Claremont McKenna College
Computer Science

CS 135 Handout 1: Syllabus January 20, 2015

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Office hours: T 4pm-5pm, H 1pm-2pm, and by appointment.

Lectures: T, H 9:35am-10:50am, Roberts North 12

Course Overview

In this class you will learn how to write web-based client/server applications. This will include HTML, CSS, JavaScript in the client browser; application programs written in PHP and at least one other language running on the server side; and SQL data sources on the back end.

For the first part of the course, we will study general concepts in distributed computing and systems.

For the second part of the course, we will use PHP running on Apache with MySQL on the back end, with Eclipse (using appropriate plugins) as our programming environment.

For the third part of the course, we will use at least one other language with MySQL on the back end. I am thinking Python but it may be something else.

For the last part of the course, we will study some current trends in distributed computing and systems.

Along the way we will encounter some of the principles of distributed computing. These issues will include distributed programming models, network protocols, multi-threaded programming, synchronization, authentication, security, etc.

There is no textbook. Instead, I will assign reading from various sources on the web.

Pragmatics

Until the final project starts, we will meet for lecture on Tuesdays and Thursdays for 75 minutes. In lecture, I will make use of both the whiteboard and of a projected laptop computer. I will use the laptop to create/view programming examples, and after lecture I will post those examples on the class web page.

In each lecture you will be given a reading assignment for the following lecture. Almost each week if not every week I will post an assignment for the following week on the schedule page of the course web site. It will consist of a set of programming and/or written problems that will be due a week later by electronic handin on Sakai. In most assignments you will work individually. For certain designated assignments, you may work in pairs if you wish. If you do, you must practice pair programming.

About two thirds into the semester I will assign a final project. You will work in groups of two, and the project will be due 6:00pm on Wednesday, May 6th, 2015. Once the final project starts, in some weeks each group will
meet with me to discuss the project’s progress. Because of these meetings, we will meet only once a week (on Tuesday) for lecture for those weeks.

There will be a link on the class web page to the lecture schedule. This schedule will show the lecture topic and reading assignment. Following each lecture, I will update this schedule to reflect what was actually covered in lecture that day. By the end of the semester, the schedule page will contain a record of everything we covered.

I will hold regular consulting hours (i.e., my office hours) each week, during which I will be available to help you with questions or problems. If you need to see me outside the consulting hours, please arrange a time.

Most of the programming that you do in this course will be in PHP and at least one other language, e.g., Python. There will also be some Java programming. If you are not already a proficient Java programmer, you should plan to put in some extra effort early in the semester to bring yourself up to speed. The level of Java knowledge I expect is the level covered in CS 62.

There will be no exams in this course (although I may still give some quizzes). Your grade will be based on the homework assignments and quizzes (63%), the final project (30%), and class participation (7%). Based on these three factors, A’s will be given to students within 90% of the best student; B’s within 80%; C’s within 70%, etc. If the best student is too good or not good enough, provisions will be made.

Getting Help and Information

You can get to the course web page from Sakai. It will contain a variety of information resources, including course schedule, my consulting hours and email address, links to course handouts and problem sets, links to examples from lecture, links pertaining to the textbook, tools, resources, etc.

I will set up a class mailing list so that I will be able to reach everyone in class.

The Announcements link on the course web page will be used to make general announcements for everyone registered for the course. I will try to reach everyone by using the Announcements link until the mailing list is set up. After that I will communicate with you via email.

Announcements specific to a problem set will be made in the FAQs link associated with the specific problem set. If you have a question on a specific problem set, please consult the FAQs link associated with it before you fire up an email with a question. It is likely that your question has already been answered in the FAQs.

Please check the announcements, your email, and the FAQs often. If any corrections or changes are to be made on an assignment, it will be in the FAQs link for the assignment.

I encourage you to see me when you need help, advice, or encouragement. I will always be available during my regular office hours each week, and you may also make appointments for other times. Simple questions can often be answered by phone or email.

Cooperation vs. Cheating

Working with others on assignments is a good way to learn the material and we encourage it. However, there are limits to the degree of cooperation that we will permit.

When working on programming assignments, you must work only with others whose understanding of the material is approximately equal to yours. In this situation, working together to find a good approach for solving a programming problem is cooperation; listening while someone dictates a solution is cheating. You must limit collaboration to a high-level discussion of solution strategies, and stop short of actually writing down a group answer. Anything that you hand in, whether it is a written problem or a computer program, must be written in your own words. If you base your solution on any other written solution, you are cheating.

When taking an exam, you must work completely independently of everyone else. Any collaboration here, of course, is cheating.

*We do not distinguish between cheaters who copy others’ work and cheaters who allow their work to be copied.*
If you cheat, you will be given an F in the course and referred to the appropriate college office. If you have any questions about what constitutes cheating, please ask.

**Students With Disabilities**

Reasonable accommodation will gladly be provided to the known disabilities of students in the class. Please let the instructor know of such situations as soon as possible.