simultaneously in-person, and virtually. Students may ask general questions through Office Hours, the discussion board, or by contacting the TA. The TA may be contacted via text, e-mail, or phone call. If the TA cannot answer the question to the student’s satisfaction, students may e-mail their questions directly to Dr. Minchin, or have the TA relay the questions. Of course students are encouraged to see Dr. Minchin and/or the TA in their offices or online during their office hours, or by appointment.

Required Textbooks:

1. Building: 3,000 Years of Design, Engineering, and Construction. Bill Addis. ISBN-10: 9780714869391, Phaidon press.
2. Charging Hell to Gain Paradise. Book 3 & Book 4. Edward Minchin, unpublished.

The Addis book is out of print, but available online, through traditional websites that sell used books. A pdf of the book is available through the UF bookstore. The Minchin “book” is actually two sections (labelled “Books”) from a book Dr. Minchin is writing, and will be posted on the class website (no cost).

Materials and Supplies Fees: None

Course Description: The first part of the course covers the development of the art and science of building. The second part depicts the vision, resolve and sacrifice necessary, and the danger and trials experienced in building some of the great structures of history. The “giants” of each era are identified, and emphasized. What these people did, and what made them great will be identified, and analyzed. Part 1 traces Western building technology from prehistoric man to the early 19th century. Technical progress, architectural types, and construction methods will be discussed in varying detail. Part 2 begins in the late 19th century, and discusses the journey of discovery through the Everglades that led to arguably the most amazing, ambitious, and impressive construction project ever built on U.S. soil – even greater even than Hoover Dam and the Transcontinental Railroad, this fantastic project is often overlooked by historians. Construction of the project, and the often-overwhelming obstacles faced by the construction team are also discussed.

Prerequisite courses, Knowledge and Skills: None

Course Goals and/or Objectives (Required): By the end of this course, students will. . .

* Evaluate the key characteristics of major historic buildings and construction Projects throughout the world.
* Evaluate the evolution of materials and technology in a context of history and resilience principles.
* Evaluate the evolution of architecture, engineering, and style in the context of the built environment.
* Seek to understand how movements in political, financial, and military power impacted the evolution of construction engineering and management.
* Analyze how advances in global technology influenced advances in how we conduct our business in the built environment—in technical, and non-technical respects.
* Identify and analyze the great people who pushed construction engineering, architecture, and management forward—their genius, the obstacles they had to overcome, and what they accomplished.

Instructional Methods: The course material will be presented using a number of methods. These will include some combination of the following: assigned readings; traditional lectures from the instructor (mostly live, but some via video), guest lecturers; posted or otherwise identified videos; movies; and voiced-over PowerPoints. Students will read each chapter or assigned text, and take quizzes, and exams based on the reading, lectures, and other assigned activities. Students will also be expected to participate in weekly discussion forums. All the quizzes and exams will be held in the classroom during class time, if possible. Discussions will be held online, through the Canvas Course website via e-learning. Details of the three types of deliverables required to complete this course can be found below in the “BREAKDOWN OF GRADE COMPONENTS” section.

## Course Policies:

Attendance Policy:  *Requirements for class attendance and make-up exams, assignments, and other work in this course are consistent with university policies that can be found at:* <https://catalog.ufl.edu/ugrad/current/regulations/info/attendance.aspx>

Quiz/Exam DAtes/Policies: *All exams and quizzes will be administered during class time, in the class room. Quizzes and exams will all be open book / open note. If a student desires to use their textbook on an exam, they have two choices: buy a used textbook online, or print the appropriate pages of their pdf copy of the textbook. Sometimes Dr. Minchin provides the PowerPoint presentations he uses (NOT ALWAYS). If a student wants to use these slides, they must print them out, as no electronic sources of information will be allowed by.those proctoring the quizzes / exams.*

Make-up Policy: Students are responsible for staying on top of their coursework throughout the semester. Be aware of the dates of the exams as you WILL NOT be allowed to make up exams if you miss them, except as outlined in the UF Catalog. Students with excused absences will be afforded the opportunity to make-up missed work/assessments, per the Catalog. To avoid problems, please inform the TA, or the Instructor, of a need to reschedule a quiz, or and exam, **before** the scheduled time of the exam or quiz. See [https://catalog.ufl.edu/UGRD/academic-regulations/attendance-policies/](https://catalog.ufl.edu/UGRD/academic-regulations/attendance-policies/%20) .

Assignment Policy: Discussion boards will be used to promote student interaction on topics every week in the course. To promote better interaction, it is recommended that your initial post for each discussion board be made by Thursday at the middle of the week the discussion is assigned. The comments on your classmate posts for each discussion board are due by 11:59 pm on Sunday at the end of that week.

Course Technology: *This course utilizes Canvas as a repository for all course material including videos, discussion topics and format, some lecture notes, Dr. Minchin’s book, and grade storage. It is the student’s responsibility to take advantage of the university resources to learn how to utilize Canvas.* ***NOTE: THE CANVAS GRADE CALCULATION FUNCTION WILL NOT BE ACTIVATED FOR THIS CLASS. Students should check to ensure that the correct grades for exams, quizzes, and assignments are reflected on their Canvas page. However, if Canvas tells you that you currently have a “C” in this course, you just as well may have an “A”, or an “E”. What Canvas says in this regard means nothing. Please do not contact the TA or the Instructor in a panic over what Canvas states as your grade.***

* <http://helpdesk.ufl.edu>
* (352) 392-HELP - select option 2

Online course evaluation:

Students are expected to provide professional and respectful feedback on the quality of this course by completing course evaluations online via GatorEvals. Guidance on how to give feedback in a professional and respectful manner is available at https://gatorevals.aa.ufl.edu/students/. Students will be notified when the evaluation period opens, and can complete evaluations through the email they receive from GatorEvals, in their Canvas course menu under GatorEvals. Summaries of course evaluation results are available to students at https://gatorevals.aa.ufl.edu/public-results/.

## UF and General Education Policies:

writing requirements:

There is no writing requirement in this course.

verbatim objectives – Social & Behavioral sciences

Social and behavioral science courses provide instruction in the history, key themes, principles, terminology, and underlying theory or methodologies used in the social and behavioral sciences. Students will learn to identify, describe and explain social institutions, structures or processes. These courses emphasize the effective application of accepted problem-solving techniques. Students will apply formal and informal qualitative or quantitative analysis to examine the processes and means by which individuals make personal and group decisions, as well as the evaluation of opinions, outcomes or human behavior. Students are expected to assess and analyze ethical perspectives in individual and societal decisions.

University Policy on Accommodating Students with Disabilities:

“Students with disabilities requesting accommodations should first register with the Disability Resource Center (352-392-8565, [www.dso.ufl.edu/drc](http://www.dso.ufl.edu/drc) ) by providing appropriate documentation. Once registered, students will receive an accommodation letter which must be presented to the instructor when requesting accommodation. Students with disabilities should follow this procedure as early as possible in the semester.”

University Policy on Academic Conduct: UF students are bound by The Honor Pledge which states, “We, the members of the University of Florida community, pledge to hold ourselves and our peers to the highest standards of honesty and integrity by abiding by the Honor Code. On all work submitted for credit by students at the University of Florida, the following pledge is either required or implied: "On my honor, I have neither given nor received unauthorized aid in doing this assignment." The Honor Code ([Student Honor Code and Student Conduct Code | SCCR (ufl.edu)](https://sccr.dso.ufl.edu/policies/student-honor-code-student-conduct-code/)) specifies a number of behaviors that are in violation of this code and the possible sanctions. Furthermore, you are obligated to report any condition that facilitates academic misconduct to appropriate personnel. If you have any questions or concerns, please consult with the instructor or TAs in this class.

Class Demeanor or Netiquette: All members of the class are expected to follow rules of common courtesy in all email messages, threaded discussions and chats. Although this is an online course, all students are expected to act as if it were a traditional course. Course communication should be civilized and respectful to everyone and relevant to the course content, material, and E-Learning system. The means of communication provided to you through E-Learning (e-mail, discussion posts, course questions, and chats) are at your full disposal to use in a respectful manner. Abuse of this system and its tools through disruptive conduct, harassment, or overall disruption of course activity will not be tolerated. Conduct that is deemed to be in violation with University rules and regulations or the Code of Student Conduct will result in a report to the Director of Student Conduct and Conflict Resolution for a conduct code infraction.

## Getting Help:

For issues with technical difficulties for Canvas, please contact the UF Help Desk at:

* http://helpdesk.ufl.edu
* (352) 392-HELP (4357)
* Walk-in: HUB 132

Any requests for make-ups due to technical issues **MUST** be accompanied by the ticket number received from the Help Desk when the problem was reported to them. The ticket number will document the time and date of the problem. You **MUST** e-mail your instructor within 24 hours of the technical difficulty if you wish to request a make-up.

Other resources are available at <http://www.distance.ufl.edu/getting-help> for:

* Counseling and Wellness resources
* Disability resources
* Resources for handling student concerns and complaints
* Library Help Desk support

Should you have any complaints with your experience in this course please visit <http://www.distance.ufl.edu/student-complaints> to submit a complaint.

### Grading Policies:

### Grading logistics

Grades for this course will be determined by a combination of quizzes, assignments, exams, and class participation. **No late quizzes, exams, or assignments will be accepted.** There will be no make-up work provided, unless there is a documented medical emergency, or other excused absence, per the UF Catalog. Please keep in contact with the Course Instructor/TA through e-mail—either the traditional e-mail, or the e-Learning email system—about anticipated conflicts with submitting work in a timely manner. **Flexibility is much more likely prior to submission deadlines than after the fact.**

Information on current UF grading policies for assigning grade points. This may be achieved by including a link to the web page:

[https://catalog.ufl.edu/UGRD/academic-regulations/grades-grading-policies/](https://catalog.ufl.edu/UGRD/academic-regulations/grades-grading-policies/%20) .

### Grade Release

Your score for quizzes and exams will be available immediately following your submission; however, you will not see the questions and/or answers. Your exam scores will be released after the timed period is over. Again, only your score will be released. All timed assessments will released to ‘Gradebook’ after the availability period has ended.

### Information on current UF grading policies for assigning grade points:

* <https://catalog.ufl.edu/ugrad/current/regulations/info/grades.aspx>

### breakdown of grade components

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Assignment | Points or percentage |
| Quizzes | 9 – Total 25% |
| Exams | 4 - Total 55% |
| Discussions | 15 – Total 20% |
| Total | 100% |

**Exams:**

Four (4) exams will be administered over the course of the term. The final exam score will be calculated by determining the average of the four exam scores earned during the term. The hope is that all exams will be administered in the classroom during regularly scheduled class time, though a night exam, or an online exam may be possible. In the case of an online exam, Honorlock will be in place. Exams are open-book, open-note, but no electronic sources of information will be available to the student during the exam. If one wants to refer to the textbook during the exam, the student should either purchase the textbook online, or print out a hardcopy of the e-textbook. Same for any PowerPoint file that might be available (don’t count on PowerPoint availability).

**Quizzes:**

Ten (10) quizzes are planned over the course of the term. Given extenuating circumstances, it may be more or fewer. The final quiz score will be calculated by dividing the total number of correct answers submitted during the term by the total number of quiz questions during the term. In the unlikely event that an online quiz is offered, Honorlock will be in place. Quizzes are open-book, open-note, but no electronic sources of information will be available to the student during the quiz. If one wants to refer to the textbook during the quiz, the student should either purchase the textbook online, or print out a hardcopy of the e-textbook. Same for any PowerPoint file that might be available (don’t count on PowerPoint availability.

**Weekly Discussion Board:**

This works much like a Chat Room. Each week the students will be expected to comment on at least two posts from the previous week. The initial post of the week, from the TA, or the Instructor, will serve as the starting point, and each student should comment on that. Once a student has posted a response, students may write their own response to any student response. Comments should be meaningful and significant to hold a conversation. Comments like “good job” “I agree with Suzy”, and “great work” will not be accepted on their own—if you post such a response, substantive text must follow. Students may post as many comments as they like. More is encouraged.

Grading Scale: Based on percentage of total points

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Letter Grade | A | A- | B+ | B | B- | C+ | C | C- | D+ | D | D- | E |
| Numeric Grade | 93-  100 | 90-  92.99 | 87-  89.99 | 83-  86.99 | 80-  82.99 | 77-  79.99 | 73-  76.99 | 70-  72.99 | 67-  69.99 | 63-  66.99 | 60-  62.99 | 0-  59.9 |
| Quality Points | 4.0 | 3.67 | 3.33 | 3.0 | 2.67 | 2.33 | 2.0 | 1.67 | 1.33 | 1.0 | 0.67 | 0.0 |

For more information, see: <http://www.isis.ufl.edu/minusgrades.html>]

A minimum grade of C is required for general education credit.

### tentative Course Schedule:

Critical Dates: Available in course Schedule, or posted announcement on course website.

A Weekly Schedule of Topics and ASsignments:

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | **Date** | **Assignments** | **Topic** |
| **Week 1** | **14 January**  **16 January** | **Assign: Module 1**  **Complete Module 1** | **Introduction** |
| **Week 2** | **21 January**  **23 January** | **Assign: Module 2**    **Complete Module 2** | **Ch. 1 - Building and Engineering in Ancient Times: 1000 B.C. – A.D. 500** |
| **Week 3** | **28 January**  **30 January** | **Calibration Day**  **Assign: Module 3**  **Exam 1 (Modules 1 & 2)** | **Ch. 2 - The Medieval Era: 500 – 1400** |
| **Week 4** | **04 February**  **06 February** | **Continue Module 3**  **Complete Module 3** |  |
| **Week 5** | **11 February**  **13 February** | **Career Fair – No class meeting**  **Assign Module 4** | **Ch. 3 - The Renaissance: 1400 – 1630** |
| **Week 6** | **18 February**  **20 February** | **Continue Module 4**  **Continue Module 4** |  |
| **Week 7** | **25 February**  **27 February** | **Complete Module 4**  **Assign: Module 5** | **Ch. 4 - Global Trading and the Age of Reason and Enlightenment: 1630 – 1750** |
| **Week 8** | **04 March**  **06 March** | **Complete Module 5**  **Exam 2 (Modules 3 & 4)** |  |
| **Week 9** | **11 March**  **13 March** | **Assign: Module 6** | **Ch. 5 - Engineering Becomes a Profession: 1750 – 1800** |
|  | **16-22 March** | **Spring Break –**  **No class** |  |
| **Week 10** | **25 March**  **27 March** | **Assign: Module 7**  **Continue Module 7** | **Book 3 – Stepping To Hell** |
| **Week 11** | **01 April**  **03 April** | **Assign Module 7, Part 2**  **Exam 3 (Modules 5 & 6)** | **Book 3 – Stepping To Hell – Part 2** |
| **Week 12** | **08 April**  **10 April** | **Continue Module 7, Part2**  **Assign: Module 7, Part 3**  **Complete Module 7, Part 3 Assign Module 8** | **Book 3 – Stepping To Hell – Part 3**  **Book 4 – The Flagler Years** |
| **Week 13** | **15 April**  **17 April** | **Continue Module 8**  **Complete Module 8** |  |
| **Week 14** | **22 April** | **Exam 4 (Modules 7 & 8)** | **Have a great summer!** |

**COURSE EVALUATION**

At the end of the semester, students are strongly encouraged to evaluate the course through Gator Evals. **Extra Credit** will be offered to students who provide documentation that they have submitted their course evaluation by the date by which the last exam must be submitted. This is the only  **Extra Credit** offered in this course. The url for Gator Evals is: <https://syllabus.ufl.edu/media/syllabusufledu/syllabi_policy_09_09_2022.pdf>

**Disclaimer:** This syllabus represents my current plans and objectives.  As we go through the semester, those plans may need to change to enhance the class learning opportunity.  Such changes, communicated clearly, are not unusual and should be expected.