



Structural Engineering 3-4 Syllabus

Course Goals

1 Structural Design

Students explore the research, planning, and budgeting that goes into building a home, school, or other structure.

2 Components of Structures

Students discover the different types of materials used in structures such as buildings and garages. Through various hands on projects, they will understand the benefits and drawbacks of using different materials

3 Safety Testing

Students learn the importance of safety testing. They will experiment with developing structures that resist harm from natural disasters such as earthquakes, hurricanes, and tornadoes.

4 Blueprints

Students learn about blueprints for various categories of structures. They will apply their knowledge to create and refine blueprints for the structures they build.

5 Teamwork

Students collaborate on creating more complex structures that combine the introductory principles that they have learned.

Course Topics

1 Building on a Budget

Students are tasked with building common public structures with budget and resource constraints

2 Construction Materials & Technology

Students explore the evolution of technology and material science that shapes the modern structural engineering.

3 Optimization

Students assess existing structures and propose modifications to make them more water resistant, energy efficient, and/or sustainable.

4 Resisting Disaster

Students build and test the safety of a hydraulic bridge, simulate the effects of natural disasters on the structures they build, and learn to plan ahead for natural disasters

5 Geometric Exploration

Students experiment with incorporating various geometric shapes in their structures to improve strength and durability.

Course Schedule

Day 1

Introduction to Structural Engineering

Students participate in an icebreaker and be introduced to the activities, concepts, and applications of this course.

Engineering Design Process

Students learn about the flow of the engineering design process.

Pre-Test: Building a House

Students are given a certain amount of materials to build a house using the knowledge that they already have.

Day 2

Properties of Materials in Structures

Students learn about the purposes for various materials in structures.

Model Parking Garage

Students learn about how parking garages are engineered and will construct a model parking garage.

Day 3

Model Parking Garage

Students learn about how parking garages are engineered and will construct a model parking garage.

Introduction to Bridges

Students are introduced to the fundamentals of bridge engineering and building.

Basic Bridges

Students choose one bridge configuration previously introduced to them and build it in groups.

Day 4

Hydraulic Bridges

Students understand how hydraulic bridges are engineered as they build their own.

Flimsy Bridges

Students manipulate flimsy materials to create load-bearing bridges

Day 5

Tower Building

Students explore how strong towers are engineered to be load-bearing and weather-resistant.

Day 6

Earthquake Simulator

Students learn how engineers design and construct buildings to withstand earthquake damage by building their own model structures using toothpicks and marshmallows. They experiment to see how earthquake-proof their buildings are by testing them in an earthquake simulated in a pan of Jell-O®.

Waterproofing

Students investigate the properties of various flimsy materials to determine which one is best for waterproofing a roof

Day 7

Design A Dam

Students learn how dams are designed and created and then have the opportunity to engineer their own.

Day 8

Design A Dome

Students explore and investigate the role of geometry in designing a geodesic dome.

Day 9

Solar Panels

Students learn about how solar panels work and observe how they can harness solar energy to provide heat and electricity.

The Super Structure

Students synthesize the knowledge of structural engineering from this session to design, create, and test the durability of a structure given a specified budget.

Day 10

The Super Structure

Students synthesize the knowledge of structural engineering from this session to design, create, and test the durability of a structure given a specified budget.

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