FS 101 – Academic Discourse I
(*Freshman Seminar*) Syllabus

Fall 2021

Course Instructor

Dr. Oliver BONHAM-CARTER (said and written as "Bonham-Carter," not "Carter")
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Web site: `http://www.cs.allegheny.edu/sites/obonhamcarter/`
Class meeting place: Alden 109
Final deliverable due: 15th December 2021
Final exam code: J
Syllabus updated on: August 25, 2021

Discord channel:

- `https://discord.gg/Sc54gTKk`
  (Note: this link will expire in 7 days from 23rd August 2021!)

Google Calendar:

- `https://calendar.google.com/calendar/u/0?cid=`
  `Y184OWliMjRuOHRmMmF1N2I4NWlsMmZ2ZjkxOEBncm91cC5jYWxlbmRhci5nb29nbGUuY29t`
  (Note: This link is allon one line!)

Instructor's Office Hours

- All office hours will take place online using Zoom or in-person in my office in Alden 104.

- To schedule a meeting with me during my office hours, please visit my web site and click the "Schedule" link in the top right-hand corner. Here, you can browse my office hours slots to schedule an appointment. If using Zoom, you will find a link with the meeting invitation. At the allotted time, I will be awaiting your meeting. If the given office hour meeting times are not convenient for your schedule, please let me know and I would be happy to work with you to find and other time which would be suitable for your schedule.

- By Zoom or in-person in Alden 104 (please let me know which it is!)
- Tuesday: 2:45 pm – 4:45 pm EST (15 minute time slots)
- Wednesdays and Thursdays : 2:00pm – 4:00 pm EST (15 minute time slots)
- By appointment, if these times do not work for you.

Course Meeting Schedule

- **Lecture, Discussion, Presentations, Group Work, and Labs:**
    - 24th August - 15th December 2021
    - **Class**: Monday, Wednesday *and* Friday 11:30 AM - 12:20 PM EST

Academic Bulletin Description

An exploration of interpretation and communication of data in the digital world. Students participate in class discussions and hands-on activities to investigate how data may be used to draw logical conclusions, to make informed decisions and to create policies with potentially far-reaching implications. Students reflect on current practices for collecting data, its uses, abuses, and impacts on society. The coursework emphasizes the development of effective oral and written communication skills with a focus on description, summary, and critical thinking.

Course Objectives

There are two main parts of this course;

- This course serves as a discussion point of how data is used in our time. For instance, data and information play prominent roles in seemingly all parts of our society. For instance, in the news, one is exposed to many different aspects of data usage which are used to convey facts and inform readers of current phenomena. While it is a good usage of data to create meaning to facilitate comprehension, there are other types of uses of data which may not be desirable or healthy for the progression of a society. Part of this course is to learn the differences between how data may be used or misused, and to understand how to think about information which could be used to make decisions and eventual policies. In addition, to these main objectives of the course, we spend time to discuss how data may be converted to information.

- This course also serves as an introduction to college thinking, working, and living. Specifically, FS 101 prepares you for academic and career success by developing foundational communication and critical thinking skills. More notably, these skills of success for your college career include the following.

- Recognizing and expressing interesting ideas of intellectual value.
- Developing an engaging voice as a speaker and writer.
- Organizing ideas effectively to communicate in specific contexts.
- Using language clearly, powerfully, and with appropriate detail.

Throughout the semester, we also discuss how to thrive at Allegheny College and to make the most of the resources that our learning community has to offer. In particular, we discuss the following types of themes.

- How to be a student
- How to study and learn
- How to pick a major and minor
- How to manage time
- How to use library resources
- How to keep motivated at a college student
- Other qualities that will help you to learn, grow and flourish

Students who want to improve their technical writing skills may consult the following books.

This class will have readings which will be handed out to you. There is no textbook necessary but below are two books that might help you with (technical) writing that the instructor uses very regularly.

- Crapsi, Linda. *Bugs in Writing: A Guide to Debugging Your Prose.* Technical Communication 42.4 (1995): 665-667., ISBN-10: 020137921X, ISBN-13: 978-0201379211, 704 pages, 1998.

- Zobel, Justin. *Writing for computer science.* Vol. 8. New York NY: Springer, 2004., ISBN-10: 1852338024, ISBN-13:978-1852338022, 270 pages, 2004.

Class Policies

Grading

The grade that a student receives in this class will be based on the following categories. All percentages are approximate and, if the need to do so presents itself, it is possible for the assigned percentages to change during the academic semester. Students will receive their reported grades approximately once a week through an individual GitHub grading repository.

Class Activities	20%
Writings	40%
Speakings	20%
Final Portfolio	20%

These grading categories have the definitions which are defined below.

Definitions of Grading Categories

Each element of the below class work will be assigned in class where the questions to which the student is to respond will be clearly stated.

- *Class Activities*: All students are required to actively participate during all of the class sessions. Your participation will mainly take a form of completing class activities that are submitted via an appropriate GitHub repository. You may also be asked to answer questions about the required reading assignments and lead a discussion session in class.

- *Writings*: All students are required to write essays which concern topics discussed in class.

- *Speakings*: All students are required to give oral presentations over elements of class work. These talks may be short but the content will be important to the grade.

- *Final Portfolio*: All students are required to assemble a larger writing project concern topics discussed in class.

Assignment Submission

We will be using GitHub Classroom to collect all assignments. It is expected that you are able to effectively use `git` to submit your work. If you require help, please see your peers or your instructor.

All assignments will have a stated due date. The electronic version of the assignments are to be turned in at the beginning of the class session on that due date. Submissions after the beginning of class are counted as being late.

Extensions

Unless special arrangements are made with the course instructor, no assignments will be accepted after the late deadline. If you are requesting extensions for an assignment, then you are to email me with your request and also provide a *valid reason* for your extension. This request must come before the due date of the assignment and not on the due date. Requests will not be granted where the reason appears to be insignificant. Extensions are 24 hours of extra time (after the original due date) and are given out at my discretion. The decision to provide you with an extension (or not) will be weighed in light of fairness to your peers who are still able to complete their assignments, regardless of their own busy schedules.

The submission of homework comprises the Honor Code pledge of the student(s) completing the work. For any assignment completed in a group, students must also

turn in a one-page reflection that describes each group member's contribution to the submitted deliverables.

Bring your own computer to class

During the semester, we will be using laptops to work on class assignments and to view materials. You will be told which software to install on your machine to be prepared for class. Some of the prominent software that we may be using include;

- Git and GiHub (a software development software system): `https://github.com/`

- Atom (an editor): `https://atom.io/`

Class Preparation

In order to minimize confusion and maximize learning, students must invest time to prepare for class discussions and lectures. During the class periods, the course instructor will often pose demanding questions that could require group discussion, the creation of a program, a vote on a thought-provoking issue, or a group presentation. Only students who have prepared for class by reading the assigned material and reviewing the current assignments will be able to effectively participate in these discussions. More importantly, only prepared students will be able to acquire the knowledge and skills that are needed to be successful in both this course and the field of data analytics. In order to help students remain organized and effectively prepare for classes, the course instructor will maintain a class schedule. During the class sessions students will also be required to download, write, use, and modify programs, and data sets that are made available through the course GitHub repository.

Email

Using your Allegheny College email address, I will sometimes send out class announcements about matters such as assignment clarifications or changes in the schedule. It is your responsibility to check your email at least once a day and to ensure that you can reliably send and receive emails. This class policy is based on the following statement in *The Compass*, the college's student handbook.

> "The use of email is a primary method of communication on campus. ...All students are provided with a campus email account and address while enrolled at Allegheny and are expected to check the account on a regular basis."

Disability Services

The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) is a federal anti-discrimination statute that provides comprehensive civil rights protection for persons with disabilities. Among other things, this legislation requires all students with disabilities be guaranteed a

learning environment that provides for reasonable accommodation of their disabilities. Students with disabilities who believe they may need accommodations in this class are encouraged to contact Disability Services at (814) 332-2898. Disability Services is part of the Learning Commons and is located in Pelletier Library. Please do this as soon as possible to ensure that approved accommodations are implemented in a timely fashion.

Honor Code

The Academic Honor Program that governs the entire academic program at Allegheny College is described in the Allegheny Course Catalog and in *The Compass: Student Handbook*. The Honor Program applies to all work that is submitted for academic credit or to meet non-credit requirements for graduation at Allegheny College. This includes all work assigned for this class (e.g., examinations, laboratory assignments, and the final project). All students who have enrolled in the College will work under the Honor Program. Each student who has matriculated at the College has acknowledged the following pledge:

> *I hereby recognize and pledge to fulfill my responsibilities, as defined in the Honor Code, and to maintain the integrity of both myself and the College community as a whole.*

Additionally, we expect that you will adhere to the following Department Policy:

Department of Computer Science Honor Code Policy

It is recognized that an important part of the learning process in any course, and particularly in computer science, derives from thoughtful discussions with teachers, student assistants, and fellow students. Such dialogue is encouraged. However, it is necessary to distinguish carefully between the student who discusses the principles underlying a problem with others, and the student who produces assignments that are identical to, or merely variations on, someone else's work. It will therefore be understood that all assignments submitted to faculty of the Department of Computer Science are to be the original work of the student submitting the assignment, and should be signed in accordance with the provisions of the Honor Code. Appropriate action will be taken when assignments give evidence that they were derived from the work of others.

College Messages

- **Statement of Community** Allegheny students and employees are committed to creating an inclusive, respectful and safe residential learning community that will actively confront and challenge racism, sexism, heterosexism, religious bigotry, and other forms of harassment and discrimination. We encourage individual growth by promoting a free exchange of ideas in a setting that values diversity, trust and equality. So that the right of all to participate in a shared learning experience is upheld, Allegheny affirms its commitment to the principles of freedom of speech

and inquiry, while at the same time fostering responsibility and accountability in the exercise of these freedoms.

- **Student Success Center (formerly "Learning Commons")** If you are not already, you should become familiar with the Learning Commons, located in Pelletier Library (`http://sites.allegheny.edu/learningcommons/`). Among other things, the staff at the Learning Commons can assist you with study and time management skills, writing, and critical reading. You should know that if you are having trouble in this class, or if I think you can specifically benefit from their services, I will refer you to the Learning Commons. Experienced peer writing and speech consultants in the Learning Commons help writers and speakers to determine strategies for effective communication and to make academically responsible choices at any stage in the writing or speaking process and on assignments in any discipline. Both appointments and drop-in sessions are available. To view the hours of operation, and to make an appointment, visit the Learning Commons website.

- **Religious Accommodations** If you need to miss class or reschedule a final examination due to a religious observance, please speak to the professor well in advance to make arrangements. See `http://sites.allegheny.edu/religiouslife/religious-holy-days/`.