

COMP 898 Master's Project

Course Syllabus

BASIC COURSE INFORMATION

- Semester: Fall 2025
- Credits: 3
- Department: Applied Engineering and Sciences
- Program: Graduate Computing

INSTRUCTOR INFORMATION

Name: Tim Finan, Lecturer

Department: Applied Engineering and Sciences Department, UNH Manchester

Office: P143

Email: Timothy.Finan@unh.edu

Phone (office): (603) 641-4340

Office Hours:

- As posted outside my office
- Outside posted hours; as needed by appointment

COURSE DESCRIPTION

Catalog Course Description

Guided project on a topic which has been approved as a suitable subject for a master's project. Supervision and advising by faculty in the Computing Technology program. Completion of 24 credits in the major.

Learning Goals

The purpose of the course is for you to achieve these goals:

- Conduct a research and development (R&D) study in the Information Technology (IT) field
- Apply IT concepts, computational approaches, and computing tools in the process of developing, evaluating, and writing about your project
- Gain professional experience and develop your own computing professional identity through practicing professional competencies.

Professional Competencies

On the technical side

- Analyze the project's computing problem and requirements to identify a technically sound solution
- Design, implement, and evaluate the project's computing-based solution
- Communicate effectively with your peers and faculty advisor
- Demonstrate professional responsibility in all project activities and make informed judgments based on legal and ethical principles
- Participate and contribute effectively as a member of this course

On the human side

- Reflect on your learning experiences and your best possible self
- Persist in working with difficult problems
- Adapt, adjust, change course, be flexible as needed
- Tolerate uncertainty and ambiguity
- “Walk in another’s shoes” to learn more about other perspectives, show empathy, consider various points of view, and recognize and avoid bias
- Have confidence in dealing with complexity

Estimated Student Workload

This syllabus reflects the federal definition of **1 credit hour**, that is:

1 credit = 3 hours of academic work per week per 1 credit over a 15-week semester

This means that the student's weekly workload is estimated at **9 hours** per week.

Modality

- Regular check-in meetings will use both in-person and remote modality, as determined by the meeting schedule arranged at the beginning of the semester.
- In-person project presentations will be scheduled two weeks before the end of the semester.

Academic Integrity

You are expected to **do your own work** and not submit as yours something done by others. Copying the work of others is a violation of academic integrity.

As you work on your project, you **must ALWAYS give clear attribution to the source(s) of content included or integrated in your work**. The faculty advisor may reduce your grade for work that does not include proper attribution.

Giving attribution has many forms, depending on how content that is not yours is used in your work. Thus, you may need to:

- Cite the content that originates from other sources or has been modified and integrated in your work.
- Reference the source(s) you use:
 - Articles, forum or blog posts, public GitHub repos, tutorial, and other accessible materials, regardless of modality (written, audio or video streaming).
 - Generated content obtained from AI tools, such as Generative Pretrained Transformers (GPTs) and the like
- Give credit to individuals who have helped you, whether peers, tutors, lab/tech assistants, course instructor, or any other person (friend, relative, etc.)

Do not work on behalf of someone else and do not provide your work products to others. If you do, you commit an act of academic integrity misconduct. There is no way to know whether those who get your work products intend to submit them as theirs. Equally important, this is NOT how you help someone learn.

There are consequences if you deviate from the course and university academic integrity policy. For academic integrity misconduct, you may receive no credit for the submitted artifact in question. Persistent academic misconduct will result in you failing the course.

You will receive notice of the academic misconduct allegation from the faculty advisor. The faculty advisor will meet with you and give you the opportunity to respond. If the violation stands, the course instructor will report it to the Office of Community Standards.

Bottom line, do not cheat, plagiarize, or facilitate academic misconduct that violates academic integrity. It is

very important that you review the University's [Academic Integrity Policy](#).

Project Deliverables

The project work will unfold iteratively, with regular feedback loops. It will encompass:

- Research and development (R&D) of computing artifacts that accomplish the project/thesis objectives
- Writing of your project paper that describes your work and outcomes.
- Public project presentation and demo.

Check-in Meetings

The course has **regular check-in meetings** with your faculty advisor in which you:

- Report on progress since previous check-in meeting
- Identify roadblocks and consult on how to address the roadblocks
- Share work-in-progress and other artifacts
- Present and discuss the current state of the project, and
- Plan your work for the next check-in.

ADVISING AND SUPPORT

Your faculty advisor will guide you through the entire process of working on your project, and support you in the following **research and development (R&D)** activities:

- Define the goal, objectives, scope, and outcomes of your project
- Identify and use appropriate methods and tools
- Write drafts of the project paper iteratively, from one-page outline to the first full draft and to the "almost final" draft
- Review project/thesis artifacts and project paper/thesis drafts and final version
- Use effective tools to support the test-driven and incremental process of:
 - Managing your project work activities using the GitHub project board
 - Progressively documenting your work while drafting the project paper using OneDrive folder dedicated to the project work
 - Give a presentation of your project to peers, faculty advisors, committee members, and other guests in the second to last week of the term.
- Evaluate your overall achievements in the course.

Project Topic Selection

The project topic, overarching goal, scope, and expected outcomes are determined by you and your faculty advisor based on:

- Your interest, professional experience, and level of preparation and readiness
- Expertise and research program of your advisor.

Evaluation

Upon successful completion of your project, your advisor will evaluate your project and submit the final letter grade in WebCat.

If no or insufficient progress is made with your work, your advisor will submit an F grade, and you will need to retake and pass the course in order to fulfill the program requirements.

If you make progress with the project work, but you don't finalize it at the end of the term, your advisor will submit an IA grade (meaning that you will continue your work the following semester). To continue and complete the project/thesis in the following semester you will enroll in the **GRAD 900 Continuing Research**

course with the approval of your advisor. The GRAD 900 course carries no credit but ensures that you will receive advising and feedback from your advisor.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

Communication (10%)

The course semester has 15 weeks with **regular check-in meetings** with your faculty advisor. These meetings are structured to create a learning environment supportive of your project work. Your responsibility is to be on time, come prepared, share your progress, ask questions, present and discuss issues, document progress, and keep the evidence of your work well organized.

Writing Artifacts (20%)

Writing and revising drafts of your project paper or thesis manuscript is an iterative process with three milestones:

- Outline (4%)
- First draft (4%)
- Almost final draft (8%)

You'll develop these drafts using a **OneDrive** folder set up for your project paper materials. The faculty advisor will guide you through this writing process and evaluate the three instances of drafting your project paper manuscript.

Work Progress (10%)

Weekly progress documented via regular meetings and communications with your faculty advisor. These may include regular email, entries into a project log, or other mutually agreed upon method. Your faculty advisor will assess your work progress.

Presentation (10%)

You'll present your master's project to your peers, computing faculty, and other guests. Presentations are open to the public and announced to the department community. A presentation announcement includes project title and author, presentation date, location, and abstract. Copies of the announcement are posted on the 1st floor and communicated via email to all graduate students and department faculty members.

Computing Artifacts (20%)

The **GitHub** org associated with this course, <https://github.com/master-projects-theses>, hosts the remote repositories of the project/thesis computing artifacts you develop and manage using the GitHub platform tools (e.g., Kanban project board, issue tracker) and **git feature branch workflow**. Your faculty advisor will evaluate this component of your project.

Project Paper (30%)

Detailed guidelines will be shared based on the feedback provided to the paper drafts (outline, first draft, and “almost done draft”).

GRADING

To evaluate your achievement in this course, the following evidence is taken into account:

- **Participation** (10%)
- **Writing artifacts** (20%)
 - Outline (4%); First draft (8%); Almost final draft (8%)

- **Work progress** (10%)
- **Presentation** (10%)
- **Computing artifacts** (20%)
- **Final Paper** (30%)

LEARNING RESOURCES

- **OneDrive** folder shared with faculty advisor, where non-coding project work-in-progress, drafts, and final versions reside
- **Canvas site** has
 - Course syllabus, schedule, and gradebook
 - Announcements and useful materials
- **GitHub** organization associated with this course has student project repositories at <https://github.com/master-projects-theses>
- **Discord** server for messaging in and outside class with channels on various subjects.

Center for Academic Enrichment (CAE) Tutoring Services

Tutors in the **Center for Academic Enrichment (CAE)** are well-prepared to assist with drafting and writing your project paper or thesis manuscript. Please make use of one-on-one tutoring sessions. Contact **Kim Donovan** and **Emily Kerr** in the CAE for guidance, tutoring, and feedback on your written versions of your project paper.

Library Services

The UNH Manchester librarians are available to assist you with your research. You can contact a librarian by calling 603-641-4173 or by emailing unhm.library@unh.edu.

The following online resources provide information about library resources and services:

- UNH Manchester Library webpage: <https://cps.unh.edu/library>
- Online Research Guides: <https://libraryguides.unh.edu/index.php?b=s>
- Access Library Resources Remotely: <https://libraryguides.unh.edu/remoteaccess>
- Reserve a study room for Zoom classes: <https://libraryguides.unh.edu/remoteaccess/studyrooms>

Student Tech Assistants

The **Computing Program** has student tech assistants who are available to help with software configuration, troubleshooting, and any other technical questions you might have.

COURSE POLICIES

Academic Integrity

Completing your own work is essential to learning. Copying work of others is not learning. You are expected to do your own work and not submit as yours something that is done by other entities.

Collaborative work has clear instructions regarding the nature of collaboration. Grading is based on your individual contribution to the collaborative work. Team members are required to properly and accurately indicate authorship for their own contributions. If unclear, you must consult with the course instructor on what is allowed. It is your responsibility to get such clarification.

Whether done individually or in collaboration, submitted coursework must **ALWAYS** give clear attribution to the source(s) of content included or integrated in your work. The instructor may reduce

your grade for work that does not include attribution. Giving attribution has many forms, depending on how content which is NOT yours is used in your work. Thus, you may need to:

- Cite the content that originates from other sources or has been modified and integrated in your work.
- Reference the source(s) you used:
 - Articles, forum or blog posts, GitHub repos, tutorials, and other accessible materials, regardless of modality (written, audio or video streaming)
 - Generated content obtained from AI tools, such as Generative Pretrained Transformers (GPTs) and the like.
- Give credit to individuals who have helped you, whether peers, tutors, lab/tech assistants, course instructor, or any other person (friend, relative, etc.)

Do not work on behalf of someone else and do not provide your work products to others. If you do, you commit an act of academic integrity misconduct. There is no way to know whether those who get your work products intend to submit them as theirs. Equally important, this is NOT how you help someone learn.

There are consequences if you deviate from the course and university academic integrity policy. For academic integrity misconduct, you may receive **no credit** for the assignment in question. Persistent academic integrity misconduct will result in you **failing the course**.

You will receive notice of the academic misconduct allegation from the course instructor. The course instructor will meet with you and give you the opportunity to respond. If the violation stands, the course instructor will report it to the Office of Community Standards.

Bottom line, **do not cheat, plagiarize, or facilitate academic dishonesty.** It is very important that you review the University's [Academic Integrity policy](#).

Attendance

Class meeting attendance is important for your learning. Attendance is taken every class. **You are responsible for attending all class meetings.** See the UNH Attendance policy at <https://catalog.unh.edu/undergraduate/academic-policies-procedures/attendance/> for more information.

If you need to miss class for a planned activity or need accommodation for a religious or cultural holiday/observance, **email the course instructor using the Canvas Inbox tool** as early in the semester as possible.

If you miss a class meeting, you take the responsibility to do the following:

- **Email course instructor** using **Canvas Inbox** tool about the circumstances for missing the class either **BEFORE** your absence **OR** no later than within 3 days AFTER your absence.
- **Contact your peers** to find out what you've missed.
- **Make up the absence** by doing the work assigned that week. By NOT taking this responsibility, your final grade will be lowered by **5%** for each missed class.

If your absence is because you are dealing with unexpected and extenuating circumstances, please see the policy on **Temporary Academic Supports for Extended Absences with Letter**.

If your absence might cause a **late submission**, see policy on **Late Submissions** policy below.

Course Workload and Credit Hour

This syllabus reflects the federal definition of 1 credit hour, that is:

1 credit hour = minimum 3 hours of engaged time per week per 1 credit over a 15-week semester.

This means that

- **3-cr course** requires **9 hours of engaged time each week**, including class meeting time.
- **4-cr course** requires **12 hours of engaged time each week**, including class meeting time.

Student engaged time includes the following:

- Attendance of class meetings and participation in in-class learning activities
- Completing weekly labs, readings, and assignments
- Participation in collaborative learning experiences, such as working with peers on labs or the course team project
- Participation in scheduled study groups
- Seeking tutoring help and other academic supports from the Library and CAE
- Consultation with and assistance from the course instructor and classroom assistants
- One-on-one check-ins with class instructor to evaluate your progress.

Student academic work reflects the development of competencies facilitated by this course and is demonstrated through the evidence of student achievement.

Curtailed Operations

If the University curtails operations due to weather, we will not hold in-person class meeting for our safety and the safety of others. As soon as possible, the instructor will post an **announcement on Canvas** about possible remote class meeting, due dates, any make-up work. Please make sure you have access to the UNH Alert RAVE system. If needed, sign up for RAVE Alerts [here](#).

Early Alerts Report

The University is invested in your academic success. If a faculty member is concerned about your academic behavior or performance, they may submit an academic alert – particularly around Week 5 (Feb. 19 – Feb. 25). Academic alerts are not punitive. The goal is to provide you with support and resources to support your success. They act as an important check-in point and, if you receive an academic alert, you will receive an email to your UNH email address. It is strongly recommended that you meet with a professional advisor (or your faculty advisor, if graduate student) and connect with your instructor to discuss the reason for the alert.

Late Submissions

No assignment will be accepted after the deadline and a 0 grade will be entered in the Canvas Grades.

If you are in the situation of missing a deadline, you take the responsibility to **request approval for a time extension**. This means that you MUST do the following:

- **Email course instructor** using **Canvas Inbox tool BEFORE the deadline**. - In your email, include these TWO IMPORTANT things:
 - **Explain circumstances** that prevented you from meeting the submission deadline.
 - **Outline SPECIFIC plans** for making up the missed requirements, including the EXACT time when you'll submit your work, **no later than FIVE days** after the submission deadline.

You will receive an email confirmation from the course instructor with the approval or denial of your request.

If missing a deadline is because you are dealing with unexpected and extenuating circumstances, please see the policy on **Temporary Academic Supports for Extended Absences with Letter**.

Online Communication Guidelines

We are all expected to communicate professionally when using online communication tools with peers and instructor. See guidelines at <https://www.unh.edu/it/academic-technology>.

Student Accessibility Services

According to the Americans with Disabilities Act (as amended, 2008), each student with a disability has the right to request services from UNH to accommodate his/her/their disability. If you are a student with a documented disability or believe you may have a disability that requires accommodations, please contact **Student Accessibility Services (SAS)** located on the Manchester campus, room 417.

Accommodation letters are created by SAS with the student. Please follow-up with your instructor as soon as possible to ensure timely implementation of the identified accommodations in the letter. Faculty have an obligation to respond once they receive official notice of accommodations from SAS but are under no obligation to provide retroactive accommodations.

For more information refer to www.unh.edu/sas or contact SAS at 603.862.2607, 711 (Relay NH) or sas.office@unh.edu.

Temporary Academic Supports for Extended Absences with Letter

If you are dealing with an unexpected, extenuating circumstance that will keep you out of class or affect your performance for more than a day or two, reach out to **Lisa Enright Assistant Dean of Student Success**, at lisa.enright@unh.edu to request a letter be sent to all your faculty.

If you are required to miss significant class, you will be provided **temporary academic support** so that you can continue to make satisfactory progress in this course. Please **email the instructor (using Canvas Inbox email)** to schedule a virtual meeting, if possible, and catch up on missed content. If not, email communication will help to determine the supports that work for you, such as course materials that are available on the website, notes from a peer, or one-on-one meeting with a student tech consultant or classroom assistant.

UNIVERSITY POLICIES

Basic Needs Support

Food, Housing, Financial Resources: <https://www.unh.edu/dean-of-students/getting-help/housing-food-financial-basic-needs-support>

Confidentiality and Mandatory Reporting

The University of New Hampshire at Manchester and its community are committed to assuring a safe and productive educational environment for all students. Title IX makes it clear that violence, harassment, and discrimination based on sex and gender are Civil Rights offenses subject to the same kinds of accountability and the same kinds of support applied to offenses against other protected categories such as race, national origin, and ability.

If you or someone you know has experienced sexual or relationship violence, and/or stalking and harassment, you can find the appropriate resources below:

Reporting On Campus:

- Title IX Deputy Intake Coordinator: Lisa Enright 603-641-4336. Lisa's office is located on the fourth floor in Room 439.
- UNH Manchester Security: 603-541-4101 or located in the second-floor foyer

Reporting Off Campus:

- Manchester Police Department - 603-668-8711, 405 Valley St. Manchester, NH
- or your local police department

For emergencies dial 911.

Confidential Support Resources:

- Caroline Young, SHARPP Expanded Services Coordinator ofro UNH Manchester, room 417. Available in person Thursday, 9 am to 4 pm, and available by appointment (in person and virtually) by emailing caroline.young1@unh.edu.
- Reach Crisis Services, NH – 603-668-2299 (24hour), 72 Concord St. Manchester, NH
- The SHARPP Center for Interpersonal Violence Awareness, Prevention, and Advocacy: 603-862-7233 (24hour), 2 Pettee Brook Lane, Durham, NH 03824
- The Mental Health Center of Greater Manchester: On campus mental health counselors are available by appointment during the academic year. Located in room 426.
- 24 Hour NH Sexual Violence Hotline: 1-800-277-5570
- 24 Hour NH Domestic Violence Hotline: 1-866-644-3574

Crisis Assessment and Risk Evaluation (CARE) Team

The CARE Team provides assistance to the UNH Manchester community when there is a need to activate a systematic, coordinated response to students who may be in crisis or whose mental, emotional or psychological health condition may substantially disrupt or directly threaten the safety of the learning environment. The CARE Team receives reports regarding students of concern, develops and implements appropriate interventions, assists students in accessing appropriate resources and recommends appropriate actions to the Dean of Students when needed.

More information regarding the CARE Team can be provided by calling the Assistant Dean of Success at 603-641-4116. To report a student of concern, please go to the following [link](#).

Emotional or Mental Health Distress

In partnership with **The Mental Health Center of Greater Manchester**, UNH Manchester offers consultation visits in on a walk-in basis and through telehealth appointment. Services include:

- Free confidential screening & consultation with a licensed mental health therapist.
- Referrals to mental health or substance misuse treatment
- Assistance in understanding how to afford additional treatment (with or without insurance!) or find free services.

If you would like to connect to counseling services directly, you may do so by contacting **The Greater Manchester Mental Health Center** at (603) 668 - 4111.

The National Suicide Prevention Lifeline provides 24/7, free and confidential support via phone or chat for people in distress, resources for you or your loved ones, and best practices for professionals. Call (800) 273-TALK (8255).

Financial Literacy Resources

All students benefit from understanding their mindset about money, how to build and use a personal budget, as well as understanding interest rates, loans, insurance, investing, and more. UNH has wonderful free resources for students in Library Resource Guides <https://libraryguides.unh.edu/finlit>, and every student (and faculty!) can access CA\$H COURSE at <https://www.cashcourse.org/> by creating a free account.

Find more information on the Financial Wellness site of Health & Wellness
<https://www.unh.edu/health/financial-wellness> .

Food Pantry

The UNH Manchester Food Pantry, located in room 437 is open Tuesdays and Thursdays. Students can sign up for individual appointment times to shop the pantry throughout the academic year.

Library

The UNH Manchester librarians are available to assist you with your research. You can contact a librarian by calling 603-641-4173 or by emailing unhm.library@unh.edu.

The links below guide you to useful online library resources:

- Make a **Research Appointment** with a librarian:
<https://libraryguides.unh.edu/remoteaccess/researchhelp>
- Use the **Library Search Box** to find information:
https://libraryguides.unh.edu/librarysearchbox_unhmanchester
- Reserve a **Study Room**: <https://cps.unh.edu/library/support-services>
- Discover resources for **Citing Sources**: <https://libraryguides.unh.edu/unhmcittingsources>
- Learn strategies for **Evaluating Sources**:
<https://libraryguides.unh.edu/ENGL401UNHManchester/evaluatingsources>.

Question, Persuade, Refer

QPR is a training program in mental health awareness and suicide prevention training offered by trained facilitators and members of the UNH Manchester community. Please contact Lisa Enright at lisa.enright@unh.edu should your department or program want to schedule a training session.

Sexual Harassment and Rape Prevention Program (SHARPP)**

Provides free and confidential advocacy and direct services to survivors.

UNH Manchester's SHARPP Office Hours during Fall & Spring Semesters are Mondays 9am-4pm in Room 471.

- Zoom Appointment Availability year-round is Mon-Fri 9am-4pm
- 24/7 Crisis Line: 603-862-SAFE (7233)
- Main Office: 603-862-3494
- <https://www.unh.edu/sharpp/>

UNH Manchester students can also contact the YWCA of New Hampshire – 603-668-2299 (24hour), 72 Concord St. Manchester, NH, for crisis or emergency services.