

Welcome to Programming for Data Science

Welcome to the course manual for CSC310 at URI.

This website will contain the syllabus, class notes and other reference material for the class.

Syllabus

Welcome to CSC/DSP310: Programming For Data Science.

In this syllabus you will find an overview of the course, information about your instructor, course policies, restatements of URI policies, reminders of relevant resources, and a schedule for the course.

About

About this course

Data science exists at the intersection of computer science, statistics, and machine learning. That means writing programs to access and manipulate data so that it becomes available for analysis using statistical and machine learning techniques is at the core of data science. Data scientists use their data and analytical ability to find and interpret rich data sources; manage large amounts of data despite hardware, software, and bandwidth constraints; merge data sources; ensure consistency of datasets; create visualizations to aid in understanding data; build mathematical models using the data; and present and communicate the data insights/findings.

This course provides a survey of data science. Topics include data driven programming in Python; data sets, file formats and meta-data; descriptive statistics, data visualization, and foundations of predictive data modeling and machine learning; accessing web data and databases; distributed data management. You will work on weekly substantial programming problems such as accessing data in database and visualize it or build machine learning models of a given data set.

Basic programming skills (CSC201 or CSC211) are a prerequisite to this course. This course is a prerequisite course to machine learning, where you learn how machine learning algorithms work. In this course, we will start with a very fast review of basic programming ideas, since you've already done that before. We will learn how to *use* machine learning algorithms to do data science, but not how to *build* machine learning algorithms, we'll use packages that implement the algorithms for us.

About this semester

This semester is a lot of new things for all of us. This course will be completely online all semester, so we will get to use a single instructional format all semester, including when all campus activities move remote after Thanksgiving. I recognize that those last two weeks of the semester may change your obligations with siblings, parents, work, etc. In light of that, we will cover all of the most important topics and you will have the opportunity to achieve all of the course learning outcomes before Thanksgiving. The material in the last two weeks of the semester will be more advanced, likely interesting and definitely useful material, but if your ability to participate in class is less at that time, it will not hurt your grade.

About this syllabus

This syllabus is a *living* document and accessible from BrightSpace, as a pdf for download directly online at rhodyprog4ds.github.io/BrownFall20/syllabus. If you choose to download a copy of it, note that it is only a copy. You can get notification of changes from GitHub by "watching" the [repository](#). You can view the date of changes and exactly what changes were made on Github.

Creating an [issue on the repository](#), is also a good way to ask questions about anything in the course it will prompt additions and expand the FAQ section.

About your instructor

Name: Dr. Sarah Brown Office hours: TBA via zoom, link in BrightSpace

Dr. Brown is a new Assistant Professor of Computer Science, who does research on how social context changes machine learning. Dr. Brown earned a PhD in Electrical Engineering from Northeastern University, completed a postdoctoral fellowship at University of California Berkeley, and worked as a postdoctoral research associate at Brown University before joining URI. At Brown University, Dr. Brown taught the Data and Society course for the Master's in Data Science Program.

The best way to contact me is e-mail or by dropping into my office hours. Please include [CSC310] or [DSP310] in the subject line of your email along with the topic of your message. This is important, because your messages are important, but I also get a lot of e-mail. Consider these a cheat code to my inbox: I have setup a filter that will flag your e-mail if you use one of those in the subject to ensure that I see it. I rarely check e-mail between 6pm and 9am, on weekends or holidays. You might see me post or send things during these hours, but I will not reliably see emails that arrive during those hours.

Note

Whether you use CSC or DSP does not matter.

Tools and Resources

We will use a variety of tools to conduct class and to facilitate your programming. You will need a computer with Linux, MacOS, or Windows. It is unlikely that a tablet or Chromebook will be able to do all of the things required in this course.

All of the tools below are either: - paid for by URI or - freely available online.

BrightSpace

This will be the central location from which you can access all other materials. Any links that are for private discussion among those enrolled in the course will be available only from our course [Brightspace site](#). This is also where your grades will appear.

Zoom

This is where we will meet for synchronous class sessions. You will find the link to class zoom sessions on Brightspace.

URI provides all faculty, staff, and students with a paid Zoom account. It *can* run in your browser or on a mobile device, but you will be able to participate in class best if you download the [Zoom client](#) on your computer. Please [log in](#) and [configure your account](#). Please add a photo of yourself to your account so that we can still see your likeness in some form, when your camera is off. You may also wish to use a virtual background and you are welcome to do so.

Class will be interactive, so if you cannot be in a quiet place at class time, headphones with a built in microphone are strongly recommended.

For help, you can access the [instructions provided by IT](#).

Prismia chat

Our class link for Prismia chat is available on Brightspace. We will use this for chatting and in-class understanding checks.

On Prismia, all students see the instructor's messages, but only the Instructor and TA see student responses.

####TL;DR

- [] check Brightspace
- [] Install Zoom
- [] Setup your URI Zoom Account
- [] Log in to Prismia Chat
- [] Make a GitHub Account
- [] Install Python
- [] Install Git

Course Manual

The course manual will have content including the class policies, scheduling, class notes, assignment information, and additional resources. This will be linked from Brightspace and available publicly online at rhodyprog4ds.github.io/BrownFall20/. Links to the course reference text and code documentation will also be included here in the assignments and class notes.

GitHub Classroom

You will need a GitHub Account. If you do not already have one, please create one by the first day of class. There will be a link to our class GitHub Classroom on Brightspace.

Programming Environment

This is a programming course, so you will need a programming environment. In order to complete assignments you need the items listed in the requirements list. The easiest way to meet these requirements is to follow the recommendations below. I will provide instruction assuming that you have followed the recommendations.

Requirements:

- Python with scientific computing packages (numpy, scipy, jupyter, pandas, etc)
- [Git](#)
- A web browser compatible with Jupyter Notebooks

Recommendation:

- Install python via [Anaconda](#)
- if you use Windows, install Git with [GitBash](#) ([video instructions](#)).
- if you use MacOS, install Git with the Xcode Command Line Tools. On Mavericks (10.9) or above you can do this by trying to run git from the Terminal the very first time. `git --version`

Optional:

- Text Editor: you may want a text editor outside of the Jupyter environment. Jupyter can edit markdown files (that you'll need for your portfolio), in browser, but it is more common to use a text editor like Atom or Sublime for this purpose.

Note

all Git instructions will be given as instructions for the command line interface and GitHub specific instructions via the web interface. You may choose to use GitHub desktop or built in IDE tools, but the instructional team may not be able to help.

Textbook

The text for this class is a reference book and will not be a source of assignments. It will be a helpful reference and you may be directed there for answers to questions or alternate explanations of topics.

Python for Data Science is available free [online](#):

Note

I use atom, but I decided to use it by downloading both Atom and Sublime and trying different things in each for a week. I liked Atom better after that and I've stuck with it since. I used Atom to write all of the content in this syllabus.

Grading

This section of the syllabus describes the principles and mechanics of the grading for the course. This course will be graded on a basis of a set of *skills* (described in detail the next section of the syllabus). This is in contrast to more common grading on a basis of points earned through assignments.

Principles of Grading

Learning happens through practice and feedback. My goal as a teacher is for you to learn. The grading in this course is based on your learning of the material, rather than your completion of the activities that are assigned.

This course is designed to encourage you to work steadily at learning the material and demonstrating your new knowledge. There are no single points of failure, where you lose points that cannot be recovered. Also, you cannot cram anything one time and then forget it. The material will build and you have to demonstrate that you retained things.

- Earning a C in this class is intended to be easier than typical grading. I expect everyone to get at least a C.
- Earning a B in this class is intended to be very accessible, you can make a lot of mistakes along the way as you learn, as long as you learn by the end.
- Earning an A in this class will be challenging, but is possible even with making mistakes while you learn.

Grading this way also is more amenable to the fact that there are correct and incorrect ways to do things, but there is not always a single correct answer to a realistic data science problem. Your work will be assessed on whether or not it demonstrates your learning of the targeted skills. You will also receive feedback on how to improve.

How it works

There are 15 skills that you will be graded on in this course. While learning these skills, you will work through a progression of learning. Your grade will be based on earning 45 achievements that are organized into 15 skill groups with 3 levels for each.

These map onto letter grades roughly as follows:

- If you achieve level 1 in all of the skills, you will earn at least a C in the course.
- To earn a B, you must earn all of the level 1 and level 2 achievements.
- To earn an A, you must earn all of the achievements.

You will have at least three opportunities to earn every level 2 achievement. You will have at least two opportunities to earn every level 3 achievement. You will have three *types* of opportunities to demonstrate your current skill level: participation, assignments, and a portfolio.

Each level of achievement corresponds to a phase in your learning of the skill:

- To earn level 1 achievements, you will need to demonstrate basic awareness of the required concepts and know approximately what to do, but you may need specific instructions of which things to do or to look up examples to modify every step of the way. You can earn level 1 achievements in class, assignments, or portfolio submissions.
- To earn level 2 achievements you will need to demonstrate understanding of the concepts and the ability to apply them with instruction after earning the level 1 achievement for that skill. You can earn level 2 achievements in assignments or portfolio submissions.
- To earn level 3 achievements you will be required to consistently execute each skill and demonstrate deep understanding of the course material, after achieving level 2 in that skill. You can earn level 3 achievements only through your portfolio submissions.

Participation

While attending synchronous class sessions, there will be understanding checks and in class exercises. Completing in class exercises and correctly answering questions in class can earn level 1 achievements. In class questions will be administered through the classroom chat platform Prismia.chat; these records will be used to update your skill progression.

Assignments

For your learning to progress and earn level 2 achievements, you must practice with the skills outside of class time.

Assignments will each evaluate certain skills. After your assignment is reviewed, you will get qualitative feedback on your work, and an assessment of your demonstration of the targeted skills.

Portfolio Checks

To earn level 3 achievements, you will build a portfolio consisting of reflections, challenge problems, and longer analyses over the course of the semester. You will submit your portfolio for review 4 times. The first two will cover the skills taught up until 1 week before the submission deadline.

The third and fourth portfolio checks will cover all of the skills. The fourth will be due during finals. This means that, if you have achieved mastery of all of the skills by the 3rd portfolio check, you do not need to submit the fourth one.

Portfolio prompts will be given throughout the class, some will be structured questions, others may be questions that arise in class, for which there is not time to answer.

TLDR

You *could* earn a C through in class participation alone, if you make nearly zero mistakes. To earn a B, you must complete assignments and participate in class. To earn an A you must participate, complete assignments, and build a portfolio.

Detailed mechanics

On Brightspace there are 45 Grade items that you will get a 0 or a 1 grade for. These will be revealed, so that you can view them as you have an opportunity to demonstrate each one. The table below shows the minimum number of skills at each level to earn each letter grade.

	Level 3	Level 2	Level 1
letter grade			
A	15	15	15
A-	10	15	15
B+	5	15	15
B	0	15	15
B-	0	10	15
C+	0	5	15
C	0	0	15
C-	0	0	10
D+	0	0	5
D	0	0	3

For example, if you achieve level 2 on all of the skills and level 3 on 7 skills, that will be a B+.

If you achieve level 3 on 14 of the skills, but only level 1 on one of the skills, that will be a B-, because the minimum number of level 2 achievements for a B is 15.

Late work

No late work will be graded. Every skill will be assessed through more than one assignment, so missing assignments occasionally *may* not hurt your grade. If you do not submit any assignments that cover a given skill, you may earn the level 2 achievement in that skill through a portfolio check, but you will not be able to earn the level 3 achievement in that skill.

Learning Objective, Schedule, and Rubric

Learning Outcomes

There are five learning outcomes for this course.

keyword	
process	Describe the process of data science, define each phase, and identify
standard tools	
data	Access and combine data in multiple
formats for analysis	
exploratory	Perform exploratory data analyses including descriptive statistics and
visualization	
modeling	Select models for data by applying and evaluating mutiple models to a
single dataset	
communicate	Communicate solutions to problems with data in common
industry formats	
Name: outcome, dtype: object	

We will build your skill in the **process** and **communicate** outcomes over the whole semester. The middle three skills will correspond roughly to the content taught for each of the first three portfolio checks.

Schedule

The course will meet MWF 1-1:50pm on Zoom. Every class will include participatory live coding (instructor types, students follow along)) instruction and small exercises for you to progress toward level 1 achievements of the new skills introduced in class that day.

Programming assignments that will be due each week Sunday by 11:59pm.

Note

In this example, you will have also achieved level 1 on all of the skills, because it is a prerequisite to level 2.

Note

You may visit office hours to discuss assignments that you did not complete on time to get feedback and check your own understanding, but they will not count toward skill demonstration.

week	topics	skills
1	[admin, python review]	process
2	Loading data, Python review	[access, prepare, summarize]
3	Exploratory Data Analysis	[summarize, visualize]
4	Data Cleaning	[prepare, summarize, visualize]
5	Databases, Merging DataFrames	[access, construct, summarize]
6	Modeling, Naive Bayes, classification performance metrics	[classification, evaluate]
7	decision trees, cross validation	[classification, evaluate]
8	Regression	[regression, evaluate]
9	Clustering	[clustering, evaluate]
10	SVM, parameter tuning	[optimize, tools]
11	KNN, Model comparison	[compare, tools]
12	Text Analysis	[unstructured]
13	Topic Modeling	[unstructured, tools]
14	Deep Learning	[tools, compare]

Note

On the [BrightSpace calendar](#) page you can get a feed link to add to the calendar of your choice by clicking on the subscribe (star) button on the top right of the page. Class is for 1 hour there because of Brightspace/zoom integration limitations, but that calendar includes the zoom link.

Skill Rubric

The skill rubric describes how your participation, assignments, and portfolios will be assessed to earn each achievement. The keyword for each skill is a short name that will be used to refer to skills throughout the course materials; the full description of the skill is in this table.

	skill	Level 1	Level 2	Level 3
keyword				
python	pythonic code writing	python code that mostly runs, occasional pep8 adherence	python code that reliably runs, frequent pep8 adherence	reliable, efficient, pythonic code that consistently adheres to pep8
process	describe data science as a process	Identify basic components for data science	Describe and define each stage of the data science process	Compare different ways that data science can occur
access	access data in multiple formats	load data from at least one format; identify the most common data formats	Load data for processing from the most common formats; Compare and contrast most common formats	access data from both common and uncommon formats and identify best practices for formats in different contexts
construct	construct datasets from multiple sources	identify what should happen to merge datasets or when they can be merged	apply basic merges	merge data that is not automatically aligned
summarize	Summarize and describe data	Describe the shape and structure of a dataset in basic terms	compute summary statistics of a whole dataset	Compute summary statistics of subsets of data
visualize	Visualize data	identify plot types, generate basic plots from pandas	generate multiple plot types with complete labeling with pandas and customize with matplotlib	generate complex plots with pandas and plotting libraries
prepare	prepare data for analysis	identify if data is or is not ready for analysis, potential problems with data	apply data reshaping, cleaning, and filtering as directed	apply data reshaping, cleaning, and filtering manipulations reliably and correctly by assessing data as received
classification	Apply classification	identify and describe what classification is, apply pre-fit classification models	fit preselected classification model to a dataset	fit and apply classification models and select appropriate classification models for different contexts
regression	Apply Regression	identify what data that can be used for regression looks like	can fit linear regression models	can fit and explain nonlinear regression
clustering	Clustering	describe what clustering is	apply basic clustering	apply multiple clustering techniques, and interpret results
evaluate	Evaluate model performance	Explain basic performance metrics for different data science tasks	Apply basic model evaluation metrics to a held out test set	Evaluate a model with multiple metrics and cross validation
optimize	Optimize model parameters	Identify when model parameters need to be optimized	Manually optimize basic model parameters such as model order	Select optimal parameters based on multiple quantitative criteria and automate parameter tuning
compare	compare models	Qualitatively compare model classes	Compare model classes in specific terms and fit models in terms of traditional model performance metrics	Evaluate tradeoffs between different model comparison types

	skill	Level 1	Level 2	Level 3
keyword				
unstructured	model	Identify options for representing text data and use them once data is tranformed	Apply at least one representation to transform unstructured data for model fitting or summarizing	apply mulitple representations and compare and contrast them for different end results
	unstructured data			
tools	use industry standard data science tools and workflows to solve data science problems	Solve well strucutred problems with a single tool pipeline	Solve semi-structured, completely specified problems with multiple tools	Scope, choose an appropriate tool pipeline and solve data science problems

Assignments and Skills

Using the keywords from the table above, this table shows which assignments you will be able to demonstrate which skills and the total number of assignments that assess each skill. This is the number of opportunities you have to earn Level 2 and still preserve 2 chances to earn Level 3 for each skill.

	A1	A2	A3	A4	A5	A6	A7	A8	A9	A10	A11	A12	A13	# Assignments
keyword														
python	1	1	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	4
process	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2
access	0	1	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	3
construct	0	0	0	0	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2
summarize	0	0	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	11
visualize	0	0	1	0	0	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	9
prepare	0	0	0	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2
classification	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	0	0	1	0	0	0	3
regression	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	1	0	0	2
clustering	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	1	0	0	2
evaluate	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	0	0	2
optimize	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	0	0	2
compare	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	1	2
unstructured	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	2
tools	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	1	1	4

Portfolios and Skills

The objective of your portfolio submissions is to earn level 3 achievements. The following table shows what Level 3 looks like for each skill and identifies which portfolio submissions you can earn that Level 3 in that skill.

		Level 3	P1	P2	P3	P4
keyword						
python	reliable, efficient, pythonic code that consistently adheres to pep8	1	1	0	0	
process	Compare different ways that data science can occur	0	1	1	0	
access	access data from both common and uncommon formats and identify best practices for formats in different contexts	1	1	0	0	
construct	merge data that is not automatically aligned	1	1	0	0	
summarize	Compute summary statistics of subsets of data	1	1	0	0	
visualize	generate complex plots with pandas and plotting libraries	1	1	0	0	
prepare	apply data reshaping, cleaning, and filtering manipulations reliably and correctly by assessing data as received	1	1	0	0	
classification	fit and apply classification models and select appropriate classification models for different contexts	0	1	1	0	
regression	can fit and explain nonlinear regression	0	1	1	0	
clustering	apply multiple clustering techniques, and interpret results	0	1	1	0	
evaluate	Evaluate a model with multiple metrics and cross validation	0	1	1	0	
optimize	Select optimal parameters based of mutiple quanttiateve criteria and automate parameter tuning	0	0	1	1	
compare	Evaluate tradeoffs between different model comparison types	0	0	1	1	
unstructured	apply mulitple representations and compare and contrast them for different end results	0	0	1	1	
tools	Scope, choose an appropriate tool pipeline and solve data science problems	0	0	1	1	

Support

Academic Enhancement Center

Located in Roosevelt Hall, the AEC offers free face to face and web-based services to undergraduate students seeking academic support. Peer tutoring is available for STEM-related courses through drop-in centers and small group tutoring. The Writing Center offers peer tutoring focused on supporting undergraduate writers at any stage of a writing assignment. The UCS160 course and academic skills consultations offer students strategies and activities aimed at improving their studying and test-taking skills. Complete details about each of these programs, up-to-date schedules, contact information and self-service study resources are all available on the AEC website.

- **STEM Tutoring** helps students navigate 100 and 200 level math, chemistry, physics, biology, and other select STEM courses. The STEM Tutoring program offers free online and limited in-person peer-tutoring this fall. Undergraduates in introductory STEM courses have a variety of small group times to choose from and can select occasional or weekly appointments. Appointments and locations will be visible in the TutorTrac system on September 14th, 2020. The TutorTrac application is available through [URI Microsoft 365 single sign-on](#) and by visiting aec.uri.edu. More detailed information and instructions can be found on the AEC tutoring page.
- **Academic Skills Development** resources helps students plan work, manage time, and study more effectively. In Fall 2020, all Academic Skills and Strategies programming are offered both online and in-person. UCS160: Success in Higher Education is a one-credit course on developing a more effective approach to studying. Academic Consultations are 30-minute, 1 to 1 appointments that students can schedule on Starfish with Dr. David Hayes to address individual academic issues. Study Your Way to Success is a self-guided web portal connecting students to tips and strategies on studying and time management related topics. For more information on these programs, visit the Academic Skills Page or contact Dr. Hayes directly at davidhayes@uri.edu.
- The **Undergraduate Writing Center** provides free writing support to students in any class, at any stage of the writing process: from understanding an assignment and brainstorming ideas, to developing, organizing, and revising a draft. Fall 2020 services are offered through two online options: 1) real-time synchronous appointments with a peer consultant (25- and 50-minute slots, available Sunday - Friday), and 2) written asynchronous consultations with a 24-hour turn-around response time (available Monday - Friday).

Synchronous appointments are video-based, with audio, chat, document-sharing, and live captioning capabilities, to meet a range of accessibility needs. View the synchronous and asynchronous schedules and book online, visit uri.mywconline.com.

Policies

Anti-Bias Statement

We respect the rights and dignity of each individual and group. We reject prejudice and intolerance, and we work to understand differences. We believe that equity and inclusion are critical components for campus community members to thrive. If you are a target or a witness of a bias incident, you are encouraged to submit a report to the URI Bias Response Team at www.uri.edu/brt. There you will also find people and resources to help.

Disability Services for Students Statement

Your access in this course is important. Please send me your Disability Services for Students (DSS) accommodation letter early in the semester so that we have adequate time to discuss and arrange your approved academic accommodations. If you have not yet established services through DSS, please contact them to engage in a confidential conversation about the process for requesting reasonable accommodations in the classroom. DSS can be reached by calling: 401-874-2098, visiting: web.uri.edu/disability, or emailing: dss@etal.uri.edu. They are available to meet with students enrolled in Kingston as well as Providence courses.

Academic Honesty

Students are expected to be honest in all academic work. A student's name on any written work, quiz or exam shall be regarded as assurance that the work is the result of the student's own independent thought and study. Work should be stated in the student's own words, properly attributed to its source. Students have an obligation to know how to quote, paraphrase, summarize, cite and reference the work of others with integrity. The following are examples of academic dishonesty.

- Using material, directly or paraphrasing, from published sources (print or electronic) without appropriate citation
- Claiming disproportionate credit for work not done independently
- Unauthorized possession or access to exams
- Unauthorized communication during exams
- Unauthorized use of another's work or preparing work for another student
- Taking an exam for another student
- Altering or attempting to alter grades
- The use of notes or electronic devices to gain an unauthorized advantage during exams
- Fabricating or falsifying facts, data or references
- Facilitating or aiding another's academic dishonesty
- Submitting the same paper for more than one course without prior approval from the instructors

URI COVID-19 Statement

The University is committed to delivering its educational mission while protecting the health and safety of our students. At this uncertain time, those concerns include minimizing the potential spread of COVID-19 within our community. While the university has worked this summer to create a healthy learning environment for all, it is up to all of us to ensure our campus stays that way.

As members of the URI community, students are required to comply with standards of conduct and take precautions to keep themselves and others safe. Students are required to comply with Rhode Island state laws, including the Rhode Island Executive Orders related to health and safety, ordinances, regulations, and guidance adopted by the University as it relates to public health crises, such as COVID-19.

An addendum on policies and guidelines concerning your obligations during this crisis has recently been integrated into the Student Handbook. These obligations include:

- Wearing of face masks by all community members when on a URI campus in the presence of others
- Maintaining physical distancing of at least six feet at all times

- Following state rules on the number of individuals allowed in a group gathering
- Completing a daily health self-assessment also available through the Rhody Connect app before coming to campus
- Submitting to COVID-19 testing as the University monitors the health of our community
- Following the University's quarantine and isolation requirements

If you answer yes to any of the questions on the daily health assessment, do not go to campus. **YOU MUST STAY HOME/IN YOUR ROOM** and notify URI Health Services via phone at 401-874-2246 immediately.

If you are already on campus and start to feel ill, you need to remove yourself from the public and notify URI Health Services via phone immediately at 401-874-2246 and go home/back to your room and self-isolate while you await direction from Health Services.

If you are unable to attend class, please notify me at brownsarahm@uri.edu or through the medium we have established for the class. We will work together to ensure that course instruction and work is completed for the semester.

Syllabus FAQ

How much does x assignment weigh in my grade?

There is no specific weight for any assignment, because your grade is based on earning achievements for the skills listed in the skills rubric.

By Professor Sarah M Brown
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