Homework 0

Computing in the Wild

Due September 10, 2021 at 5pm

In this assignment, you'll briefly discuss some aspects of this course (and computer science more broadly) and turn in a pdf format document with your answers.

Learning Goals

1. Verify that you have read the syllabus.
2. Identify some interesting aspects of computer science.
3. Demonstrate that you can successfully turn in an assignment.

The Assignment

Answer the following four questions:

1. Did you read the whole syllabus? What surprised you the most? What would you like to know more about?
    a. Yes I did, the thing that surprised me the most was the grade split that is used in the course. I appreciate that in this environment the actual coding projects/homeworks are valued over the exams. I'd like to know more about how best to engage with the TA's and MLA's for assistance.
2. How can computing be used to improve something you care about or solve a problem that you are concerned about?
    a. I would like to think that computing could play a role in solving the problems of the less fortunate to some extent. I recently returned from a year deployment to the Horn of Africa and I believe that technologically developed countries can develop solutions to the less fortunate countries in this world to make everything better. For example, one could design AI to predict and mitigate attacks/terrorism in those countries or design programs to allow for efficiency of resource usage.
3. What is a strength or advantage that you bring to this course? Why does that matter?
    a. Entering into this program as an older student (22 years old) I think that while my life experience is not vast, I can bring some perspective on issues solved with computing in this course and generally see things in a different light than those fresh out of high school. That being said I believe that multiple outlooks are needed to create really anything in order to consider all possible usages / outcomes. I as well have some experience operating unmanned aircraft in the Army and I think that will help me be able to visualize outcomes when dealing with the computer-code relationship.

Each answer should be about a paragraph long (your answer to Question 1 can be shorter). You should use correct spelling and grammar.

How to turn in your homework

Submit your pdf document at the COS125 Brightspace site, which can be found at courses.maine.edu. The submission link can be found under the Assignments tab, found under

Assessments. Make sure to use the "Homework 0" link to submit, and upload your .pdf following the instructions on this page.

Why is this homework numbered 0?

Computer scientists generally start indexing at zero. There are a host of possible reasons for this: small efficiencies in storage, ease of computing memory addresses, cleanness of resulting notation, philosophical beauty of starting with the first natural number, or just general contrariness. It also matches how Europeans number the floors in their buildings (ground, first, second, etc.), but that's probably not it. This one of the small secret handshakes of computer science – you can use it to subtly declare your membership in the club. In this instance, though, it is also a small inside joke that this is the easiest of the assignments in this course and you really don't want to use your free late on this one.