

Synopsis

This semester has brought a lot of change in my life. ISAT along with General Education classes have surrounded my days while clubs and performances surrounded my night. Becoming more involved at JMU as well as balancing social life with school has been a difficult one this semester, but I believe that I have been able to fight through and have another successful semester here at JMU. I have been taking the general education classes of government, sociology, and kinesiology. I have also repeated the ISAT physics class and I took ISAT 252. These classes are preparing me to become a more diverse and knowledgeable student and hopefully will train me to be a better person in the future. Alongside school, I am in the a cappella group the Madison Project. This is the bulk of my social life and club life. I have become more involved in the group by becoming an executive member as the new business manager for the Madison Project. We perform throughout campus for events and shows, as well as travel throughout the east coast to perform with other a cappella groups. This semester has brought much work but as well equal amounts of fun.

The ISAT 252 programming class has introduced the sector IKM. During my time in this class, I have been able to create programs, assess my knowledge, create KBS, and learn life skills for the future. Professional competencies (aka "soft skills") are vital in any future career and frequently tested in the ISAT major. The programming class has taught much about communication, teamwork, punctuality, documentation, file management, and professionalism. Because group work was such a large facet of the class, each skill was drilled in and honed to new levels. My experience in the ISAT 252 class has taught me that I have much to work on and much to be proud of in professional competency.

As I get older, communication is becoming more and more important in life. I have been able to train myself through the ISAT 252 class to become a better communicator and more reliable with communication. I was able to work very well with my group from the start because we communicated with each other frequently and clearly. Through all mediums (e.g. telephone, email, text, and facebook), my group was able to communicate in an orderly fashion. Our frequent communication enabled us to rely on each other. Texting was rapid, answering the phone was usual, and emails were immediately responded between our group. We were also not afraid to tell each other how things were going with our projects and labs. Asking questions and learning from mistakes were allowed and communicated through our group. This allowed us to proceed throughout the semester without many speed bumps in communication with each other.

As a result of our stellar communication with each other, our team work blossomed. We all found our niches, and proceeded through our labs with ease and speed. I was usually the scribe and organizer. I had many of our labs on hand and frequently contacted my members when needed. Our combination of skills allowed us to rely on each other for help and success. I helped as much as I could with the programming aspects and computer aspect. Although I am not the best computer whiz in the group, I made due with the knowledge I had and learned from my team.

Punctuality has been a focus of mine this semester throughout each and every aspect of my life in college. Although I was not usually on time in class, I still did come to class. Because of my accountability, I always let my team members know when I was late and when I would arrive at class. Having only missed two to three class this semester, I was not at all behind in the material and made up everything had to at hacking sessions and after class.

From the beginning of semester, I have kept all of my notes and materials. I have a separate notebook for this class and most, if not all, of my notes and papers are featured in this portfolio. Our group has kept up with each and every lab, and turned them in on time. We were always prepared to present and were always handy with a hard copy. Not only were all of our files on our stationary computer, but all of our documents are also on each team members flash drive. Our files

were always organized in the isatgeek website, on our flash drives, and on our stationary computer in the lab. Our file management was very accountable and reliable.

Throughout the semester, my team has most of all demonstrated professionalism. Accountability as well as responsibility was frequent in our group and we could always depend on one another. We all enjoyed each other's company and worked together flawlessly. Despite our very different lives and personalities, we worked as professionals and finished as much as we could with one hundred percent effort.

The ISAT 252 class most of all taught programming skills. With help from Visual Basic, our TA, and our professor, I was able to learn about programming. Computational thinking is realm of study that I have never thought of embarking in, and so far this semester, said area of study has been quite interesting. I was able to learn about the inside of a computer, Boolean logic, thinking algorithmically, and how to begin a program. With this beginning knowledge, I was able to begin programming and creating a program with my group. My group created a program called Dr. Drink, which enabled a user to pick items in a fridge to use for alcoholic drinks. Throughout the semester, my group and I were able to work on the program. The finished product is featured in the portfolio. By attending hacking sessions and working after class, we were able to make a great program that succeeds in providing information about drinks. Hopefully, this idea can be expanded and become a website or iPhone app. Along with the creation of the program, we were taught how to create classes, try/catch, if/then, event-handling, and an ever expanding array of procedures using Visual Basic. Along with Visual basic, we also learned to use Exsys Corvid and other KBS. These programs allowed for the creation of knowledge based systems and simplified problems. Lastly, ISAT 252 taught us how to be better programmers. Finding out how to get "unstuck," planning, debugging, and asking questions were drilled into our brains and I am a better programmer because of it.

The assessment of our knowledge was somewhat successful. On the first test I received a 77. I was able to get a majority of the answers correctly but still had trouble with the writing of code. Despite the grade, I believe I progressed throughout the rest of the semester by continually going to hacking sessions and the success of my program. On the second test, I received a 60. I did not do as well on this test because I was not able to read code very well and translate into more code. Despite the grade, I progressed by adding said problems to my program and visually understanding how more detailed code worked within a program.

The grades on my test are not reflective to my success in the class. My ultimate success is that I learned a new area of study throughout the semester. By watching the videos that were posted, taking notes in class, and actively listening during lecture, I was able to learn how programming worked. By creating a program through Visual Basic, using KBS's, and manually learning how to program, I became a better programmer and a more tacit programmer. The more hands-on the class became, the more I enjoyed the class. Along with the fantastic help from my group, my TA, and my professor, I was able to learn how to be a better programmer and student.

The grade I believe I deserve is an A. I added much time outside of class into this class and worked hard every single day in class. I did not take advantage of any knowledge I learned and I applied it all into my program and into the class. Not only did I work hard in the class, but I also had a lot of fun. This class was one of the more enjoyable classes I have had in my career here at JMU. I put my heart and soul into my group and our program. Every single day, despite the 9:05 time, I enjoyed my time in class. I surely hope to add onto our program in the future. I have had a great time this semester in ISAT 252. Hopefully more classes in the ISAT major will be as exciting and innovating as this class.