

CSU101: Computer Science and Its Applications

Syllabus

Spring 2008

Professor Ronald J. Williams

Office: 334 WVH, 617-373-8683

Office Hours: Monday and Wednesday, 1:30-2:30, or by appointment

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Home Web Page: <http://www.ccs.neu.edu/home/rjw>

Course Objectives

This is a course in concepts in computer science and their application in a series of useful software products, essentially how to solve problems using the kinds of software we will be studying. Its goals include teaching you some basic notions underlying operating systems (like Windows) and their use, notions about structure and design of spreadsheets and relational databases, and problem solving and conceptualization. The particular applications we will be exploring are: Excel (a spreadsheet program), Access (a relational database program), and SPSS (a statistics package). Excel and Access are part of Microsoft Office, but SPSS is not. You can also expect to become familiar with email, Word, and the World Wide Web, if you are not already.

Course Format

There are two class sessions per week, both held in a computer lab (210 WVH). Class sessions will consist of lecture/discussion of the material, including class exercises that we work through together, and, generally, there will be some amount of time during the class sessions to work on lab assignments. All completed lab assignments will be submitted electronically through the Assignments section of the BlackBoard site for this class. There will be two quizzes, three exams, and nine laboratory assignments. The exams will count for 50% of your overall grade and the quizzes will count for 20%. The total of all nine lab assignments will count for 30%. You will generally need to spend more time working on the lab assignments than the time available in class. Our class lab will not generally be available to use during non-class times, but you can also use 102 WVH or any of the other open labs on campus. There will, however, be regularly scheduled help sessions in our lab and you are free to come to these to work on assignments. The help session schedule will be announced later.

Where to Complete Your Lab Assignments

If you work on your own computer, make sure you are using the right software, MS Office, 2003 or 2007. In particular, Microsoft Works does not work for this purpose. SPSS is a big expensive piece of software, so it is not likely that you will want to put it on your computer (legally). Expect to use it in a school lab on campus.

Lab Assignment Policy

You are welcome to work together with other students on the lab assignments, but we require that all of the work you submit for grading be your own. ***If you do collaborate with others on an assignment, you must list their names on the materials you submit.*** Furthermore, collaboration does not mean simply copying someone else's solution or providing your solution to someone else to copy. ***Any lab assignment submitted that is copied from others (in whole or in part) will receive an immediate zero.***

Late Assignments

Each lab assignment will be given a due date and its submission time stamp in Blackboard will be used to determine whether it is late or not, and by how much. Assignments up to 24 hours late will receive a 20% penalty. Assignments submitted later than this will not be accepted.

Attendance and Class Participation

Attendance will be taken at almost every class. There will be a small bonus added to the overall course score for students present when attendance is checked. In addition, during class I will ask questions that informally test your mastery of the material being taught, and the first students to develop reasonable answers to these questions will receive class participation bonus points. The attendance and class participation bonuses may add anywhere between 0 and 3 points to your overall course score.

Makeup Exams

There is no required final exam for this course during finals week. However, students who miss any of the regular exams during the quarter must make them up during the regularly scheduled exam time during finals week. This is the only means provided to make up missed exams. To reiterate: ***There is no final exam. But if you miss an exam, you will have an opportunity to make it up at the time and place scheduled for the final exam.*** Also, no makeup quizzes will be given. Instead, any missed quiz will be given the same score as the corresponding exam.

Textbooks

There is no required textbook for this course.

Course Web Sites

The main course web site is at <http://www.ccs.neu.edu/course/csu101>. Here you will find announcements (especially as they pertain to all sections of the class), the schedule for the semester, the materials for the lab assignments, links to individual instructors' web sites, and contact information for the TAs.

You will also need to use the Blackboard web site, at <http://blackboard.neu.edu>, to submit lab assignments, and other useful course links may be available from there as well.