

Front Door

Introduction

Welcome to one of the Spring 2008 sessions of Grinnell College's CSC 151, *Fundamentals of Computer Science I*, which is described relatively briefly in the official blurb. My own take on this course is that we'll be starting to develop your knowledge of Computer Science and *Algorithmic Problem Solving*. We will be using Scheme as our development language. As in all Grinnell classes, we'll also be working on general thinking and work skills.

This year, we are trying a new approach to CSC151. In both sections of the course, we will be emphasizing *media computation* - the application of algorithmic problem solving techniques to media. We will particularly emphasize algorithms for creating and manipulating images.

In an attempt to provide up-to-date information, and to spare a few trees, I am making this as much of a "paperless" course as I can. Hence, materials will be in a course web. If you are puzzled by the organization of the Course Web, you may want to read the basic instructions for using this course web. If you find that you want paper copies of pages, please read the notes on printing copies. If you find that you are regularly printing pages, let me know and I can provide them for you.

Important Warnings

Warning! Experience shows that CSC151 exercises different parts of your brain than other courses, even than math courses. In general, such exercise is a good thing - one of the key points of a liberal arts education is that it exercises different parts of your brain. However, it may take a bit of time to get these new parts of your brain into shape. Expect a few difficult times, but have confidence that you can get through them and that you'll come out of the course with much more knowledge.

Warning! Computers are sentient, stupid, and malicious. When things go wrong, don't blame yourself. Ask me, a tutor, or the class mentor for help.

Warning! We are using some cutting-edge software, which means that things will occasionally crash for no good reason.

Basics

Meets: MTuWF 9:00-9:50 a.m., Science 3813

Instructor: Samuel A. Rebelsky, Science 3824. 269-4410 (office). 236-7445 (home). Office hours: MTuWF 10-11, Tu 1:15-2:05, MF 2:15-3:05. I also tend to follow an open door policy: Feel free to stop by when my door is open or to make an appointment for another time.

Class Mentor: Max Kuipers (kuipersb@grinnell.edu). Office hours TBD.

Grading (subject to change):

- Class participation: 10%;
- Weekly homework: 20%;
- Weekly quiz: 20%;
- Project: 10%;
- Exams: 30% (3 graded exams plus optional final);
- Best of (average quiz, project, average exam, final): 10%.

The final examination for this course is *optional*. It can be used as a makeup for one examination. It will be held at 9:00 a.m. on Friday, May 16, 2008.

I will drop the grade on one quiz (the quiz with the lowest grade).

More information on grading can be found in the grading policies page.

Labs: Computer science 151 is taught in a *collaborative workshop style*. Each day, you'll work on laboratory problems with other students in the class. We may start each day with a short lecture/discussion and end with a reflective discussion.

Extra Credit: I offer a number of forms of extra credit during the semester. Here are some of the most common ones. Throughout the term, I may suggest other forms of extra credit.

- I will often offer 1/2 point of extra credit for attending a particular talk (e.g., a computer science talk or college convocation) or for supporting your classmates in their public endeavors (e.g., attending a concert or a dance recital). Each category is capped at 1.5 points.

Tutoring: The CS Lab makes tutors for 151 available at regularly scheduled times. As soon as tutors have been scheduled, I'll let you know what those times are (and post them on this page).

Good-Faith Grade Guarantee:

Because I realize that computer science does not “click” will all students, I reward effort as well as outcome. Hence, students who make a “good faith” effort in this class will pass the class, with at least a C+. A good-faith effort includes missing no more than two classes, turning in every homework assignment, and spending the requisite time on each examination.

Class Software:

For this course, we are using locally-modified versions of two pieces of software, DrScheme and The Gimp. Because we are using modified versions, you cannot just download the software from these sites to your personal computer. However, if you use a Macintosh, we can provide you with Mac versions and instructions for using and updating them. Those materials will be available in the second week of the course. If you use a PC or a Linux workstation and are on campus, there are a few ways to run software directly from the MathLAN. That information is also forthcoming. Further information will follow.

Printing Pages:

Most of these pages are designed for viewing onscreen. If you'd like to print them, you may want to use PDF versions, which are designed for paper. Many pages have links directly to the PDF version. If there isn't such a link, simply replace the `html` at the end of the URL with `pdf`.

If you do decide to print, you should also consider printing the document double-sided and two-up (that is, two pages side-by-side on one physical page) so as to conserve paper. When I distribute documents, I will do my best to distribute them in this form.

Optional Books and Other Readings

Kelsey, Richard, Clinger, William, and Rees, Jonathan, eds. (1998). *Revised⁵ Report on the Algorithmic Language Scheme*. February 20, 1998. The concise and complete definition of the Scheme programming language. You won't need to understand all of it, but you'll find it helpful to keep it by your side.

The PLT Team Languages Team (2006). *DrScheme Manual*. The guide to the Scheme development environment we'll be using.

Rebelsky, Samuel (2008). *The CS151.01 2008S Course Web*. The hypertext that you are currently reading. Many of these materials (particularly those under Readings and Labs are required. You should make it a point to load the page of the day at the beginning of each class to check announcements and such.

Davis, Janet (2008). *The CSC151.02 2007F Course Web*. The course web for the other section of this class.

Springer, George and Friedman, Daniel P. (1989). *Scheme and the Art of Programming*. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press. The textbook that we formerly used in the class. We try to keep copies around the department.

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