

Class Policies

Instructor: Dr. Kevin Cherry
Nethken 239
(318) 257-2920

Office Hours: Monday: 1:15pm - 3:20pm, 5:00pm - 5:50pm
Tuesday: 7:15am - 7:50am
Wednesday: 1:15pm - 3:20pm
Thursday: 7:15am - 7:50am
Friday: 1:15pm - 3:20pm, 5:00pm - 5:50pm

Email: drcherry@latech.edu

Website: <https://crystalgrading.com>

Grading Scale:

```
if avg >= 90: return 'A'
if avg >= 80: return 'B'
if avg >= 70: return 'C'
if avg >= 60: return 'D'
return 'F'
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NOTE: The Computer Science Undergraduate Program requires a **C** or better in any course in the College of Engineering and Science prior to taking courses for which these are prerequisites. A student must have at least a **2.0 GPA** in all Computer Science courses (which includes **all attempts**).

COMMUNICATION: The following questions will not be answered during this quarter:

- When is our exam, the next assignment or any questions regarding the schedule
 - The schedule is posted on Canvas and it is your responsibility to check it if you want to know what will happen on what day
 - If there are changes, I will let you know. If something is postponed, I will let you know. If we need to move everything back one class period, I will let you know. I will also try to keep the schedule as up to date as possible so it remains accurate.
- When is your office hours?
 - They are posted above. If you can read this document then you can read my office hours. This document is posted on Canvas. Memorize, write it down, keep a notecard in your pocket or find some other way to recall my office hours
- When can I come by your office?
 - During my office hours.
- If I make a [insert grade here] on the next exam, can I pass the course?
 - My website has an awesome feature for this! Simply click on the words "not graded yet" on any assignment that hasn't been graded and enter in the grade you expect to make. The website will show you how your grade will be affected in the course.

- It's the end of the quarter and I don't like my grade
 - I have no problem discussing grading issues **during** the quarter. I will give back any points deducted in error after my review. However, when the quarter is finished and final grades are posted, that is not the time to bring up grading issues. I reserve the right to ignore any emails discussing grades after final grades are posted. If you are truly concerned about your grade you won't wait until the end of the quarter to talk about it.
- "Why did I get points off for some silly mistake or why is your grading so nitpicky?"
 - For some reason, certain students think that directions for an assignment, homework problem or exam problem are just suggestions that can be ignored. Let me be clear about something, following directions is a very important skill that is inexplicably lacking in some people. When you have a career, directions given to you by a client or your boss are not up for discussion (in most cases). In fact, sometimes if directions aren't followed, a lawsuit could ensue, and you could be fired. I want to stress the importance of following directions in my classes and therefore I will take off points for any student ignoring my directions.
 - To give examples of what I mean, when I say I want output to match "exactly", I don't mean approximately. When I say refer to a worksheet or practice problem, I don't mean refer to lecture notes. When I say circle your answer on an exam, I want you to circle your answer. I choose my words carefully and I say what it is that I mean.
 - Some students still see this as nitpicking but college is meant to prepare you for a career and that's exactly what I am doing here. As you learn to pay more attention to details, you become more marketable to a company and in turn can have a more successful career. This is for your benefit, whether you realize this or not.
- Grammar issues
 - If I can't understand your email due to grammar and spelling issues, then I will not answer it. Period. It can be a sign of disrespect to have several mistakes in a correspondence with only a few sentences. Proofread your emails or they won't be answered.

COMMON MISTAKES:

- "My code works fine on my laptop, why doesn't it work for you when you graded it?"
 - This is a common complaint and I have a very simple solution. When you upload your submission for an assignment, refresh the browser page and now download the file(s) you just submitted somewhere on your machine. Compile and run the code you just downloaded. If it works fine for you, IT WILL 100% work fine for me. So, if you receive points off because your code didn't run, this means you did not follow the above steps and you have submitted code that does not run. Period.
- "I thought I submitted the assignment but Canvas/Course Website must have messed up."
 - No software is perfect. Whether it be Canvas or some other website, you are responsible for making sure your submission goes through. If you follow the steps directly above, this won't be an issue. If you continue to try to submit and it isn't working, it is your responsibility to let me know as soon as possible (well before the deadline) so I can fix the issue. Students waiting until the last minute to submit and/or not adhering to this simple guideline will lose points if a submission issue occurs.

- About homework and other take home assignments
 - If you have homework where you must write code, always test it. Think about it like this, you have a machine in front of you that is capable of telling you whether you got the answer right or not on a homework assignment. Why not use it? Also test your code out before writing it down on a homework assignment and turning it in.
 - This is the same for any homework where a demo file has been given. If I give you a demo file to run that contains visualizations on a particular algorithm or data structure and then give you a homework on those algorithms/data structures, you should absolutely use the demo visualizations to check your answers before turning in your homework. It doesn't make any sense not to.
- Take responsibility!
 - In the real world outside of this university, stuff happens all the time. As a professional, you need to learn to adapt. If your Raspberry Pi or main computing device can't connect to WiFi, we have computers on campus that you can use. Use a jump drive to transfer data. If your device breaks down, either get it fixed or find a way to get/use another one. If you miss class, get notes and any announcements from a classmate. In general, if something happens that makes it difficult for you to complete an assignment or study for an exam, it is your responsibility to be resourceful and find a way to still do your best in this class. Most of the time when students email me of certain things happening, I can think of a dozen different ways they can work around it and yet some students use these events as a crutch to excuse bad work on an assignment or exam. This isn't tolerated in the real world so why should it be tolerated here? Obviously, there are exceptions to this, but it will be at my discretion as to whether an exception should be made for a particular circumstance.
- "I'm trying but I'm still failing, is there any way I can get bonus points?"
 - In some of my classes, I do give bonus. I've already made that decision before the class starts for the quarter. Sometimes I will give an extra assignment to everyone if I see overall the class is struggling. However, if you try your best on every assignment, exam, etc. and you make a habit of coming to class every single class period, there is a strong chance you will pass even without this. I've found that the people receiving F's in my class are those that do not attend class regularly and/or have one or more zeros on their assignments because they just didn't turn it in. I could be the nicest professor when it comes to partial credit but if you don't even try then you get a 0% for the assignment; no other grade makes any sense. I can't help those that are unwilling to even try. Also, COME TO MY OFFICE HOURS! I've had several students walk in, ask some questions and walk out saying things like "that makes so much more sense now!" or "I get it!". If you want to make a passing grade in this course, your chances are exponentially better if you do the following:
 - Take EVERY ASSIGNMENT seriously
 - Attend class regularly (at least 90% of the time)
 - Take notes and re-read the lecture material
 - Code. Code. Code.
 - See me during my office hours with any questions/confusion on any topics

ACADEMIC HONESTY: I do not tolerate plagiarism or cheating of *any* kind. This includes—but is not limited to—copying of or collaboration on programs, copying of assignments, getting help on exams, getting AI to provide too much help on assignments/homeworks, etc. Students are expected to do their own work on all assignments. Students are expected to adhere to the Academic Honor Code (link on syllabus). The first time you cheat on any assignment (except tests), you will receive a score equal to the *negative* of what you would have received had you not cheated; subsequent occurrences result in an **F** for the course. If you cheat on a test, you will receive an **F** for the course. **I will report ALL instances of cheating to the university to be dealt with how they see fit.** Penalties can involve expulsion from the university. No amount of “I didn’t know”, “I thought it was ok” or “it’s just a coincidence that both our submissions are identical” will help. If you cheat, you will receive the full consequences regardless of any excuses you may have or pleading you may do. Please note that I am very supportive of the discussion of general techniques or logical insights used to complete assignments, but absolutely no code or specific implementation(s) may be shared (i.e., you must write your own code without the assistance of others). Note that I am not able to determine if your code is being used with or without your permission and in cases of copying, both students will receive the same penalty.

GENERATIVE AI and ONLINE HELP: You may use generative AI or other online resources to help you study and learn the course material. In fact, this may be a great resource! Do note that if AI is wrong about anything, you may be learning something incorrect. So do fact check everything. You may use AI to help you learn concepts that you can apply to assignments. However, you are not permitted to have AI directly generate any answers or code that you use for an assignment. Doing so is a violation of the academic honesty policy and is subject to the penalties stated directly above this paragraph. In summary, you can use AI to learn, not to do.

CLASS ATTENDANCE: Good class attendance is very important and tends to convince me that you are making an effort; this may help boost borderline grades at the end of the quarter. Note that attendance may affect your university/financial aid standing. Whenever you are absent, it is **your** responsibility to obtain the material that was covered in class (including assignments/programs and due dates, announcements, etc). I cannot always give a detailed explanation of what all was covered or what topics we learned about, so get with other classmates to find out what you missed. Note that it is your responsibility to turn in assignments on time even if you are absent.

TESTS: I don't like doing make up tests. So as a general rule, no makeup tests are given. However, if you must miss a test, and you provide a valid excuse (preferably in advance of the test), I may replace your test score with your final exam score (at my discretion). If no valid excuse is given, the missed test grade will be a zero. A maximum of one test score can be replaced. Note that I am the sole judge of the validity of an excuse.

ASSIGNMENTS: Assignments are either to be turned in on Canvas by the designated time and date shown or turned in during class in hard copy form. If a hard copy assignment is turned in without a name, I reserve the right to deduct points as a penalty, the amount of which is at my discretion. Some assignments (including all puzzles, exams, and all assignments to be turned in during class) will not be accepted late. Assignments turned in on Canvas have the following late policy:

- If an assignment is 1 second up to 24 hours late, 25% of its value will be deducted.

- If an assignment is 24 hours up to 48 hours late, 50% of its value will be deducted.
- No assignments turned in later than 48 hours past the due date will be accepted!

This policy may be altered for any assignments whose due date lands at the end of the quarter. For these assignments, I may not accept late submissions since I will need to turn in final grades.

ASSISTANCE WITH ASSIGNMENTS: You are strongly encouraged to ask questions in class to clarify any uncertainties you may have. If you don't understand any topic, concept, or idea, you should ask immediately. Please don't convince yourself of going home, studying the material, and then asking a *smart* question later; if you don't understand and don't ask immediately, that's not very smart. I will be glad to help you during my office hours so long as you have demonstrated a reasonable attempt at thinking about the problem on your own first. **For help with programs, please email me your source code or show it to me during my office hours. I can't help you unless I can see your code.**

ELECTRONIC DEVICES: You may use electronic devices in my class so long as they are **quiet** and until such time that they become a nuisance to me or to others. Please set your phone to Do Not Disturb (or turn it off) when entering class. If your phone rings and you must answer the call, please leave the room before doing so. Note that I do strongly encourage you to completely put your phone away for the short time we meet every week for class. If you miss anything I say because you are looking at your phone, that's on you.

OFFICE HOURS: I don't hold office hours on the first week of class. On the last week of class, I will be in and out of my office so I may not be in during office hours. For all other weeks, aside from holidays, I will be in my office during normal office hours. If you come to my office during office hours and I am not there, please wait a few minutes. If I still don't show up, please send me an email. I might have gotten pulled away for some last-minute meeting.

REGRADING: I am human and make mistakes just like everyone else. If you feel that I have made a mistake in any graded work, you must let me know within **one week** of having it physically returned to you or when a grade is posted on the grading website. After this one week period, I reserve the right to not revisit the graded assignment and will not honor any grading complaints made on it. Do not complain at the end of the quarter (or past the end) that something wasn't graded correctly and that lead you to receive a bad grade in the course. **Please note that once final grades are posted I will not revisit any graded assignments/exams. This means the one week policy is only in effect before final grades are posted.** I will gladly refund erroneously deducted points; however, keep in mind that I reserve the right to regrade the work in its entirety. Note that certain work I must retain in my office. You are free to see this work during my office hours. The retention of any work does not elongate nor modify the one week period stated.

CLASSROOM BEHAVIOR: I want everyone to be comfortable in my class. As long as we don't have electronic university equipment around, I'm ok with allowing food and drink during class. I'd rather you bring your breakfast or coffee than to skip it and not pay attention because you're hungry or need caffeine. If, however, any behavior becomes distracting during class or if any student has an issue and brings it up with me, I may revoke these privileges for all students. I've found that students who are relaxed and comfortable are more receptive to receiving the information during a lecture, but I don't want that to become distracting to other students.

COMPUTER LABS: The university has computer labs at various places on campus. I have no idea where these are at, but I have faith that they exist... somewhere. Either way you all have your own laptops, so you will probably never need to use this resource.

TEAM PROJECTS: For any team projects, there may be portions of the rubric that are scored individually. This could lead to different members receiving different grades.

DROP DEADLINE: Friday Feb 7th, 2025

This is the last day to drop/resign from a class with a **W**. After this date, you are not allowed to drop this class with any grade other than an **F** regardless of your current grade in the class.

ACCOMMODATIONS FOR STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES: Students requiring testing or classroom accommodations based on a disability are encouraged to discuss those needs with me as soon as possible. For more information, please see www.latech.edu/ods.