

Introduction to Computer Systems

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- Spring 2022
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This new course links together different ideas that you have encountered but not covered deeply in other courses. We'll learn about tools used in programming and how they work. The goal of this course is to help you understand how your computer and programming environment work so that you can debug and learn independently more confident.

Quick Facts

- **Course time:** TuTh 12:30PM - 1:45PM Spring 2024
- **Location:** TBA
- **Credits:** 4
- **Mandatory Lab:** Monday 3-4:45pm

To request a permission number [complete this google form](#)

you must be signed into your URI google account to access the form

1. use and understand git/ GitHub
2. make sense of cryptic compiler messages
3. understand how file organization impacts programming
4. fulfill your 300 level CSC elective requirement
5. preview ideas that will be explored in depth in 411 & 412
6. Further your understanding of systems abstractions

[see other reasons from students](#)

Topics covered

this is a partial list

- git and other version control
- bash and other shell scripting
- filesystems
- basics of hardware
- what happens when you compile code
- what are the different types of software on your computer

Catalog Description

How the history and context of computing impacts the practice of computing today. Tools used in programming and computational problem solving. How programming works from high level languages to hardware. Survey of computer hardware and representation of information. **Pre:** CSC110, any 200 level CSC course, or equivalent (prior experience programming in at least two languages).

Learning Outcomes

By the end of the semester, students will be able to:

1. Differentiate the different classes of tools used in computer science in terms of their features, roles, and how they interact and justify positions and preferences among popular tools

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3. Discuss implications of choices across levels of abstraction
4. Describe the context under which essential components of computing systems were developed and explain the impact of that context on the systems.

FAQ

What is the best way to be successful in this course?



What will the course be like?



Are there specific hardware requirements?



Does the course focus on going in depth on a few topics or covering a variety of topics with less depth?



How many credits is this class?



Why does e-campus let us choose a number of credits?



How does this count toward my CS Major?



How big is the class?



Will there be a lab?



Can this course be taken with a full course load?



References

These resources are available to students. Level 1 is a basic scratch the surface explanation of the topic. Level 2 is an intermediate level of explanation. Level 3 is an in-depth explanation of the topic.

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History of Computers

Tools of the Craft

Survey of Hardware Components

What is a CPU, and What Does It Do?	1	Article	Easy to read article that explains CPUs and their use. Also touches on “buses” and GPUs.
Processors Explained for Beginners	1	Video	Video that explains what CPUs are and how they work and are assembled.
The Central Processing Unit	1	Video	Video by Crash Course that explains what the Central Processing Unit (CPU) is and how it works.
Input/Output Device	1	Article	Easy to read article that explains what an I/O device is. Touches on troubleshooting I/O Errors and examples of I/O devices.
Computer Bus	1	Article	Article that explains what computer buses are and how they work. Talks about the different types of buses and bus speeds.
What is a GPU?	1	Article	Defines a GPU in simple terms. Explains the difference between a CPU and a GPU. Also touches on how it works and its uses.
What Are Parallel Processing Systems	2	Article	Explains what a parallel processing system is and how it works.
Logic Gates	1	Video	Crash Course video that explains boolean logic and their respective gates in a visual and easy to understand way.
[What are derived logic gates?] (https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wGilePBfcT8)	1	Video	Video that explains what the derived logic gates are (NAND, NOR, XOR, XNOR). Uses simple, easy to understand real-world examples such as light switches in a room.
Registers and RAM	1	Video	Crash Course video that explains what registers are and how RAM works.

Software Infrastructure

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Operating Systems: Crash Course

1 Video

Very basic introduction to operating systems and the history of how they began.

Files and File Systems

1 Video

Crash Course video that gives a very basic introduction to files and file systems.

Abstraction Layers Explained

1 Video

Video that gives the basics of how abstraction layers are organized.

The Linux File System Explained

1 Video

Video that explains the Linux file system. Explains by showing.

Programs, Processes, and Threads

1 Article

Article that explains the differences between programs, processes, and threads. Has helpful diagrams that show the differences and how each one works.

Cache Memory in Computer Organization

1 Article

Explains how cache memory works and how it is accessed by the CPU. Also talks about cache mapping, types of cache, and cache performance.

Number Systems

Representing Numbers and Letters with Binary

1 Video

Basic intro to how numbers and letters are represented using binary.

Binary, Octal, and Hexadecimal

1 Text

Explains the three different types of number representations used in computer memory. Explains which ones are more efficient for storing information.

Numeral Systems

1 Text w/ chart

BRIEFLY explains how each numeral system works (binary, octal, decimal, and hex). Shows examples of each numeral system would work. Has a conversion table at the bottom of the page.

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Machine Representation of Data

What is a Bitwise Operator and How to Use Them	2	Video	Presentation that explains what bitwise operators are and how they work. The presenter gives examples of their use and shows them in action.
Why Your Storage or RAM Size Doesn't Add Up	1	Article	Talks about the difference between base-10 and base-2 storage options. Table that visualizes the differences between the two number systems.
Integer and Floating-Point Number Representation	2	Text	3.0-3.10 for information on integer representation and 1's and 2's complement. 4.0-4.4 for information and exercises on Floating-Point Numbers.
What are Overflow and Underflow?	1	Article	Explains what overflow and underflow are. Each is explained using an example.

Why take this class

Note

These are real comments submitted by former students. Dig through the [git blame](#) to see

You should take this class if you want to be introduced to some topics prior to taking 411 and 412. This class also allows you to gain some experience using the terminal, understanding the term `computing` and the topics surrounding it, and using version control systems such as git which are useful in the professional world.

This class offers great experience with real world computer science tools like github. This class will also expose you to intermediate computer science concepts. In total the skills learned in this class will make you a much more rounded computer science student.

You should take this class if you want to know more about what your computer is doing. This class will help you better understand error messages and will teach you bash scripting and git. I have not taken 411 yet but I hear this class is good to take before 411. I also believe this class is good to take before 305

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You should take this class if you want to get a headstart on your education and career. This class covers quite a bit, but each topic is designed to give you just enough so that you're not completely in the dark when you have to learn this stuff for a class. Additionally, being comfortable with version control systems is essential for not only school projects, but also your internships and jobs.

You should take this course if you want to get acquainted with the basic skills needed to use github and bash, two applications that will be used in the workplace. This class will also teach you background information on how computers work, both in how the a cs language interacts with the computer but also how the hardware relates to the processes of a computer and its languages.

This course offers an extremely helpful understanding of both git and github, I believe it would be especially beneficial to take before CSC305 and CSC412 which both use knowledge that would be learned in this course. I found that this course was able to help be strengthen my understanding on git and github in such a way that I know it will be beneficial to my education and career moving forward.

You should take this course if you want experience with different tools used in the computer science field or more knowledge on how IDEs' and programming languages work. This class gets your feet wet in many different aspects and you are able to gain a lot of knowledge within a short period of time with the assignments.

You should take this class if you want to understand more of a real software developer's workflow and begin to create your own code in a more professional way. The level of comfort that I have gained with Git is something that I believe will be invaluable to me as I enter my career as a professional developer. Getting more comfortable with working in the terminal and using simple bash scripts to automate tasks is another thing that I learned in this class which greatly increased my work efficiency. Getting introduced to some of the core topics for 411 and 412 ahead of time is also a huge benefit to this class as it will save you a ton of time when taking those courses.

You should take this class if you want to learn more about git, github, and how to use the terminal.

YOU should take this class because it introduces you to new concepts about computer science. It helps you gain experience/knowledge about real world applications. For example, we go over a lot of github commands and the many things you can do with github. This will help you in the real world but also while your still in school. Currently, I am still only in CSC 212 but I have already used github a bunch. With this class, I can now use github better.

You should take this class if you want to see how things will go in your future CSC classes this is a

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learn a lot about the history of github and computers and topics that you would normally not see in other CSC classes. You taught how to use version controls with GITHUB and how to approach projects with different languages.

This class offers experience with working with groups on assignments, you'll know how to approach your assignments for other classes in the future and you will be better prepared to do work and know what language you will need in the future.

I believe this class is important because for a student like me I did not know how to start my projects and I wasn't so secure with programming but a lot of the assignments for example made me research into other languages that are like the famous ones and I found it really interesting because it showed me there were more programming languages out there besides C and java. This will also allow you to learn scripting and bash which getting a head start with your future classes will help.