Introduction – Welcome to CSCI 1301!

https://csci-1301.github.io/about#authors

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For this first lab, we would like to discuss three important topics for you to succeed in this class.

1. How to access the material and naviguate our resources,
2. What to read first,
3. How to get help.

As you may have noted, the list of topics was already included a first time below the title: we generally try to include table of contents and presentations, along with numerous links, to make our guides easy to navigate.

1 Navigating our Resources

We strive to provide to our students all the material they will need to succeed in one place, at https://csci-1301.github.io/. On this website, you will find

- "The book"[1], which contains the lecture notes to cover one semester, and is available in `pdf`[2] (for printing, typically) and in `odt`[3] (for editing, typically). Along with the `html` version[4] (i.e., the website), this gives three convenient ways of accessing the content of this course.
- Slides accompaining the lecture notes (in `pptx`).
- The labs[5], which are tied to particular lectures, and contains hands-on practise exercise as well as instructions on how to use computers to complete this class.
- Along with other useful documents[6] about this class or studying at our school[7] in particular.

[1] https://csci-1301.github.io/book.html
[2] https://csci-1301.github.io/book.pdf
[3] https://csci-1301.github.io/book.odt
[4] https://csci-1301.github.io/book.html
[5] https://csci-1301.github.io/labs/
[6] https://csci-1301.github.io/#other-documents
[7] https://www.augusta.edu/ccs/

The main purpose of this first lab is to help you navigating those resources. We want this reading to be pro-active, so we will include questions and actions like the ones below every now and then to help you being engaged in the material.

Question: We used four different file formats in the text above you may not be familiar with. Along with *markdown* (`.md`), that's five: can you make sure you know them all and know their purposes? Looking them up on wikipedia[8] and reading the first paragraph of each of their pages can be a good way of getting started!

Action: On the html version of our documents, you will always find on the footer links to the pdf and odt versions of the document you are currently reading. Download them by clicking on the "↓ pdf" and "↓ odt" links, then make sure you can open them both. You should realize that their content is identical to the page you are currently reading![9]

You may also have seen the Source code[10] and About[11] links on the footer: the first one will give you access to the "frame" we are using to construct this website, and the second contains information about the authors, copyrights and tools used to construct this website. Even if you do not need to understand the source code and details of the implementation of this website (that uses, as you may have guessed … markdown!), being curious about them may be extremely useful for the sake of learning, if you want to become an Undergraduate Course Assistant (UCA), are interested in contributing to open-source project, or simply wonder how the magic is done!

2 What to Read First

Your instructor will be your primary guide when it comes to the order in which you need to read the material hosted here. However, you should feel free to explore our other useful documents[12], that contain information you may be interested in fairly early in the semester (like…today!). Typically, the Installing Software[13] page should probably be one of the first document you should read: it explains in details how to set-up your computer to be able to execute, compile and study the code we will be discussing in class and lab, and how to access and use the computer labs.

Some of the resources on this website are still in the flux: the instructors are working hard to construct the material from scratch, and we are sorry if at times you feel that you are going through dry runs. On the flip side, remember that you did not have to buy a textbook, and that those resources will be taylored for your use and course of study here at Augusta University: among many other specificities, like using C#, we are making sure that security and other cyber-related issues are regularly discussed!

Be remember , the internet is (also!) a wonderful place where many useful resources are shared. For instance, this guide on open source[14] is an excellent place to understand what open source is and why it matters. Our resources are supported by Affordable Learning Georgia, who strives to share good, accessible and free (as in "free coffee" *and* as in "free speech") Open Educational Ressources (OER) to students in Georgia: reading their "About"[15] page may help you understand the importance and benefits of developing resources here, for you!

Question: What exactly is implied by "free" as in "free coffee" *and* as in "free speech"? Try to understand what "free software[16]" means: is it like coffee (some people say "beer") or like speech? Are the resources presented here free as in coffee, as in speech, or both?

[8] https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_file_formats
[9] Even this sentence will be displayed, even if it makes fewer sense to discuss the links on the footer of a `pdf` file, as there is none!
[10] https://github.com/csci-1301/csci-1301.github.io
[11] ./about.html
[12] https://csci-1301.github.io/#other-documents
[13] software_install.html
[14] https://opensource.guide/
[15] https://www.affordablelearninggeorgia.org/about/about_us
[16] https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Free_software

3 How to Get Help

This may be the most important aspect of this lab: understanding when you get help, and how to obtain it, is critical in succeeding in your studies (be it in this class or other classes alike!). Your instructor should be your first point of contact for any question regarding the content of this class, but many other resources are available, through the University, for this class, or through clubs.

3.1 At Augusta University

- If you are food insecure, you are not alone[17], and the Open Paws Food Pantry[18] will help you.
- For tutoring resources, consult the Academic Success Center[19] (or "ASC"). It can help you, among other things, in the areas of time management, test preparation and study strategies.
- The Testing & Disability Services[20] (or "TDS") can help you–and your instructor!–accommodate this class.
- The Student Counseling & Psychological Services[21] (or "SCAPS") is here to assist students with a variety of personal, developmental, and mental health concerns.
- The Writing Center[22] can help you with any written, oral, or multimedia project.
- To get help with technologies, refer to our Instructional Technology Support[23] correspondent Sienna Sewell, whose contact can be found on the Continuity webpage[24].

3.2 For this Class

Again, your instructor should be your first point of contact. Make sure you have their email address, and understand their prefered means of communication: is it through LMS[25] (formerly D2L), Teams[26], their office hours?

Secondly, if your class have an Undergraduate Course Assistant (UCA), this may be the right person to ask all kind of questions: they went through CSCI 1301 and have been selected based on their capacities, grades, interest and skills, so they will be able at the same time to relate to your struggle and describe the program better than anyone else!

There is also a way of reaching *all the instructions of CSCI 1301* at once, and it is by commenting on the lab pages.

3.2.1 Commenting Using a Github Account

On the website, if you look below, you will see a box where you can comment. This will require that you create a Github account[27], which is free and may serve multiple purpose if you intend to study, use, or contribute to open-source projects. The comment can use the markdown syntax[28] (exactly like this resource!), which is also used on websites like stackoverflow[29] and extremely popular!

[17] https://www.wjbf.com/csra-news/nearly-36-percent-of-college-students-are-hungry/
[18] https://www.augusta.edu/student-affairs/open-paws.php
[19] https://www.augusta.edu/academicsuccess/
[20] https://www.augusta.edu/tds/
[21] https://www.augusta.edu/counseling/
[22] https://www.augusta.edu/pamplin/writingcenter/
[23] https://www.augusta.edu/continuity/index.php
[24] https://www.augusta.edu/continuity/
[25] https://lms.augusta.edu/
[26] https://www.augusta.edu/its/microsoftteams.php
[27] https://github.com/login
[28] https://commonmark.org/
[29] https://stackoverflow.com/editing-help

Action: *If you feel like it*, create an account on Github[30] and leave a comment! We'll be happy to read from you!

3.3 Through the ACM Club

The Augusta University chapter[31] of the A.C.M[32] is one of the university's best resources for Computer Science, Information Technology and Cyber Security students. It provides a platform to network with other students in similar majors; presenting countless opportunities to expand not only the people you know, but also a fantastic place to learn and ask questions. Because of Covid-19, they are holding meetings virtually in their Discord server[33]. If you are interested in joining these meetings, or you have any questions about Computer Science or Cyber Security, feel free to join through their link.

[30] https://github.com/login
[31] https://augusta.presence.io/organization/association-for-computing-machinery
[32] https://www.acm.org/
[33] https://discord.gg/QGuGmsF