Educational information systems and networks

Matthew X. Curinga

Tom Jennings

Christian Correa

David Frackman

Table of Contents

**0858-606, Summer 2019**

**Description:** From a foundation of computer networks and systems, this course expands to cover instructional technology infrastructure: file systems, users, wired and wireless networks, email, web servers, computer labs, and common educational software services. This course focuses on Free Software; where the source code is free to use, study, or modify. To explore these topics in this hands on class all students will be configuring their own Raspberry Pi computers and using them to complete a software/hardware project.

**Keywords:** linux, bash, systems, networks, lamp, free software, trouble shooting, technical project management, rasberry pi, physical computing, debian, ubuntu

# Goals & Objectives

This course introduces students to the key concepts in current networked computing in order to develop a conceptual framework for configuring and troubleshooting computing systems. Upon completing this course they will be able to:

* set up a secure, network computing environment
* effectively use the basic tools of GNU/Linux computing environments
* implement techniques for administering group and user permissions
* install and troubleshoot hardware and software infrastructure for networked and internet computing
* configure a client/user computer for specific purposes
* configure various server-side applications to support teaching and learning
* identify the ethical and legal concerns surrounding educational information systems

# Class Information

**Instructors:**

Tom Jennings [tjennings@adelphi.edu](mailto:tjennings@adelphi.edu)

Christian Correa [correa@adelphi.edu](mailto:correa@adelphi.edu)

**Class dates:**

Tuesday, May 28 - Monday, July 1

**Lab sessions:**

weekly lab sessions TBA

# Course Communications

This is a *fully online course*. There is no set class time for video chat or live lectures. However, there will be two live lab sessions each week held by the instructors, using video conferencing, screen sharing, and other tools. You will be required to attend at least 4 of these sessions.

Participants in this course must actively participate in our suite of online communications tools, including Slack (<https://auedtech.slack.com>), Adelphi email, and the course website.

You *must* check your Adelphi email and the #raspberrypi channel on Slack **at least once a day.** It is highly recommended that you install the Slack mobile client and an email client on your mobile phone so that you receive “push notifications” of course announcements.

The best place to post general course questions and any content-related questions is the #raspberrypi Slack channel. The instructor and course assistant, as well as other students and alums monitor this channel and often provide immediate support. You are encouraged to contact the instructors at any time via email or direct message on Slack.

**Online tools:**

* **Moodle:** will be used to post the syllabus and links to weekly readings, videos, and discussions.
* **Slack:** will be our main channel for online communications. Please [Join our Slack team with your Adelphi email](https://auedtech.slack.com/signup). If you run into trouble or have a question, post it here to our channel, #raspberrypi, or send a message to @tomjennings. During the weeks of the class, we recommend running the Slack app for you phone.
* **Trello:** is project management software that you will use to track/plan your two projects, and to share your progress with the course instructors. Create a [Trello Account](https://trello.com/signup) before the first week of class, and (optionally) [install the mobile app](https://trello.com/platforms).
* **mail.adelphi.edu email:** we will use your official adelphi student email for class email communications as well as the associated google account for video/audio chats and calendar events. Please check this email regularly.

# Required Books

*None*

# Required Materials

## Desktop/Laptop

You must have access to a desktop computer running Linux, Windows, or MacOS to participate in this course. You will use this computer to participate in the course online and to configure and connect or your RPI. You can use a phone or tablet for some online elements of the course, however you will not be able to complete course assignments without access to a computer where you are able to install software.

In addition to the computer, you must have a webcam, headphones, and microphone to participate in live video chat and to record your screencasts.

## Raspberry Pi

Every student *must* purchase a Raspberry Pi (RPI) computer and accessories for use in this course. You will keep your own hardware.

The core setup **required** for all students (~$50):

* Raspberry Pi model 3 B+ [Buy on Ada Fruit](https://www.adafruit.com/product/3775)
* 16GB Micro SD Card (at least 2 recommended)

*You must have your RPI* ***before*** *the first week of class.*

In the spirit of Raspberry Pi and DIY, we encourage you to re-use any of these items that you might already have or might be able to buy second hand. You will need these items, but don’t need to buy them new. If you are unsure, you can wait until after the first class to make your purchase.

* USB Keyboard and Mouse
* Micro USB charger (you can use a phone charger)
* HDMI Cable
* Computer Monitor or TV with HDMI input (or you may need an HDMI to VGA adapter)
* USB Card reader for your MicroSD card

If you purchased everything except the monitor it would cost another $35-$50.

In addition to these core materials, you will also need to purchase/acquire materials to complete your final project (see below). Costs may range from $20-$80.

# Books & Resources

* [Raspberry Pi Foundation](https://www.raspberrypi.org/)
* [Ada Fruit](https://www.adafruit.com/)
* Crowley, C. 2017. [*Raspberry Pi: The Unofficial Tutorial*](http://cdn.makeuseof.com/wp-content/uploads/2017/07/Raspberry-Pi-The-Unofficial-Tutorial.pdf)
* [Make: Magazine](https://makezine.com/)
* [Explaining Computers Series](https://www.youtube.com/user/explainingcomputers/videos) (Youtube)

# Class sessions

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Session | Date | Topic |
| 1 | Tue, May 28 | Computers & Operating Systems |
| 2 | Tue, Jun 4 | The Command Line |
| 3 | Tue, Jun 11 | Users, Groups, Files, & Permissions |
| 4 | Tue, Jun 18 | Networks |
| 5 | Tue, Jun 25 | Ethics |
| 6 | Mon, Jul 1 | Projects Due |

# Grades & Assignments

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Assignment | Pct | Due |
| Participation | 20% | ongoing |
| RPI Client or Server Setup | 40% | 6/17 |
| Final RPI Project | 40% | 7/1 |

## Participation

Because this is a short summer course (3 credits in 6 weeks), you should budget 10-15 hours each week for course work. You must join at least 4 of the live lab sessions. During these labs, the course instructors will be available for help with projects and will demonstrate over video and screensharing some of the key techniques of the week. We recommend that you join at least one live lab each week. Your participation grade will consider your participation in class, timely management of your Trello projects, and participation in Slack and Moodle discussions. Smaller weekly assignments (like the networking mini-report) will inform your participation grade.

## RPI Client or Server Setup

For our first project you will configure your Raspberry Pi for a specific educational scenario: a general computer for 4th grade classroom computer station, a setup to teach computer programming for kids, a development server for the Canvas LMS, a web server to host static HTML/Javascript projects, a managed computer lab setup, etc.

You will present your project as a narrated screencast. In addition to demonstrating the software, you will upload a report which details:

* a description of the target audience and how you envision they would use the RPI
* the process you used to find, test, and configure the RPI
* key features of the software installed
* advantages, disadvantages, and other implications of your design

You will be evaluated on:

* demonstration of your understanding of RPI hardware and software
* suitability of your solution for your stated audience/problem
* risk/complexity of the task undertaken
* reflection on the process

*This is an individual project.*

## DIY Project

One of the key technical tasks of an educational technologist or instructional designer is to research and evaluate possible solutions to a problem and then implement a plan to test a possible solution. Real world problems often require the combination of several systems in a new way, suffer from incomplete or inaccurate documentation, and are hindered by time or resources/financial constraints.

With this in mind, you will choose an RPI project that you find interesting and engaging to pursue for your final project. You will be responsible for gathering/purchasing the materials to complete the project.

You will be evaluated on:

* skill with RPI hardware
* skill with RPI software
* creativity of the project chosen
* risk/scope of the project
* reflection on the process

This is a *paired project.* You and a partner of your choice will work on the same project. You will share a Trello and set goals together, however you will both complete the project independently and will receive an individual grade. Your partner will serve as a resource for planning and troubleshooting problems that arise during the course of the project.

With the instructors’ permission, you may work on this project individually.

While you are free to pursue your own project, you are welcome to choose a project from this list:

1. **MyCroft Open Source personal assistant** <https://mycroft.ai> MyCroft is a Free Software alternative to systems such as Alexa and Google Assistant. While it runs on a regular desktop computer, it was designed to work on a RPI. You can download a pre-configured SD Card image to get started with “PiCroft”. For this project, you will download and configure MyCroft for your Pi; create and connect to your online account, configure and test the microphone and audio output, and customize the features and functionality of your RPI assistant. Start at the [mycroft site](https://mycroft.ai) for all of the information you need to get started.
2. **RetroPi Arcade Console** <https://retropie.org.uk/> Do you think that Fortnite has nothing on the original Streetfighter? That Assassin’s Creed pales in the glow of Golden Eye? Or do you just want to play the Super Mario Bros, the greatest video game of all time? Turn your RPI into a video game emulator that can play the classics made for Artari, Nintendo NES, Sega, and more. Once you’ve got the general system up and running, you can add some custom controllers and make it an upright arcade.
3. Christmas light or other light project: https://www.raspberrypi.org/blog/christmas-lights/
4. Bug habitat (would certainly be fun to take it to a school and let them enjoy it as well): https://allenheard.wordpress.com/2013/11/06/making-a-mini-beast-habitat-raspberry-pi-style/
5. Garage door monitoring: <https://www.richlynch.com/2013/07/27/pi_garage_alert_1/>
6. Digital puppet: <https://www.monkmakes.com/puppet/>
7. Talkie Pi: <http://projectable.me/i-built-a-wifi-walkie-talkie-for-my-kids-now-you-can-too/>

# Weekly Sessions

## Week 0: Before Class Begins

**To Do:**

1. Order your Raspberry Pi and related equipment
2. Join Slack and install the desktop and mobile apps
3. Create an account on Trello and install the mobile app

## Week 1: Computers & Operating Systems

This week we will learn about core computer hardware, and the key software (Operating Systems) that drive computers. We’ll also learn about the specific hardware of our RPIs and install an operating system so we can take them out for a test drive. By the end of the week you should have a bootable Raspberry Pi that is housed in a homemade case of your design. You should be able to log into your computer with a working display (monitor) and keyboard/mouse. You will also make sure that it connects to the internet.

**Watch & Read:**

1. [Computer Hardware](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ExxFxD4OSZ0) (Computer parts Explained) [7:48]
2. [RPI Hardware](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SgR_5Ai64nM) (Urban Penguin) [2:01]
3. [*Unofficial Raspberry Pi Manual*](https://www.makeuseof.com/tag/great-things-small-package-your-unofficial-raspberry-pi-manual/) [ [pdf](http://cdn.makeuseof.com/wp-content/uploads/2017/07/Raspberry-Pi-The-Unofficial-Tutorial.pdf) ] Sections 1-3
4. [What is an OS?](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=26QPDBe-NB8) (Crash Course Computer Science) [13:35]
5. [What is Free Software?](https://www.fsf.org/about/what-is-free-software) (The Free Software Foundation)
6. Klint Finley. (April 24, 2019) [The WIRED Guide to Open Source Software](https://www.wired.com/story/wired-guide-open-source-software/). *WIRED*.

**To Do:**

1. Post in the “Introductions” forum on Moodle.
2. Install Raspbian on your RPI. [[instructions](https://www.raspberrypi.org/documentation/installation/installing-images/README.md)]
3. Make a case for your RPI and post a picture on Slack (see *Unofficial Manual* Section 3.1)

## Week 2: The Command Line

This week we will learn how to interact with our computer using the command line (aka terminal). The command line interface (CLI) offers and alternative to the graphical user interface (GUI) we are more familiar with. Wile the terminal hearkens back to the early days of computing, its still very much alive for systems administrators, software developers, and others. In particular, complex tasks can be accomplished with a few lines of text, remote computers can be easily accessed, and all manner of tasks can be automated (and scheduled). Specifically, after gaining fluency with the command line, you will be able to log into your RPI from your regular laptop or desktop computer in order to configure and control it. To get started on the command line we’ll check out Terminus, a game developed at MIT to introduce the players to the command line.

In addition to jumping into the command line, by the end of the week you will have customized your RPI by installing software packages through apt and the GUI. You will also choose your topic for the first project and set up a Trello with a Board for your project and milestones for each week until it’s due.

**Watch, Play, & Read:**

1. Read [What is Free Software?](https://www.gnu.org/philosophy/free-sw.en.html)
2. Watch [Keyboards & Command Line Interfaces: Crash Course Computer Science #22](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4RPtJ9UyHS0)[11:23] Hackers are fast typists.
3. Play [Terminus](http://web.mit.edu/mprat/Public/web/Terminus/Web/main.html) for at least an hour. Post on Slack how far you get.
4. Read [Chapter 5 in *Unofficial Tutorial*](https://www.makeuseof.com/tag/great-things-small-package-your-unofficial-raspberry-pi-manual/#chapter-5)

**To Do:**

1. Update the software on your RPI with apt (hint sudo apt update then sudo apt dist-upgrade)
2. Install at least 2 programs on your RPI using apt or the graphical software package manager. See [5 Ways To Install Software On Raspberry Pi](https://www.makeuseof.com/tag/three-ways-to-install-software-on-raspberry-pi/)
3. Post in the FOSS Apps Discussion which apps you installed and a brief review of them.
4. Create a Trello Board for your project and invite the course instructors as collaborators.

## Week 3: Users, Groups, Files, & Permissions

As you’re working on finishing up your first RPI project, we’ll take a deeper look at how permissions and security works on RPI and in linux/unix operating systems generally. We’ll work to understand security principles of least privileges and learn the basic linux commands for configuring permissions.

**Watch & Read:**

**To Do:**

* finish Project 1 by the end of the week

## Week 4: Networks

How does the internet work? What happens after you hit enter on a search term on [Duck Duck Go](https://duckduckgo.com/spread)? How does Spotify get music to your phone to your wireless earbuds? A deeper understanding of different networking hardware, software, and protocols will help us better understand the networked software we’re installing, configuring, and troubleshooting.

**Watch:**

1. [How the Internet Works in 5 Minutes](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7_LPdttKXPc)[4:48]
2. [The Internet: IP Addresses & DNS](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5o8CwafCxnU)[6:44]
3. [The Internet: Wires, Cables & Wifi](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZhEf7e4kopM&list=PLzdnOPI1iJNfMRZm5DDxco3UdsFegvuB7&index=2)[6:41]
4. [The Internet: Packets, Routing & Reliability](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=AYdF7b3nMto&list=PLzdnOPI1iJNfMRZm5DDxco3UdsFegvuB7&index=4)[6:25]
5. [Compression: Crash Course Computer Science #21](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OtDxDvCpPL4)[12:47] *this is good, but gets fairly technical, but without compression, it would be impossible to send media files over the internet*

**To Do:**

1. For a more in-depth look at a networking, you will work with a partner to write a mini report on related topics. Please: a) choose a partner, and b) choose a topic from the list below. If you have an idea for a different topic, you may write about that with approval from the instructors. By the end of the week, please post your report directly into our *Networking Topics* forum. Your report should be roughly 500-800 words. It should give an overview of the topic, summary of how it works, and discussion of how it’s used and why it is (or isn’t) important. Read through the other posts, and ask any follow-up questions. The instructors and topic authors will do their best to answer your questions.

* Possible topics:
  1. Bluetooth
  2. Mesh network
  3. Near Field Communication (NFC)
  4. HTTPS/SSL
  5. 4g/5g/6g
  6. BitTorrent
  7. Dark Web
  8. Radio-frequency identification (RFID)
  9. Bluetooth Beacons

1. Choose a topic and a partner for your final project. Create a Trello board for it and share it with your partner and the instructors.

## Week 5: Ethics

[As Spider-Man learned](https://www.marvel.com/comics/issue/17610/spider-man_with_great_power._2008_1), with great power comes great responsibility. We trust the people who run our networks to keep our information safe, and to not violate our trust while they do it. Along the way, they may face some hard choices, usually weighing the benefits of individuals versus the group. We’ll take a look at some of the ethical concerns in “big tech”, and also investigate how these same concerns appear in the context of schools and other educational institutions.

**Read:**

1. **Monitoring Student Social Media**
   1. Karen Turner. April 22, 2016. [Schools are helping police spy on kids’ social media activity](https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/the-switch/wp/2016/04/22/%20schools-are-helping-police-spy-on-kids-social-media-activity/). *The Washington Post*. [alternate link](https://adelphi.summon.serialssolutions.com/#!/%20search?bookMark=ePnHCXMw42JgAfZbUzkZbCHHSBYrJBalKmSk5oC2_yiAbh5ITlUoLqhUyM9TyM5MKVZXgAwOK4B3SiiAVvODLk3gYWApKSpN5YVQ3Awabq4hzh66sOIyHhgIoJHtxLxUYAc53hC0F8EUdJye%20MQlKAdaHN6s)
   2. Aaron Leibowitz. September 6, 2018. [Could Monitoring Students on Social Media Stop the Next School Shooting?](https://www.nytimes.com/2018/09/06/us/social-%20media-monitoring-school-shootings.html). *The New York Times*.
   3. Tom Simonite. August 20, 2018. [Schools Are Mining Students’ Social Media Posts for Signs of Trouble](https://www.wired.com/story/algorithms-monitor-student-%20social-media-posts/). *Wired*.
2. **Student Data**
   1. [Student Privacy](https://www.eff.org/issues/student-privacy). *Electronic Frontier Foundation*.
   2. Natasha Singer. May 13, 2017. [How Google Took Over the Classroom](https://www.nytimes.com/2017/05/13/technology/google-education-chromebooks-%20schools.html). *The New York Times*.
   3. Gennie Gebhart. March 28, 2017. [Privacy By Practice, Not Just By Policy: A System Administrator Advocating for Student Privacy](https://www.eff.org/deeplinks/2017/03/privacy-practice-not-just-policy-system-administrator-advocating-student-privacy). *Electronic Frontier Foundation*.

**To Do:**

1. Post a reaction in the Ethics Discussion (by end of day Wed).
2. Comment on at least 2 reaction posts (end of week). Respond to comments on your own post.
3. Update your Trello project with the work you’ve completed this week. Identify any issues and get help as needed.

## Week 6: Final Project Due

This is a working week where our full attention is focused on producing great final projects.

**To Do:**

* turn in your final project and have a great summer!