

Hi everyone,

I have set up a Moodle account for this course. It can be accessed via your MyLSU account. Among other purposes, it will serve as a portal for some courseware and a digital drop box for submitting your programming projects for grading. Prior to our first meeting, I suggest that you read the syllabus and click the 'welcome' link to read a brief message that I have about the course. Explore other available links and the course lecture calendar via an external link.

I generally use the first meeting in this course for introductions and to discuss course policies and other administrative matters. I also do a 15-minute lecture consisting of a few definitions and then a few brain-teasers to introduce everyone to problem-solving, where the answer is not as obvious as one may think it is. This semester, we will do things slightly differently.

As you may be aware, classes were cancelled yesterday. My understanding is that the University intends to schedule a Saturday makeup classes during the semester. I am not a huge fan of Saturday classes. In order to avoid the Saturday class, I will give a full lecture during our first meeting and not discuss administrative matters. Here is a summary of some of the administrative matters that I would have discussed had Tuesday's class not been cancelled:

1. Read the syllabus and explore all the links on Moodle. I suggest that you do not print the syllabus, for now, since I will need to update the dates for the last day to add a course, do section changes and withdraw from a course without receiving a 'W' when the registrar's office updates the academic calendar.
2. I do not use power-point slides during the lectures. I do give an 80-minute lecture during most meetings and after the lecture I upload a PDF summary of the lecture. Theorem proving and related mathematical concepts as well as hand-traces and mathematical analyses of the algorithms that we studied are done on the board.
3. All instructional materials provided on Moodle are covered by the LSU regulations and bylaws regarding intellectual property as well as the Digital Millennium Copyright Act (DCMA). Do not commercialize (sell), re-distribute to third parties or post online instructional materials that I have provided. Doing so will constitute a copyright violation for which you may be held liable.
4. You will have a choice for writing code for your programming project in either C++ (ANSI/ISO C++ Standard 11) or Java (SDK 1.8 or later). For purposes of making only programming contents relevant to you visible to you on Moodle, I have created a separate group for each language. Tentatively, all students whose major is officially listed as computer science by the registrar's office have been enrolled in the Java group and all other students have been tentatively enrolled in the C++ group. You are allowed to switch your language group from now until the first programming project is due (January 28). To switch your language group, send me an email and I will switch your group. After the first project is submitted for grading, group enrollment is permanent. How do you know your current group enrollment? I have two versions of a supplementary e-book on Moodle. If the C++ version of the e-book is visible to you, then you are in the C++ group and if the Java version of the e-book is visible to you, you are in the

Java group. Needless to say, make your group choice based on the programming language that you are most proficient in. DO NOT E-MAIL a request to switch group if you are already enrolled in your preferred group.

5. The first programming project will be assigned during our first meeting. The handout for the project will be available immediately after class. You should be able to complete the project based on the programming that you had in your CS1/CS2 programming sequence. Part of the project is based on measuring approximate run time. I have "programming tips" handout on Moodle illustrating how to do that since it is unlikely that you have used that language feature in your CS1/CS2 programming sequence. The rest of the project is using loops, implementing static methods and writing basic input/output statements.

6. The course will have an SI (Supplementary Instructor, i.e. student tutor). When the SI and I have had a meeting, the schedule for the SI sessions and the SI's office hours will be emailed to you. Those sessions will be used for problem solving (math), doing hand-traces of the algorithms that we study and review sessions for the mid-term and final exams. The SI will solve as many of the practice exercises as possible that are listed on the last page of the syllabus during the help sessions. When a programming project is assigned, the SI wouldn't be writing code for you or debugging your code. The SI may discuss how a given algorithm should work at a high level (i.e. conceptually) but the actual coding of the algorithm in C++ or Java will always be left for you to do.

7. Grading in the course will be based on 2 or 3 homework assignments (20%), 4 programming projects (25%), a mid-term exam (25%) and a final exam (30%).

Regards.

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