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**DSE 5002: SQL & Python Programming**

**Instructor: Jeremiah Lowhorn**

**Course Term: Spring 2 2025**

**On-line live meeting: Wednesdays 7-8PM Est**

**Office Hours: By appointment only**

**Course Description**

This course offers students an introduction to SQL & Python object-oriented programming. More specifically, students will learn data programming concepts, reproducible research, and version control which will serve as a foundation to the rest of the program. The course is meant to offer a foundation to the programming skills necessary for modern data professionals.

**Credit Justification Statement**

In this course, students will be expected to do the following amount of work:

* Live session: 1.5 hours per week
* Readings/Discussion 8 hours per week
* Labs: 5 hours per week (on average)
* Course project: 8 hours per week (on average)
* Total: 22.5 hours per week (on average)

# Course Learning Objectives

Upon completion of this course, students should:

* Understand how to create reproducible research documents in Python.
* Understand how to create objects from both unstructured and structured data sets in Python.
* Understand basic SQL and how to interact with databases in Python.
* Understand Python classes, functions, and code efficiency.
* Understand basic language processing tasks in Python.
* Understand version control and working directories.

# Important Deadlines

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| --- | --- |
| **Wednesday 03/19/2025** | **First day of classes** |
| **Thursday 03/21/2025** | **Last day to add/drop a course** |
| **Tuesday 04/28/2025** | **Last day to withdraw from a course with a “W”** |
| **Friday 05/09/2025** | **Last day of classes** |
| **Tuesday 05/13/2025** | **Final grades due** |

## Required Course Materials:

1. *None*

## Software

The instructor will utilize SQL, Python, and Git to illustrate all techniques during the instructional process.

## Project Data

Project data and labs will be available through Canvas.

# Grading & Assignments

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| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **A** | **B** | **C** | **F** |
| **Excellent** | **Good** | **Fair/Poor** | **Unacceptable** |
| 93+ A | 87-89 B+ | 77-79 C+ | Below 70 |
| 90-92 A- | 83-86 B | 73-76 C |  |
|  | 80-82 B- | 70-72 C- |  |

Although the graduate grading policy is similar to the undergraduate policy, it should be noted that the expectations for graduate students are much higher and therefore the grading is more rigorous. Candidates for any graduate-level degree or certificate must attain a final cumulative grade point average of 3.0 before the degree or certificate will be conferred.

The following letter and special grades are used across all graduate programs. Please note that this document sets the minimum standards for the College. Individual degree programs may have stricter GPA and course grade requirements.

A: “A” indicates outstanding work

B: “B” means that the work is satisfactory

C: “C” (2.0) is deemed unsatisfactory at the graduate level. No more than two courses at the C level (2.0 or higher) will be counted as acceptable toward a graduate degree. Students may be permitted to repeat only two courses and may repeat each course only one time. Those who receive more than two C level grades will be automatically dismissed from their program of study.

Any grade lower than a C - will not be acceptable for graduate-level work and cannot be counted as credit towards the degree. However, the grade will be counted toward the graduate student’s GPA. If a student receives a grade lower than a C in a required course, the student will be required to retake the course. A course may only be retaken one time. The most recent grade will replace the first grade and will be factored into the student’s GPA.

Please see “Academic Requirements and Policies” in the Graduate Catalog at <http://catalog.merrimack.edu/content.php?catoid=11&navoid=265> for more information.

Student requirements and their corresponding weights are summarized as follows:

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Assignment** | **Weight** |
| Python Project 1 | 30% |
| Python Project 2 | 30% |
| Discussions | 20% |
| Labs | 20% |

# Python Project 1

The main purpose of this assignment is to demonstrate a grasp of the concepts learned in the Python language, reproducible research, and version control. Students will be provided a directory of files through GitHub and will be expected to combine, cleanse, transform, aggregate, and create a basic visualization of the data.

# Python Project 2

The second project is writing a class in Python, and it also involves accessing the database and testing functions. It is meant as a programming project, not data analysis.

# Labs

There will be 8 Labs throughout the course, each providing hands-on experience implementing and reinforcing the techniques and methods discussed during the Live Session and Readings. Students are expected to prepare and submit responses to the questions found at the end of each Lab to receive credit.

# Project Assignment Content and Format

As noted earlier, the core part of this course’s learning assessment takes the form of hands-on, applied data wrangling project. Students will be expected to maintain their own GitHub (version control). Each lab and project will be pushed to their GitHub repository in a directory corresponding to the week of class. Students will provide the instructor a link to their GitHub. Each lab and project will be a jupyterfile knitted to PDF.

# Grading-Related Policies for this Course

**Assignments** must be **submitted on Blackboard by 11:59 pm of the due date listed in the Weekly Topics & Assignments** section. Please note that there will be **NO late work accepted**. Final grades will be based on a percentage of possible points earned, but the instructor reserves the right to adjust the course grade.

# Class Policies

**1. Academic Integrity**

See Merrimack College Student Handbook for college’s Academic Integrity Policy. The academic integrity code and policy is also posted in the Graduate Catalog: <https://catalog.merrimack.edu/content.php?catoid=9&navoid=202#academic-integrity>

Here is a brief excerpt from that: “…Academic integrity is fundamental to creating and maintaining an atmosphere of cooperation and trust. It is thus a concern for everyone in the college community. The academic integrity code below is designed to help students understand what is not permissible in their academic and intellectual lives at the college. It seeks to protect students from unintentional acts of dishonesty and to preserve the trust inherent in the student- teacher relationship, which is compromised if suspicion arises regarding the integrity of a student’s work. The code is also designed to inform students of the rules which will be used to judge academic integrity infractions…”

Specifically concerning the production of code it is important to recall that using code, text or other forms of media, such as homework solutions, from previous offerings of the course is forbidden, except as a “reference” or “guide” to work from, and even as such, **it is necessary to explicitly cite all consulted sources**. Tutors or other students who have taken the course in the past may help current students, but should not show them the solutions that they have developed for assignments. The lack of detailed citation of previous offerings of the course or any other similar sources, notably from the Internet or Generative AI systems, will be considered as submission of copied material, and a serious breach of academic integrity. Simply put, any work that is not your own should be clearly identified either through citations in written work or in comments in submitted files. This includes not only things that are directly copied from other’s work, but also for ideas and procedures gathered from outside sources. It is not necessary to cite the materials presented in class.

# Academic Accommodations from the Accessibility Services Office

Merrimack College provides reasonable accommodations for students with documented disabilities. Students who have, or think they may have, a disability are invited to contact the Accessibility Services Office via the online request form found on the Accessibility Services website: [www.merrimack.edu/aso](http://www.merrimack.edu/aso), email: [accessibilityservices@merrimack.edu](mailto:accessibilityservices@merrimack.edu), or by visiting us on the third floor of McQuade Library (in the event we are open).

Students are encouraged to contact the office as soon as possible to ensure adequate time to meet and create a plan. Students already registered with Accessibility Services are encouraged semesterly to request for their letters to be emailed and students are responsible to then email the PDF to their instructors personally. Accommodations cannot be made retroactively.

# Live On-line Meeting Attendance

Participation in weekly live on-line meetings is highly encouraged, but it is not mandatory. All sessions will be recorded, and recordings will be posted; however, when not attending students forego the ability to directly ask questions about topics being discussed, or other parts of the course.

# Communication

I will be communicating through official college email (merrimack.edu) and Canvas announcements as needed. Those will be the primary methods for dissemination of information between us, so please check your email at least once a day. I check my email several times a day, so it is the quickest way to reach me with questions. I will also be archiving important announcements through Canvas. When emailing me, use your Merrimack account, include a greeting with the class code and a closing signature with your name, or I will likely not respond.

If you are having trouble with an assignment, please do not suffer in silence. Let me know if you are struggling, either by email or by scheduling an appointment. I’m interested in seeing students succeed and am more than happy to provide extra help.

# 5. Requests for Extensions

The general policy is that, outside of properly verified serious medical emergencies\* (as defined below), extensions are not given, which applies to all 4 assignments. Missing an assignment without an acceptable reason (to be clear, that means a serious medical emergency, as defined below) will result in 0 points for the exam or a project. The intent here is not to penalize anyone – quite to the contrary, it is to create a level playing field so that no one has a unique and an unfair advantage. All assignment due dates are published (see the Live Meetings, Topics & Assignments section below) and will not change, barring a natural or other emergency – please consider those dates when planning any non-class related activities.

\**Serious medical emergency is defined as an injury or illness that is acute and poses an immediate risk to a person’s life or long term health. To be “properly verified”, the said serious medical condition must be attested to by hospitalization and related medical treatment documentation*.

# 6. Mental Health

It is important to make your mental health a priority! We will do activities in class to support your mental health and wellness, and I also encourage you to engage in your own self-care habits outside of class. If you want more information or resources, please come see me! If you are struggling with your mental health, or you believe a classmate is, please talk to me so I can put you in touch with qualified and caring support to get you back on track and feeling better.

# 7. Suicide Prevention Lifeline:

We can all help prevent suicide. The Lifeline provides 24/7, free and confidential support for people in distress, prevention and crisis resources for you or your loved ones, and best practices for professionals.

http://www.ulifeline.org/stay\_well

National Suicide Prevention Lifeline 1-800-273-8255(TALK) or Call or Text 988

# 8. Counseling Services:

Counseling Services are available to Graduate students at the Counseling Center at Merrimack via Uwill for telecounseling services only. Telecounseling includes video, chat, phone, message. Uwill is HIPPA and FERPA compliant which means they follow the strictest privacy guidelines. To access Uwill, register with your Merrimack email address at [app.uwill.com](http://app.uwill.com/). To receive support after hours call 978-837-5444 to be connected to the Uwill 24/7/365 crisis line which offers phone assistance only. The Counseling Center is located on the third floor of the Sakowich Center.

# 9. Student Success Resources:

It takes a village to progress in your knowledge. The numerous resources available at Merrimack College to assist you in meeting your goals are outlined in the **Data Science Hub in Canvas**.

For assistance in navigating the student success resources please reach out to the graduate advising team via [ecs-grad-advising@merrimack.edu](mailto:ecs-grad-advising@merrimack.edu)

National Suicide Prevention Lifeline 1-800-273-8255(TALK) or Text START to 741-741.

*Student Success Resources -* It takes a village to progress in your knowledge. The below resources are a sampling of what Merrimack College provides to assist you in meeting your goals. If you have questions, please see me for additional information.

**Academic Success Center:** The Academic Success Center offers workshops, programs, tutoring, and individual or group meetings to all students. Topics include: academic expectations, dealing with test anxiety, effective reading, preparing for tests, study skills, and time management. Visit

<https://www.merrimack.edu/academics/academic-success-center/>

Student Success Resources

It takes a village to progress in your knowledge. The below resources are a sampling of what Merrimack College provides to assist you in meeting your goals. If you have questions, please see us for additional information.

**Success Coach:** As a student of the Master in Computer Science you have access to the success coach Michael Bowler that may help you out with specifics of the program, as well as course issues. To contact the success coach write an email to [bowlerm@merrimack.edu](mailto:bowlerm@merrimack.edu) with your issue.

**Academic Success Center:** The Academic Success Center offers workshops, programs, tutoring, and individual or group meetings to all students. Topics include: academic expectations, dealing with test anxiety, effective reading, preparing for tests, study skills, and time management. Visit

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**The Writing Center:** Because everyone is a writer, the Merrimack College Writing Center provides free consultations for any student, in any major, in any class. Individual or small group consultations are generally done face-to-face in the Writing Center, McQuade Library 3rd floor. Limited online consultations are also available. Visit [www.merrimack.edu/writingcenter](http://www.merrimack.edu/writingcenter) or visit MyMack for a listing of hours and for registration and appointment instructions. Please note that while drop-ins are welcome, appointments take priority. For specific information about availability, schedule, and location of all tutoring available on campus, please go to <http://www.merrimack.edu/tutoring>.

**The Tutoring & Math Center:** The Tutoring & Math Center operates both face-to-face and on Blackboard. Students may meet with tutors in a socially-distant, college, state, and CDC approved one-to-one face-to-face session by appointment. For virtual, drop-in assistance, students may log into Blackboard where a peer tutor will assist them in real-time via a Collaborate session – no appointment needed. All students in STEM courses have been given access to the Tutoring \& Math Center Blackboard page, titled "Tutoring \& Math Center Online Tutoring". Visit <https://www.merrimack.edu/academics/academic-success-center/tutoring-and-math-center> or

email MathCenter@Merrimack.edu for more information.

**McQuade Library:** For help citing sources consult the Writing Center or try a citation management tool such as Mendeley or Zotero. McQuade Library LibGuides can help:

<http://libguides.merrimack.edu/mendeley>

<http://libguides.merrimack.edu/zotero>

**Tech Support:** If you are having trouble logging in to your accounts, or with your iPad, please contact the help desk by emailing askit@merrimack.edu. Here are some basics to get you started: <https://www.merrimack.edu/about/offices_services/information-technology-services/students/>

# Weekly Topics & Assignments

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| --- | --- | --- |
| Date | Topic | Readings & Discussions |
| Week 1:Python Prerequisites  3/17/2025 to 3/23/2025 | 1.) Install Anaconda  2.) Work with notebook files in Jupyter Notebook  3.) Start Spyder and write basic code.  4) Working directories | - Instructor provided reading  *-* Discussion 1  - Lab 1 |
| Week 2: Dataframes, Graphics, Database setup - 3/24/2025 to 3/30/2025 | 1) Load data into a pandas dataframe for analysis  2.) Use the three main plotting libraries in Python  3.) Use GitHub  4.) Install PostGres  5.) Import PostGres files | - Instructor provided reading  - Discussion 2  *-* Lab 2 |
| Week 3:  Python Functions, SQL Users  3/31/202 to 4/6/2025 | 1.) Write code in Spyder and use pylint to clean it up.  2.) Functions & Loops.  3.) Work with Lists in Python  4.) Grant privledges in PostGres.  5.) Connect to PostGres from Python. | - Instructor provided reading  - Discussion 3  - Lab 3 |
| Week 4  SQL Queries, Conda, Python Data Structures 4/7/2025 to 4/13/2025 | 1.) Be able to write basic queries in SQL  2.) Python environments  3.) Understand watermarking  4.) Use sets, tuples and dictionaries within Python | - Instructor provided reading  - Discussion 4  *-* Lab 4 |
|  | Project 1 – Python Data Problem – due: 4/20/2025 | |
| Week 5:  File I/O, dictionaries, Joins, views 4/14/2025 to 4/20/2025 | 1.) Work with dictionaries in Python  2.) Open files and use easyqui for simple user interactions  3.) Create Joins in SQL  4.) Write and use basic regex expressions in Python | - Instructor provided reading  - Discussion 5  - Lab 5 |
| Week 6:  Classes, Methods, Inheritance  4/21/2025 to 4/27/2025 | 1.) Understand how Python handle variable scope  2.) Understand how to write classes in Python  3.) Be able to create a class with several member functions | - Instructor provided reading  - Discussion 6  *-* Lab 6 |
| Week 7:  Code and Efficiency  4/28/2025 to 5/4/2025 | 1.) Discuss how several sorting algorithms work  2.) Determine the time to run code in Jupyter Lab  3.) Be able to run the profiler in Spyder  4.) Be able to locate slow functions in your code | - Instructor provided reading  - Discussion 7  - Lab 7 |
| Week 8:  Pandas & Seaborn  5/5/2025 to 5/9/2025 | 1.) Basic analysis of a text file  2.) Create a wordcloud | - Instructor provided reading  *-* Discussion 8  - Lab 8 |
|  | Project 2 – Python Class Problem – 5/9/2025 | |