

Welcome to CSCI 150

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CSCI 150 is an introduction to problem-solving, data structures and algorithms using the programming language Python.

In addition to the lectures the class has 11 labs. The Wednesday and Thursday lab sections are designed to help you get started on the labs. Most students put in 4 to 5 additional hours of work on the labs outside of the lab sections.

Every lab has a brief postlab writeup that is due in class on the Wednesday following the lab. Most of the labs also have prelab exercises that are due in class on the Wednesday of the lab week. (So next week you will hand in the postlab for Lab 1 and the prelab for Lab 2 on Wednesday).

The class is built around the labs; the class schedule is driven by what you need to know to do the next lab. If you skip class you might find yourself putting a lot of extra time into the next lab.

The class material is interesting and not terribly difficult, but it builds on itself. If you fall behind it can be very difficult to get caught up. For this reason we have strict deadlines on when things are due. If you keep up with the material this can be a fun course with a lot of opportunity for creativity. If you don't the class can be very frustrating.

Deadlines:

Prelabs are due in class on Wednesday. If you email me your prelab by 10AM I'll print and grade it, but I don't promise to check mail after that. If you bring it to my office by noon I will grade it. Other than that I don't take late prelabs. They aren't that big a portion of your grade; if you are sick and miss one, you'll live.

Lab solutions must be handed in online (Lab 1 shows you how) by 6PM on Tuesday. Late labs are docked 10 points (out of 50) each day, though we do have a late lab policy

Late Labs: You can hand in up to 3 labs up to 3 days late (this means by Friday) without penalty. To do this include with the files you are handing in a file named "LateLabExtension.txt" whose body says "This is my first (or second or third) late lab."

The Lab Sessions: We have two laboratories: King 201 and King 135, which we usually call "the upstairs lab" and "the downstairs lab". The upstairs lab is a bit larger. Tom Wexler and a student lab helper will be in the upstairs lab; I and another student helper will be in the downstairs lab. You are welcome to work in either and you can switch between rooms if you like, though most people seem to come to the same room each week.

Honor Code: On exams, do your own work. Duh.

On labs and prelabs you are welcome to work with others, BUT YOU MUST WRITE YOUR OWN CODE. Even if you sit next to someone and you type in the same code, that is okay. Making a copy of someone else's file and putting your name on it is not okay, even if you make some changes in it. Write your own code.

Attitude: I will say this many times during the semester -- SLOW DOWN AND THINK.

Programming is fun; debugging is frustrating and annoying. This class gives you ways to think about your code. If you program slowly and carefully you will find that you get done much more quickly than if you write your code in a hurry and then have to debug it. You will also find the class much more enjoyable.

Clickers: You need to have a clicker and to register it via Blackboard. In almost every class we will have "Clicker Questions" that you need to answer using your clicker. I will get a report that says which days you used your clicker in class and will use this for judging class attendance -- I will assume you weren't in class on the days you didn't use your clicker.