

Course Policies

Please read these policies thoroughly; consider this document to be an add-on to the course outline. Note that every instructor has their own course policies, and these apply only to my (Jordan's) courses.

The Instructor

- Name: Jordan Miller
- Contact:
 - o email jordanmiller@langara.ca
 - o or Slack (I'll send an invitation if requested)
- Office: B019j (in B building, the hall behind B019 and B015)
- Office hours: please see Brightspace announcements for most up-to-date office hours.

Tips on contacting the instructor:

- Slack is a good way to get quick help, but participation is optional. I'll post a survey to see who's interested in participating.
- If contacting by email, please tell me your **full name, course name, and course section**. (M01, M02, etc.) I usually DO NOT need your student number.
- If contacting me for help on an assignment, please provide the following:
 - o A thorough description of the problem, including:
 - What you were doing when the problem happened;
 - A description of what you've done already to try to solve the problem. (If you haven't done anything yet, I'll ask you to try to debug it before I provide help.)
 - Full text of the error message, if applicable;
 - Screenshots of code including line numbers;
 - o A zip archive with all project code.
- If contacting by Slack or email, **please allow 24 hours to receive a response**. If I don't respond after 24 hours, it means I missed your message or forgot to respond, so please send a reminder. (Apologies in advance and thanks for your patience!)
 - o I may be slower to respond in the evening or on weekends.
- If asking for help in the lab, please increase the size of the code on your screen so that I can easily see it from far away. (I will keep my distance for Covid safety.)
- Please drop by office hours if you need additional help. A few minutes of help in the office can save you from hours of struggling on your own!

Course Format

This is a mixed-mode course, which means part of it is done in person, and part is done online. Here's the general format:

- Online (Brightspace):
 - o Announcements: please check these daily as I post updates about due dates, corrections to assignments, clarifications of policies, reminders of quizzes, etc.
 - o Lesson videos:
 - This will be a mix of videos I've prerecorded on my own and videos recorded during live lectures.
 - o Online discussion questions;
 - o Lesson slides;
 - o Readings and other resources.
- In-person:
 - o Live lectures, occasionally;
 - o Completing lab assignments;
 - o Getting help with homework;
 - o Reviewing quizzes or homework assignments as a group;
 - o Writing quizzes and exams.

If you're not familiar with Brightspace, you can learn more about it here:

<https://iweb.langara.ca/lts/brightspace/how-to-use-brightspace/>

Attendance

- Attendance at labs is **not mandatory**, but **strongly encouraged**. There are some minimal attendance requirements that are explained later in this document.
- Please make sure you are free during our lab hours. DO NOT schedule anything else during lab hours, including work at your job.

Covid Safety Policies


Here are a few guidelines for labs to keep everyone safe and comfortable:

- If you are sick, **DO NOT COME TO THE LAB FOR ANY REASON.** You do NOT need special permission to miss a lab, and lab attendance is not graded. If you're sick on the date of the midterm exam or final exam, you can request a deferral.
- Masks are not required by the college, but are still strongly recommended. Public health experts recommend indoor mask use to curb the spread of Covid and other respiratory viruses.

- I will keep the door and windows open to increase air circulation in the lab; if you're sensitive to cold, please consider wearing a jacket, especially during exams when seating is assigned. (You may be placed next to a window and you will not be permitted to move.)
- I will maintain some distance from you when helping you in the lab; please increase the size of code on your screen so I can easily read it from far away.

Lab & Online Participation Grades

While I do not mandate attendance at every lab session, part of your grade is determined by meeting certain flexible participation requirements:

- **Weekly Assignments:**
 - At least **three** weekly lab assignments must be partially completed **IN THE LAB during the lab period in which they're assigned**. You can choose any three throughout the semester. You'll receive a bonus or penalty on your final grade depending on how many you complete:
 - Three assignments: +0.5%
 - two assignments: -1%
 - one assignment: -3%
 - zero assignments: -5%
 - IMPORTANT: you must complete ALL assignments, but only three have to be done in person, in the lab. To achieve this participation requirement, you only have to complete the tasks marked with a computer symbol:  You must show the work to me and hand it in to Brightspace before you leave the lab. (You can submit the finished work again later.) You cannot get participation credit for a lab from a previous week; only the current week's lab is eligible.
- **Quizzes:**
 - All quizzes must be completed in person, in the lab for credit. However, the lowest two quiz grades will be dropped from your final grade, so you can miss two without penalty.
- **Discussion Questions:**
 - You must answer **three** discussion questions throughout the semester; each answer is worth 0.33% on your final grade for a total of 1%. Your answers are not graded; you earn the marks simply by posting an answer. However, it's in your best interest to think carefully about the question, do research if necessary, and write a good answer, as the discussion questions introduce new topics that will form the basis of lab discussions, quizzes, tests, and assignments.
 - **Please DO NOT answer more than three questions**, as you will be taking away opportunities for other students to answer. Answering more than three questions will result in a grade of 0% for all discussions.

- Only the **first five** answers posted for any question will be considered. (This is to reduce repetition and spread out answers among more questions.)

Late and Extension Policy

- Assignments can be handed in up to 24 hours after the due date with a -10% penalty. After that, they will not be graded. Weekends count as one day. This applies to term projects as well, if your course has a term project.
- Extensions will not be provided for any reason. However, the **two lowest graded items** for each of **quizzes** and **assignments** will be dropped from your final grade at the end of the semester **automatically**. This means you can miss two of each with only a minimal effect on your grade. No action is required on your part. Please do not ask for exceptions, as this policy is meant to simplify the extension process by eliminating the need to make a request. If life circumstances arise that prevent you from completing a significant portion of the course work, consider dropping the course and retaking it in a future semester.

Exams

The midterm exam and final exam must be written in person, in the lab at the scheduled time. If you are sick at the time of the exam, please request a deferral BEFORE THE EXAM to write it later.

Assignment and Exam Grading

If you have a question or concern regarding your assignment grade, please contact the instructor (Jordan) directly. DO NOT contact the marker.

Grades are assigned based the merit of work done in the class and cannot be negotiated for any reason. However, I urge you to let me know if any mistakes have been made in grades (like if I or the marker added points incorrectly, forgot to mark part of an assignment, etc.) I will investigate thoroughly, and my decision will be final. Attempts to negotiate grades for any other reason will be referred to Langara's academic conduct office.

AI Coding Tools

Generative language models such as **ChatGPT** and **GitHub Copilot** can be used to automatically generate code from prompts written in plain English. **You are NOT required to use these tools for this course and I generally recommend that you DO NOT use them, as they may inhibit your learning.** If you do choose to use them, you do so at your own risk, and I recommend proceeding with **extreme caution** for the following reasons:

- Sometimes these tools provide suggestions that are unhelpful, incorrect, or irrelevant given the course objectives;
- Using output from these tools without reading, understanding, and adapting it may make it harder for you to learn how to write code on your own;
- Using these tools may be slower than simply writing the code yourself;
- There may be privacy implications to using these tools. (Read their privacy policies thoroughly.)

If you do choose to use them in spite of the above cautions, you **MUST** make a note of it in a prominent, easy-to-find place so that I and the marker can clearly see. Using AI tools without letting us know how and where will be considered an academic integrity violation and reported to the college.

Here are some other suggestions:

- If you're stuck on solving a problem, AI tools may provide some ideas that you hadn't thought of. Make sure you understand the output thoroughly and **DO NOT** simply copy and paste.
- If you're unsure of how to use a particular function, library, syntax, or technique, tools like ChatGPT may be able to provide some insight. (Think of it as an advanced Google search.) Be sure to fact check the results with a primary source before you accept them, as they may be incorrect.
- If you are an experienced coder and feel comfortable writing code on your own, pair programming tools like GitHub Copilot that provide suggestions may be able to speed up your work. They may also be able to provide template code that you can then modify as needed. However, if you are not an experienced programmer, these tools may lead you astray, so use with caution!

Here are some things you should definitely **NOT** do:

- **Do NOT** try to have the software complete your entire assignment. (This will be more trouble than it's worth; learning the concepts and writing the code yourself will be much easier.)
- Do not rely on suggested code uncritically without checking it to make sure it's accurate, relevant, and well written. (I find that the suggestions are usually not as good as code I can write myself.)

- Do not use the software as a replacement for understanding concepts; it may be able to answer your questions, but you must still understand and learn from the answers! (And be able to evaluate their accuracy and truthfulness.)

As these tools are quite new, I'm still learning how to use them myself, and they're constantly changing and improving. If you've made any observations about how these tools work and how they can be useful (or not useful) please let me know.

Academic Integrity

Please familiarize yourself with Langara's academic integrity policies:

- Formal policy: <https://langara.ca/about-langara/policies/pdf/F1004.pdf>
- Langara's guide for students: <https://langara.ca/student-services/student-conduct-and-academic-integrity/index.html>

For this course, please be aware of the following:

- Consulting online resources (YouTube tutorials, W3Schools, articles, etc.) or getting help from friends and classmates is encouraged. Using ChatGPT and other AI-based coding tools is not encouraged, but is permitted. However, what you submit for evaluation **must be your own work**. This means that you must have written the code yourself and understand it well enough to explain it or reproduce it on the spot. (I may request a meeting to ask you to prove that you created the work yourself.)
- Do not share your work with classmates:
 - o Do not send or accept files with another person other than the instructor;
 - o Do not copy work from another person's screen or allow them to copy your screen;
 - o Be aware that if another student somehow obtains your work, even by accident or without your knowledge or permission, you will still be responsible for cheating. Protect your work and use strong passwords for your accounts.
- Do not copy code or other assets from the web or other applications (such as ChatGPT) without permission from the instructor. If you do use a resource, you must include a reference with a link to the source. If using a generative tool like ChatGPT, please include the prompt used. Clearly indicate the file names and line numbers within your work where the code or assets were used.
- For work that involves written answers, closely follow Langara's guide to avoid plagiarism. Include references with in-text citations (any format is fine) and clearly mark quotations.
- Do not share materials from the course; do not post course materials on the web; this includes copying and pasting assignment text into ChatGPT and other AI programs, as that text may be saved and shared beyond the course.

If cheating or plagiarism is discovered, I will submit a report to the college and you will receive a grade of 0. All cases will be reported; there are no warnings. (Consider this to be the warning!) Makeup assignments will not be given.

Other Miscellaneous Things

- I regret that I cannot provide help with other courses being taught by other instructors. For help, please consult the instructor for your course. While students are encouraged to extend their learning beyond the course topics, be aware that I may not be able to provide support for topics not explicitly included in the course outline.
- The final exam date and format is set by the college; changes can be made for illness and unexpected emergencies, but no other reasons. Be aware that the college may request proof in these cases. Please DO NOT schedule anything (such as vacations, etc.) during the last month of the course, and ensure that you are in Vancouver and available to take the test in person.