Introduction to *Introduction to Programming Using Python*

Hi Folks,

I'm Ray Smith, the class instructor.  I'm excited to get started.  I hope you are too. Despite what might appear as a long introduction letter below, there really is not all that much you have to do to prepare for this course.

The class is just a short time away, starting [**Soon**] and meeting each Week.  **The class takes place online, via Zoom**.  Your Access via Zoom is provided through the St. Columbkille school, which will send you instructions.  I'm including some files, used for the class, plus a simple startup task, in the hope they will aid us in getting a quick start.

***To reduce the number of files requiring saving, all files mentioned here are stored in the attached file Introduction\_files...zip***.

As a help, I am including a sequence of PowerPoint® files,which I will use as the primary viewing slides for the class.  Because of the Covid19 pandemic, we will not be able to provide you with a hard copy.  There is no need to read these files in advance.  However, you might want to print out a hard copy of these notes in advance. They total over 100 slides. Paper saving options, include printing multiple slides per page, printing the first file Class\_1\_Introduction.ppt (38 slides), keeping the rest as a file to browse, and keeping the whole set of files to browse.

While it is not necessary, for those who have the option, it might be helpful using a computer with two monitors – one for the class notes/instructor's demo and one for your own work.

I hope to have you learn by doing.  **You will need to have a computer with Zoom installed**.  **Python, with IDLE, must be installed on this computer BEFORE the first class**.  **If you have any trouble, PLEASE email me** at *raysmith@alum.mit.edu* and I will try to help.

Installing Python, can easily be done by browsing to [www.python.org](http://www.python.org) and following the download instructions for your computer type, e.g., Windows, Mac, etc.

To aid those who might desire more guidance, I have included the file *Simple Python installing instructions.doc*x. This file contains some wordy instructions, to navigate this web site and install Python. Mostly it contains steps to go through [www.python.org](http://www.python.org/), downloading the latest python (e.g., x64-64 executable installer) and run it.

**To help me obtain an indication of successes, and issues please send me email when you have downloaded and installed python**. If you have any problems or comments, please email them to me and I'll try to help.

**Files:**

I'm including a group of files, many of which we will use during the class.  **You should create a directory(folder) named intro\_prog for use during this course**.  Expand the compressed file Introduction\_files.zip into the intro\_prog folder. You should see a, mostly empty directory, intro\_prog/exercises/**class\_work**. During the course we will use some of the example files in **exercises** and its subfolders, provided by me, as starting points You will also, hopefully, develop programming examples of your own. You might want to place your work in the **class\_work** directory to keep them in an easily rememberable and locatable place.

A partial road map to our slides files, homework descriptions, and homework solutions:

Starting with where YOU expand/store the attached Introducion\_files.zip file:

…/intro\_prog/presentation/

Class\_1\_Introduction/ - presentation materials for first class

Class\_1\_Introduction.pptx – PowerPoint® slides for first class

homework/ - homework materials

Introduction.docx – MSWord description of first class homework

solutions/ - solution to homework

samples/

hello\_world.py

…other python programs which we will run together

Class\_2\_Ideas\_Tools\_Functions/ presentation materials for second class

…Folder for each class…

NOTE: This class is intended to be for people who are new to programming, not just new to Python. While we don't turn anyone away, if you already have programming experience, but are interested in adding Python to your programming skill set, you might consider one of the many Python opportunities, including the Python Tutorial available in the Python download from [www.python.org](http://www.python.org).

If, for any reason, you decide you will not be taking our course, please let us know, as there is a waiting list.

Good luck in programming!

I hope to hear from you soon,

Ray