Sam Houston State University

Department of Computer Science

CSTE 1330: Introduction to Computers for Non-majors
Syllabus for Spring 2018

General Information
Instructor: Kirk Burns
Office:
Phone:
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Course Title: CSTE 1330: Introduction to Computers for Non-majors
Location: Online
Time   N/A

Course Description
This course focuses on the use of common computer systems, software types and various computer concepts you might not have any experience with. We will cover such topics as: hardware, types of software, photo manipulation, webpage creation, networking, encryption and much more. The intent of this class is **not to teach you any specific software** but rather to teach you **how to find and learn** about computer concepts and software as well as give you the "tools" to teach yourself new computer concepts.

Course goals
The goal of this class is not only to ensure students have a basic understanding of general computer systems, but also to remove the intimidation so many feel when faced with new technologies and challenges. We will shatter the mystique surrounding "computer people" and the students will come to view software and systems as any other tool to be leveraged for their benefit. A secondary goal of this class is to expose the students to the many facets and uses of technology in our society today.

Semester Assignments and Point Values

- Syllabus Test = 100 pts
- Library Tutorial Quiz = 100 pts
- Library Database Assignment = 100 pts
- Website Assignment = 200 pts
- Steganography/Encryption Assignment = 100 pts
- Hardware Assignment = 100 pts
- Google Docs Assignment = 100 pts
- Ethics Assignment = 100 pts
- Photo Manipulation Assignment = 100 pts
- YouTube Assignment = 100 pts
- Podcast Assignment = 100 pts
- Portfolio = 200 pts
- Total = 1400 pts
  - 100-90% (1260 min pts) = A
  - 89-80% (1120 min pts) = B
  - 79-70% (980 min pts) = C
  - 69-60% (840 min pts) = D
  - 59-0% (less than 840 pts) = F

Text/Materials:

There are no textbooks for this class. The materials for this class will be provided and will consist of a variety of online reading and library resources. The only exception is software needed for the class. Some of the software you **might wish** to use to complete assignments is available on campus, but not all. For those of you who are not on campus or just wish to do all work from home, I will provide you with options that are either free or trial. There should be no need for you to purchase anything for this class. The caveat to this is that you might want to purchase a web authoring software called Dreamweaver. You do not have to, but if you are intending to do all your work at home, I would encourage you to purchase it and/or use the free software I suggest. I will provide links when we start the website assignment.

IMPORTANT - The readings are **NOT** optional. You are responsible for assignments, readings, mass emails from me, and **ALL** recorded sessions as they are assigned from the first class day. If you do not have personal internet access then you may utilize the general use labs on campus to keep up with the readings and class work. If that is not an option for you, there are many commercial locations which provide free WiFi (Starbucks, Schlotzsky's, etc). Because this is an online class, it will be YOUR responsibility to insure you have internet access and **check your university email every day**.

Additionally, many course assignments will require you to have downloaded and/or opened the related course material before you can access the assignment. This is to help ensure you do not begin an assignment without an understanding of the material it is intended to cover. For this reason, you will not know if an assignment will be difficult or easy to complete until you have first reviewed the material and then opened the assignment. It could easily be disastrous for you to wait until a few days before the assignment is due to begin working on the materials. **Begin reviewing the materials immediately upon their availability, and then open the assignment to review it** and you will know exactly what is expected with plenty of time to complete it.

Grading

All assignments will be graded in one of three (3) ways. Either auto graded via online test, instructor graded, or peer review graded. The grade for the online tests (unless an essay question is on the test) will be viewable immediately in Blackboard. Instructor graded assignments will not be viewable until I enter them. That might not happen until all student submissions have been graded. Peer review graded assignments will be viewable approximately 24 hours after the review due date.

The instructions for what you are supposed to submit and how will be provided for each assignment. They are **NOT** all the same so pay attention to the instructions for each assignment.

For each peer reviewed assignment I will specify how many students will be reviewing your work. Those students will be picked at random by Blackboard. This will also be the number of students you can expect to review. I will provide you with the Metric you will use for each assignment. You will use that as a kind of checklist to be sure you have meet all the requirements as well as your checklist for how you will grade. Even if you do not turn something in, you are required to review. The average of all reviews will be your grade for the assignment. If a student does not review your work, the 0 listed will NOT be averaged. If you disagree with the grade and the feedback you are given, let me know and I will review and adjust your grade as I see fit. But be cautious of this, if I feel you should have gotten a lower grade than you were given by your peers, that will then become your new grade.

Attendance Requirements

This is an online class so attendance is N/A. However, there will be online classes recorded and if you do not attend them you are required to watch them at a later date as they will contain important information for homework assignments and tests. It is also expected you will be diligent and proactive about the assignments. Because of the work load for this class and the number of students I have, I will ***NOT*** accept any late work without an exceptionally good excuse as to why it is late. Please ensure you submit all work well in advance of the time it is due. You will have no less than one week to complete the assignments, so other than a hospitalization, there are few excuses that will justify an assignment being submitted late. If your computer crashes, the internet goes down, the school network goes down, or any other number of issues that might arise **the day it is due**, you will find little sympathy as you have had at least an entire week to work on and

submit the assignment. You should consider homework items as 'due' a couple of days in advance of the actual due date, as the due date represents the last possible moment the assignment will be accepted. Some of the concepts will be new to you and possibly very difficult. **It is highly unlikely you will be able to complete most of the assignments if you do not start on them as soon as they are assigned.**

Academic dishonesty
All students are expected to engage in all academic pursuits in a manner that is above reproach. Students are expected to maintain complete honesty and integrity in the academic experiences both in and out of the classroom. Any student found guilty of dishonesty in any phase of academic work will be subject to disciplinary action. The University and its official representatives may initiate disciplinary proceedings against a student accused of any form of academic dishonesty including, but not limited to, cheating on an examination or other academic work which is to be submitted, plagiarism, **collusion** (from Webster Dictionary: secret agreement or cooperation especially for an illegal or deceitful purpose) and the abuse of resource materials.

Be aware, the instructor reviews all individual assignments and exercises for evidence of collaborative work. While it is sometimes appropriate and encouraged for students to discuss concepts and ideas, it is never permissible to collaboratively work on specifically individual assignments, to share or swap completed or partially completed assignments. In addition it is not permitted for students to use examples provided by the instructor without appropriate permission and documentation/citation of the use of that example. If you work with anyone else, make sure and notify the instructor to prevent unintentionally facing disciplinary action that might range from an F in the class to expulsion from the university.

Because of incidents that have happened in previous semesters, if I feel there is any chance you have violated this section I will require you to demonstrate proficiency to either me, or another professor. I will email you and a time will be setup for you to meet with either myself, or another professor for you to prove you actually performed the work you submitted. **Do not be offended by this. This is just to prove you do know the material and performed the work submitted. There will only be an issue if you cannot demonstrate a working knowledge of the material.**

Classroom Conduct
During the semester I will be holding online classes to discuss the assignments, readings and/or just to get face time with any of the students who wish it. I do not foresee this being a mandatory participation unless I deem it necessary do to perceived indifference to the assignments. I will attempt to give at least a couple of days notice before holding the classes. If you miss the online class, it is required you find the time to watch the recording. All students are individually responsible for all information put out in the class and these online sessions tend to answer a lot of your questions about the material and assignments. You might also wish to have a webcam and microphone attached to your computer to aid in interaction. It is university policy that all students taking an online class have a webcam and microphone. I do not require these, but you might find them beneficial during the recorded sessions.

Visitors in the Classroom
If we are holding an online session, I will expect you to act as you would in any classroom. Please be dressed appropriately and try to ensure there is not a lot of background noise. Please be respectful of me and other students.

Students with Disabilities Policy
It is the policy of Sam Houston State University that individuals otherwise qualified shall not be excluded, solely by reason of their disability, from participation in any academic program of the university. Further, they shall not be denied the benefits of these programs nor shall they be subjected to discrimination. Students with disabilities that might affect their academic performance should register with the Office of Services for Students with Disabilities located in the Lee Drain Annex (telephone 936-294-3512, TDD 936-294-3786, and e-mail disability@shsu.edu). They should then make arrangements with their individual instructors so that appropriate strategies can be considered and helpful procedures can be developed to ensure participation and achievement opportunities are not impaired.

SHSU adheres to all applicable federal, state, and local laws, regulations, and guidelines with respect to providing reasonable accommodations for students with disabilities. If you have a disability that may affect adversely your work in this class, then I encourage you to register with the SHSU Services for Students with Disabilities and to talk with me about how I can best help you. All disclosures of disabilities will be kept strictly confidential. NOTE: No accommodation can be made until you register with the Services for Students with Disabilities. For a complete listing of the university policy, see:

http://www.shsu.edu/dotAsset/187f9029-a4c6-4fb4-aea9-2d501f2a60f3.pdf

Religious Observance
Because this is an online class, this should not be an issue. You will have at least one week to complete any assignment so there should be more than enough time to arrange to complete the work and submit the assignment without it interfering with religious practices. However, if there is a situation that arises where an assignment conflicts with your religious practice, the following university policy will cover how it will be handled.

University policy allows for student to observe religious holy days without penalty. If you intend to miss class as a result of the observance of a religious holy day or as a result of the necessary traveling time required for religious observance, such an absence will not be penalized. As a courtesy, it would be appreciated if you **notify the instructor in advance in writing (email is fine)**, of the dates and times of class sessions that are to be missed. Students absent from class as a result of religious observance are required to submit any assignments missed immediately on their return to the classroom. Makeup tests and quizzes will also be provided on return to the class.

Again, this should not be an issue since this is an online class. But if you do have a religious conflict, please get with me immediately so I am aware and can accommodate.

OF PARTICULAR NOTE:

THIS IS A DIFFICULT CLASS! If you **procrastinate, lack self-motivation, rely on the instructor to hold your hand** and walk you through all the steps of studying and homework **– THIS IS NOT THE CLASS FOR YOU!**

This is not an impossible class, but its nature and format require students to be self-starters, problem solvers, willing to think outside-the-box, and not be afraid to go outside themselves and the provided course materials to find answers. Remember, one of the objectives of the class is to teach you how to teach yourself new concepts.

This is an Intro class for non-majors. Several of you are going to disagree with this, but remember what Introduction means. It means introduction to the field of study and to present concepts and ideas. Most of which you probably have not ever heard of. This class is designed to teach you those concepts and ideas. What this class is not is a class to teach you how to use Microsoft Word/Excel/PowerPoint. It is expected you already have a working knowledge of those tools. If you want more knowledge, then I suggest you use what you learn in this class to teach yourself what you feel you need to know.

As the instructor I will provide you with direction, requirements for reading materials, suggestions for reading materials, assignments and tests so you can demonstrate to me your mastery of the topics covered, and when needed I welcome your questions and enjoy discussing with you the many interesting nuances of the topics covered in this course. I will **not,** however, be available at a moment's notice; I will **not** be available for walk-in office hours (**I am out of the country for most of the semester**); I will **not** be able to accommodate any particular student's specific need to have a file distributed or submitted in a particular format, **nor** to extend to any particular student extensions or accommodations on an as-needed basis. I will **not** bend over backwards to accommodate the specific unusual hardware or software you have, your work or personal life. **To do so would be unfair** to the other students who put themselves to a certain amount of sacrifice to afford adequate equipment and reserve enough time to complete the assignments. That said, as stated earlier, you

should not need any specialized equipment to complete this class. Almost all the software I will be showing you is free to download and use. But, some students MIGHT have older computers which will not accommodate these programs. If that is your case, then I suggest for those assignments you arrange to borrow a friend's computer, use software similar to what I present that is compatible with your computer, and/or go to the university and use a university computer.

It is your responsibility to provide yourself, at your own expense, with hardware and software which will enable you to complete the requirements of this course. Including the download and upload of assignments and course materials and the ability to open, manipulate, and use those materials in accordance with the directions provided.

All assignments should be completed in a professional manner. They should have a neat appearance, use proper grammar and have citations in accordance with any acceptable citation format, when appropriate.

It is your responsibility to provide yourself, at your own expense, with any tutor or tutorials needed to enable you to more fully comprehend the course material. Most of the time, this will mean a simple online search and/or something like a YouTube video demonstration. For some of you, this might mean an extra expense for tutors or optional software which assists you in making an assignment easier for you to understand or complete. You are **NOT** required to use a tutor! I am available to explain if you are not understanding a concept or assignment. If for some reason you are unable to understand my explanation of a topic, I will attempt to help you find someone who can assist. **Do not trust all tutors**. In the past there have been people who acted as tutors for students who did not know what they were doing and caused more problems for students. If you need personal assistance, let me know and I will attempt to help you find someone who CAN adequately assist you.

Google is your friend! Are you having trouble understanding a term, an assignment, a process? **AFTER** having reviewed the course materials, talking with me, and talking to my TA, use an online search engine (such as Google.com) to search for different key words that might help to better understand it. (For example: The assignment says to upload a link to your website. You do not know what that means, so you type in the phrase "what is a website link" and hit enter. There will be documents, videos, websites, and many other sources which will answer your question very thoroughly and walk you through how to provide what is needed. Remember: This is the internet and people lie all the time! Check more than a couple of different sources to make sure they agree before you decide you have come across the correct answer.) Also remember your professor is here to assist. Because this is an online course, I have no idea if you understand a concept or not unless you tell me. If you do not understand something, EMAIL me. I will be more than happy to respond back and help you understand a topic.

The Instructor is your colleague… in a 'professional environment' way. Behave in a professional manner and you can expect to receive help as needed. When you have read the materials, searched online, and still have questions, **EMAIL THE INSTRUCTOR**!! I am here to help you help yourself. When you contact the instructor, **expect a return email by the end of the <u>next</u> business day.** This DOES mean that if your question comes at 5:00pm on a Friday, you can expect the instructor will open it sometime Monday and get back to you by 5:00pm Tuesday. I have other commitments besides this class. Some of those include military service, travel for work or military, meetings, other emails to answer, assignments to grade, family, miscellaneous obligations, etc. Expecting a response within 30 minutes is unrealistic. **If your question is about your assignment that is due in 24 hours, then you should have gotten around to it sooner.** In this case, your best recourse is Google. Still email me because I might be able to answer in time to assist.

When in doubt: turn in what you have. A 30 is better than a 0.
BE PREPARED TO DROP!

I know it sounds callous, but this class is very difficult for some people. It really is an Intro class for Non-Majors but we cover a lot of material and, like other disciplines, some people just are not able to understand the concepts. Because of this, I will occasionally send out emails to students whose grades indicate a low likelihood of passing. **TAKE THEM SERIOUSLY!** Do NOT expect extra credit, or chances to make up assignments or tests. I do NOT grade on a curve. I will NOT bump you from a 69 to a 70. Assignments will

get progressively more difficult and rely on information learned previously in the course. If you fall behind it is highly unlikely that you will master future course material or be able to pass. The grade you receive in this course is the grade you earned.

If you keep up with the reading and the coursework, you should not have trouble earning good grades and passing with an A or B. On average, roughly 77% of all students make a C or higher in the class with about 55% making an A or B. If you honestly attempt to do the assignments and turn them in on time, it is unlikely you will fail the class. It is not my intent to fail anyone and those who do fail typically only do so because they do not turn in assignments. I am strict, but I am fair and as stated, you will get the grade you earn.

TUTORS

I strongly recommend you do NOT get a tutor without first asking me about the tutor. In past semesters tutors have given very inaccurate information to students which caused them to fail an assignment. Just because a person says they are, or was hired as a tutor does not mean they understand the assignment. Also, just because they say they are a Computer Science major does not mean they understand the assignment either. Your best bet is to contact me and get clarification. If you desire a tutor, let me know and I will try to help you find someone who is willing to assist you. Understand this is NOT a service provided by the university and is likely to cost you money.

FINALLY

The intent of this course is to introduce new computer concepts, give you information about them and teach you how to teach yourself computer concepts you might encounter in the future. I could give you all the answers, but then you really do not learn HOW TO LEARN and be able to better use computers as the tools they are. Do not be afraid to ask me questions. I want to help you learn. What I do NOT want to do is "spoon feed" you the answers. This is a college class and spoon feeding you is NOT teaching you. I will go out of my way to help you learn a concept but I draw the line at just giving you the answers.

CAVEAT- The Instructor reserves the right to correct and or clarify any errors or omissions in this Syllabus and Course Schedule.