Residential Construction Systems & Maintenance
Course Syllabus
Christopher Wren Society Spring Semester, 2018
Joe Cross, Instructor

Class 1:
1. Introduction & speaker’s utter lack of credentials
2. Housing’s historic dependency on available materials
3. Residential construction through the ages
4. Diverging paths- urban and rural housing
5. Diverging thoughts- house as art versus house as a machine
6. 20th Century light construction
7. The rise of suburbia meets the assembly line
8. The need for custom, the reality of assembly.
9. Controlling quality, price and time and the impact on your house
10. The evolution of component construction- it’s been longer than you think.
11. Components and lifespans- lasting forever, like a marriage, can be very short.

Class 2:
12. Why is renovation growing? Never-ending?
13. Mobility rates and their hidden effect- aging in place has unintended consequences
14. Changing lifestyles changes houses
15. Efficiency has a price
16. Building Codes- first and last line of defense.
17. Elements of maintenance- where to find (almost) anything.
18. The need for maintenance starts below ground
20. Treated wood can trick you- surprises you won’t like.
21. Thermal & Moisture protection- yes, houses get sick, cold and have infections
22. The evolutionary revolution in glass and windows
23. Finishes, fashions, laminates and other strutting peacocks

Class 3:
24. Plumbing – supplying the water to help things go down.
25. Heating, Ventilating, and Cooling (HVAC) - the computer revolution. Is your SEER up to par?
26. Electrical- supplying the juice to live. Reasons why we have electricians
27. Common Problems, the greater three- Moisture, critters and lifespans
28. Common Problems- the lesser two- Incompatible products and contractor error
29. Everything is a system in its own universe. This leads to galaxies of problems
30. Another word about the Building Code and Home Inspectors
31. The future of housing – environmental and otherwise
32. Contracting 101- How to get taken for a ride and (sort of ) enjoy the trip
33. The right type of agreement for the right job. How to get almost close to what you want.
34. Legal stuff I’m unqualified to talk about- Liens, Mechanic’s Liens and lien waivers.
35. Industry trends
36. Summary of all things

Class Content and progress are likely to vary based on audience questions.