COSC 120 - Introduction to Computer Science I

Fall 2010

Silly Bus

The basics? What the hey? Is there really anything basic about a computer? I mean, there's all those buttons and stuff, and then other stuff, and well, stuff.

Just the Facts

Course Number: COSC 120
Title: Introduction to Computer Science I
Semester: Fall 2010
Meeting Time: MWF 10:40 - 11:50 am
Locale: Schaefer 165
Instructor: Alan Jamieson
Office: Schaefer 154
Office Hours: MW 3-4 pm, TR 1 - 2 pm
Email: acjamieson@smcm.edu
AIM: DrRipark
Online Office Hours: Most evenings and weekends
Textbook: *Deitel and Deitel, Java How to Program, 8th Edition, Pearson*
Website: http://faculty.smcm.edu/acjamieson/f10/cosc120.html
TA: Alex Bromley (anbromley@smcm.edu)

Catalog Description: This course surveys computer science and introduces object-oriented programming. A survey of the pivotal fields of computer science, including software engineering; computer networks; programming languages; algorithms; computer architecture; models of computation; operating systems. Students begin to solve simple problems using object-oriented programming. The emphasis is on implementing object-oriented designs. This course is suitable for non-majors who want an overview of computer science and to learn to solve problems with programs. COSC 120 satisfies the Core requirement in Mathematics. Prerequisite: None.

Overview: Computers can be daunting things, especially when they don't work quite right. In this course we'll be doing a broad review of all things computer science. We'll go through the history of the field as well as give you an introduction to programming. By the end of the course I expect that you will be able to solve simple programming problems utilizing the tools provided to you during this class and be able to discuss knowledgeably what it is to be a computer scientist today and the basic concepts we hold dear. I also expect that you will start to be able to think like a computer scientist in the somewhat unique way that we typically solve problems. You should be able to recognize algorithms even in your everyday life. We will utilize the JAVA programming language exclusively in this course.

Purpose: Lets face it, computers dominate our life. Looking at the Washington Post as I write this, there are no less than four references to a website or computer related item on the front page. Computers run everything from refrigerators to cars, air conditioning units, the stock market, your academic records and vacuum cleaners (yes, I have a robotic vacuum cleaner). It is important for everyone to have a deep appreciation of the history and what is involved in these every-day programs. I hope you gain that during your time here in this class.

Grade Distribution:

> Exams (3) - 10% each
> Assignments (3) - 10% each
> Written Assignment - 10%
> Quizzes, Homework, Labs - 10%
> Final Exam - 20%

The class will be run fairly informally. While there will be some amount of a traditional lecture involved with each class period, I expect there will be a less traditional discussion also involved in

each class period involving questions and concepts being batted back and forth amongst you, your peers and myself. Please participate in these discussions, I can almost guarantee that you'll get more out of the class in general if you do.

Final Information: The final will be held Tuesday, December 14th from 2:00 - 4:15 p.m. in Schaefer 165. Except in emergency situations, you will be required to take the final exam at this time (unless exempt).

Assignments: There will be three out-of-class programming assignments during this course. Unless otherwise specified, these are to be done individually. You may ask for help from your instructor or TA on specific problems, and you may discuss general concepts with your fellow students. You may not debug code for someone else, or have someone else debug code for you. Under no circumstances should you have any other student (aside from the TA) looking at your code (unless I'm instructing you to do so). Each assignment will tie directly into concepts that we are discussing in class and will include one or more implementations of tools that we discuss in class. In addition to the programming assignments, there will be a single written assignment where you will discuss what it means to you to be a computer scientist.

Labs: Each week we will take time out of the scheduled class time to do some hands-on, in-class assignments. Each lab will be short and sweet and go over some major topic presented in the last week. Each lab is graded on a binary system, it is either completed or it is not. If it is not you will receive a 0, if it is you will receive a 10. If you miss a lab due to an unexcused absence, you will not have a chance to make up that lab. Due to space and computer restraints, you may be paired for each lab.

Blackboard Use: I will be utilizing Blackboard for your grades. Please check there often as I will be updating grades as I get graded material evaluated. All other course documents will be found on the course website.

Policies

Cell Phones: Please, turn off or turn to silent any cell phones prior to getting to class. If they go off in class they are distraction not only to myself, but to everyone else in the class as well. Habitual offenders will be excused from the class with a 0 for any quizzes that day.

Computer Use: Computer use in this lab is for academic use only. If you bring a laptop with you to this class I expect you to be only using it for purposes related to this class. The same goes for the computers in this lab.

Attendance and Tardiness: Attendance is mandatory. Missing a class not only causes you to miss the information disseminated in that lecture, but can cause you to miss important information in regards to exams and assignments and the potential of receiving a 0 for a quiz that day. I will pass around an attendance sheet at the start of class and collect it early on during the class period. Be sure to sign it as it goes around. In addition, the highest percentage grade that you can earn during this class is the percentage of classes that you actually attended. So, if you only attended 85% of the classes, the maximum grade you can earn is an 85. I start class promptly on the hour and expect the students to be in class at that time. If you have circumstances that can prevent you from being in class on time, please let me know as soon as possible. Habitual offenders will be excused from the class with a 0 for any quizzes that day. Note: as per College policy, you will get at least 2 absences without any penalty.

Exams and Quizzes: Exams are scheduled well ahead of time. The current schedule shows what days I believe I will be issuing an exam. Any changes to this schedule will be noted and explained in class, well ahead (approx. 1 week) of the exam affected. Exams will not be rescheduled and I will not be offering make-up exams except under extraordinary and documented circumstances. Every class has the potential of having a quiz to reinforce the ideas from the lecture the previous class. These will not be announced ahead of time. They will be 1-3 question quizzes that can be easily

done in 15 minutes either at the start or the end of the class period.

Assignments: Assignments and other outside of class work should be done on an individual basis unless otherwise specified in the description of the assignment. Assignments and other outside of class work will not be taken late except under extraordinary and documented circumstances.

Extra Credit: I may or may not be offering any extra credit opportunities in this class.

Final Exam Exemptions: If you have an A in the course going into the final exam and you have been present for at least 90% of the held lectures, then you will be exempted from the final.

Communication: The simplest way to get in touch with me is by coming by my office during my office hours or contacting me via email. The easiest way to get in touch with me "after hours" is to send me an email. I habitually check my St. Mary's email account all hours of the day. If you come by my office and the door is open, feel free to stop in to chat. The open door indicates that I'm not working on anything that has to keep my undivided attention at that time so do not feel that you are interrupting me or anything like that. I do make appointments if you have a certain time that you'd like to meet with me. If it fits in my schedule (meaning I'm not teaching class during that time) I will be happy to meet with you.

Academic Honesty: Academic misconduct policies are covered in the Student Code and Student Rights and Responsibilities, Article III. Pay close attention to the definitions of academic misconduct noted in Section 1. This can be found in the Student Handbook.

Disability: If you have any kind of disability that can affect your performance in this class, please let me know privately through email or stopping by my office.

Schedule: The schedule for the class will be posted to the class website and a pdf version will be located on Blackboard in the course documents section. The schedule is subject to change (multiple times).

Closing: The most important thing in any of my classes is that you are learning and expanding your horizons. If you are having any undue difficulty with your work as it pertains to this class, please contact me as soon as possible. Always remember that professors win when you don't need us any longer. I want you to be bouncing ideas off of each other throughout the class and it is my hope that by the end of the semester that you are driving the class session rather than me.