1 Course Objectives

1.1 Course Description

This is an introductory course designed for any student interested in using computation to enhance their problem solving abilities. *No prior experience in programming is necessary.* Students will use their problem solving abilities to implement programs in Python. More specifically as stated in the course catalog, this course will cover basic concepts, nomenclature and historical perspective of computers and computing; internal representation of data; software design principles and practices; use of terminals, operation of editors and execution of student-written programs.

1.2 Learning Objectives

1. Develop a basic understanding of programming and the Python programming language.

2. See the value of programming in a variety of different disciplines – especially as it relates to your other college courses.

3. Appreciate the value of experimentation.

4. Be comfortable with the fact that there is more than one right solution to a problem.

5. Have fun!

2 Course Material and Announcements

2.1 Class Lectures

Most of the material that you will need for this class will be presented in the class lecture. Thus, it is *extremely* important that you attend every class.

2.2 Course Webpage and elearning

The definitive source for course announcements, reading assignments, reference materials, and class handouts is the course web page and elearning.

- [http://faculty.cse.tamu.edu/tlw/Courses/fall11/csce110](http://faculty.cse.tamu.edu/tlw/Courses/fall11/csce110)
- [http://elearning.tamu.edu/](http://elearning.tamu.edu/)
Please consult the course webpage and elearning regularly as they will both be updated throughout the semester.

2.3 Email

Occasionally, I will send email to the class. So, please make sure you check your email regularly as well.

2.4 Textbook

There is no textbook for this course. However, there are many good references that are available online that you may find helpful while studying the material.

- *Think Python: How to Think Like a Computer Scientist* by Allen B. Downey
  

- *Dive into Python* by Mark Pilgrim
  

3 Grading

3.1 Course Components

Your grade will be based on three components.

- **Exams (45%)** – There will be three, fifty minute exams and a comprehensive final exam. Each of the fifty minute exams will be worth 10% each for a total of 30%. The final exam is a two hour comprehensive exam worth 15%.
  
  - The dates of the three, fifty minute exams are not scheduled yet. However, the dates will be announced at least 2 weeks before the exam to give everyone sufficient time to prepare.
  
  - The final exam will be December 9th from 10am to noon in HRBB 124.

- **Quizzes (15%)** – There will be short, weekly in-class quizzes every Monday consisting of a few simple questions concerning the course material. The purpose of the quizzes is to help you stay caught up in the class. The first quiz will be on Monday, September 5th.

- **Lab assignments and homework (40%)** – Lab assignments and homework will help students understand the course material, provide practical experience programming experience, and help improve problem-solving abilities.

3.2 Grading Scale

- 90% – 100% A
- 80% – 89% B
- 70% – 79% C
- 60% – 69% D
- 59% and below F
4 Class Participation and Success

4.1 Asking Questions

It is extremely important for you to be engaged in the course. Otherwise, you will fall asleep and wonder what happened to your tuition dollars. So, I encourage you to ask questions during lecture. When asking a question, please stand up and also state your name so that I know who you are.

4.2 Studying for the course

This is not an easy course because you are essentially learning a new language; a new way of communicating your thoughts to the computer.

To meet our learning objectives, I will keep you busy with programming projects, quizzes, and exams. You must be totally engaged in the course. But, more importantly, if you get lost early in the course, it is really difficult (if not impossible) to recover. It’s like your math courses. If you don’t know how to add, it will be impossible to learn how to multiply. Learning to program is similar. As a result, there are multiple ways that feedback is built into the course to help move you along in the course without getting lost. However, you are responsible for putting in the time to study and seeking help when you don’t understand the material.

If you put in the time, this course is designed for you to succeed. How much time should you be studying? One rule of thumb states that you should study 2 hours per credit hour. Given that this is a 4 credit course, that translates into 8 hours. However, I’ll round that up to at least 10 hours once we start writing more interesting programs.

5 The Good, the Bad, and the Ugly

5.1 The Good

This is one of my favorite courses to teach. My philosophy (which is shared with many of my colleagues) is that learning to programming (and learning computational thinking) is an essential skill given the ubiquity of computing. So, the first good related to this course is that you have a professor that is excited about teaching the material. The second good is that you will learn a skill that will be useful to you in life but more immediately in your other classes. And, maybe a third good is that you can understand your geeky friends or bosses (if you have such people in your life) better.

For many of you, learning to program will be uncomfortable at first, but the reward at the end is that you will feel a huge sense of accomplishment and a skill that hopefully transfers to other areas of your life.

5.2 The Bad

This is a large class. So, I will not have a chance to meet or know many of you personally. As a result of such a large class (over 120 students), I show no mercy when it comes to assignments, exams, and quizzes. The three rules to remember are:

- **Rule #1:** No late assignments will be accepted.
- **Rule #2:** There are no make-up quizzes or exams.
• **Rule #3**: Your overall grade will be based on the scores that you receive on the exams, quizzes, and assignments.

I do recognize that there may be unusual circumstances that may result in a violation of the above rules. Please discuss such unusual circumstances with me in advance.

### 5.3 The Ugly

For some reason, a few courageous students try to lobby for getting the rules changed for whatever reason. However, they seem to disappear without any warning from the kingdom. ₪ It’s a much better use of your time to study the material and enjoy the class.

### 6 Academic integrity

#### 6.1 Aggie Code of Honor ([http://www.tamu.edu/aggiehonor](http://www.tamu.edu/aggiehonor))

“Aggies do not lie, cheat, or steal nor do they tolerate those who do." Students are expected to attend all classes, complete assignments on time, and participate fully in class discussions and group projects. Violations will be handled in accordance with the Texas A&M University Regulations governing academic integrity.

#### 6.2 Plagiarism

As commonly defined, plagiarism consists of passing off as one’s own the ideas, words, writings, etc., which belong to another. In accordance with this definition, you are committing plagiarism if you copy the work of another person and turn it in as your own, even if you should have permission of that person. Plagiarism is one of the worst academic sins, for the plagiarist destroys the trust among colleagues without research cannot safely communicated. If you have any questions regarding plagiarism, please consult the latest issue of the Texas A&M University Student Rules, under the section for Scholastic Dishonesty.

### 7 American with Disabilities Act

The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) is a federal antidiscrimination statute that provides comprehensive civil rights protection for persons with disabilities. Among other things, this legislation requires that all students with disabilities to be guaranteed a learning environment that provides for reasonable accommodation of their disabilities. If you believe you have a disability requiring an accommodation, please contact the Department of Student Life, services for students with disabilities in Room 126 of Koldus Building, or call 845-1637.

### 8 Modifications to the syllabus

While not anticipated, there may be revisions to syllabus that are required once the semester begins. If this happens, the syllabus will be updated and students notified of the revision promptly. If a revision is made to the syllabus, they will always be advantageous to the student.