

Professor's Thoughts for the Week

Dear All,

Welcome to Week 1 of your Object-Oriented Programming (OOP) journey! This week sets the stage for everything to come, and whether you are new to programming or brushing up on fundamentals, you are starting in precisely the right place. You'll begin by **installing Java** and setting up your development environment using **Eclipse**, a professional-grade tool that will support your coding work throughout the course. Be sure to test your setup early in the week so you are ready to hit the ground running.

This week, our focus is on the **fundamentals of Java syntax**, including **variables, strings, conditional logic, and user input**. These concepts may seem small, but they form the backbone of all programming languages. You'll see how Java makes it simple to gather information from users, perform calculations, and display meaningful results based on conditions you define. It is these foundational tools that allow software to interact with people and make decisions—skills that will expand in power as you progress.

You will work as a group on one **project** this week. Your team will investigate the New York Times **Wordle** game and attempt to clone it using a generative AI of your choosing. First, you will create the **engineering specifications** for this game. The specs should include the rules, the game's outlier conditions, how users interact with the game, and how they ultimately win or lose. Next, you will create prompts to generate the game according to your engineering rules. However you engineer or architect this game, you must aim to get your AI to generate a complete **application** that meets those specs. Most importantly, you must prompt the AI to develop a program that adheres to **OOP principles**. Each team will **present** their application and code at the beginning of next week. We will then dig through the code and ask: "How does AI understand OOP?"

There will be a short **survey** this week. I ask that you complete it — in fact, it is a homework assignment. This helps me understand the baseline from which the class is starting.

Please read the syllabus and understand my **contract grading** requirements. We will have an opportunity to discuss it fully this week and make any modifications the class deems appropriate.

You are off to a strong start—focus on getting comfortable with the tools and fundamentals, and do not worry if things feel new or uncertain. That is part of the learning process. You have already taken the first important step. Keep going!