Welcome to CS 135

Information about the course is on the website:

https://student.cs.uwaterloo.ca/~cs135/

Contact info for all course staff is there, but if in doubt, here are the key email addresses:

Instructors Cameron Morland – cjmorland@uwaterloo.ca
Rob Hackman – robert.hackman@uwaterloo.ca
Coordinator Karen Anderson – karen.anderson@uwaterloo.ca
ISAs cs135@uwaterloo.ca

“Lectures” in COVID-times

CS135 is normally taught with in-person lectures on Tuesdays and Thursdays, supported by a well-developed set of slides.

During these unprecedented times, the slides are available with “commentary” on the web site. “Commentary” includes text, video, and some interactive tools embedded in the web page.

You’ll need to work through the slides and commentary on your own with lots of support via office hours, the discussion system, and self-check exercises.

The course owes a lot to the original textbook, “How to Design Programs (First Edition)” (HtDP) by Felleisen, Flatt, Findler, Krishnamurthi. It’s freely available via a link on the web site.

Participation

Computer programming is not a solitary task.

Programmers interact routinely with others:

- Many workplaces hold a Daily Scrum, a brief meeting where each member gives an update on what they’re doing.
- Programmers interact frequently with their peers in small conversations in person or through discussion tools (Mattermost, IRC, Slack, etc).
There are two ways that participation will directly affect your grade in this course:

1. **Weekly reflections.**
   - In Learn, you will write a short statement on what you have accomplished this week, and what you have not yet accomplished.
   - You can think of this as being like a scrum report.
   - Reflections form 6% of your course grade. For full marks, complete a reflection every week, any time Friday – Sunday.

2. **Use of discussion boards.**
   - This term we are trying a new discussion system: [https://us.edstem.org/](https://us.edstem.org/)
   - Ask a question, answer a question, or otherwise participate meaningfully in discussions.
   - Discussions form 6% of your course grade. For full marks, make at least one meaningful post every week, any time Monday – Sunday.

**Self-check marks**

The lecture commentary has “self-check” exercises embedded in it.

- They give you immediate feedback on your understanding.
- Self-check exercises form 6% of your course grade.
- To earn marks, they complete by 11:59 pm of the date given on the course calendar (don’t fall behind!).
- The first answer submitted is the one that counts.
- If $x$ is the proportion of the questions that you submit and $y$ is the proportion that are correct, your participation mark will be $6 \cdot \min(1, \frac{1}{3} \cdot x + \frac{4}{3} \cdot y)$.

**Assignments**

**Timing:** 11 assignments, due Tuesday at 11:45 am, Waterloo time. Remember that clocks change in Waterloo on March 14.

**Software:** DrRacket v7.8 or greater ([http://racket-lang.org](http://racket-lang.org))

**Computers:** In normal times we have labs available for your use. In these abnormal times, you'll need to provide your own computer. In the past, almost all students have used their own computers.

**A00:** Due soon. Must complete before you are allowed to submit any subsequent assignment.

**Submission:** Using MarkUs. More in A00. Submit early and often. No late submissions. No email submissions.
Winter-term CS135 normally has one midterm exam and one final exam. Exams are written on paper in-person and supervised (“proctored”) by course staff. Normally they count for the majority of your CS135 grade.

In COVID-times we can’t offer proctored exams and for on-line courses the accumulated wisdom is to have more “assessments” that are individually and collectively worth fewer marks.

We’ve tried to use the term “assessment” to mark this change, but you’ll likely see references to “exam” in places we’ve missed.

You’ll have one midterm assessment (see the course calendar) and one final assessment (not yet scheduled) in addition to the assignments and self-check exercises.

Instead of writing your exam on paper, you’ll be able use DrRacket and other tools.

6% weekly reflection, completed in Learn
6% weekly peer discussion
6% Self-check exercises
60% Assignments (roughly weekly)
7% Midterm
15% Final assessment

To pass the course:
- Your weighted assignment average must be 50% or greater.
- Your weighted average of the midterm and final must be 50% or greater.
Getting help

- **Office hours**: Held on-line using Microsoft Teams. Instructions on the web site.
  - 1-to-1 with an undergrad tutor (Instructional Support Assistant) or instructor.
  - many-to-1 group sessions, usually with an instructor.
  - All of these sessions are student driven. You bring the questions.
- **Discussions**: An on-line forum where you can ask questions. Your fellow students and course staff answer them.
  - Regularly check the official assignment pinned posts.
  - Use meaningful subject headings (not just “A3 problem”; what’s your specific problem?).
  - Search previous posts before posting; **Don’t duplicate!**

Suggestions for success

Read the CS135 Thrival Guide as soon as possible. Find it on the course web site under “Help”.

- Work carefully through the material in each module. Do the exercises, and discuss them in the discussion board. **This is key!**
- Keep up with your assignments. Start them early, submit frequently.
- Go over your assignments and assessments; learn from your mistakes.
- Visit office hours as needed; earlier is better.
- Follow our advice on approaches to writing programs (e.g. design recipe, templates).
- Read your mail sent to your UW email account. We will **only** send to and reply to your UW email account!
- Integrate exam study into your weekly routine.
- Maintain a “big picture” perspective: look beyond the immediate task or topic.

Academic integrity

- You must do your own work.
- Policy 71 - Student Discipline: plagiarism, sharing assignments, etc.
- Running out of time? It is better to hand in a partial assignment or nothing than to hand in someone else’s work.
- Be careful about posting code to the discussion board. If it looks like it could have come from your assignment, don’t post it.
- Don’t post solutions to homework sites. We monitor them and flag plagiarism there too.

“In order to maintain a culture of academic integrity, members of the University of Waterloo community are expected to promote honesty, trust, fairness, respect and responsibility. [Check www.uwaterloo.ca/academicintegrity/ for more information.]"
The teaching material used in CS 135 is the property of its authors. This includes:

- Lecture slides and instructor written notes
- Assignment specifications and solutions
- Assessments and solutions

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**Installing DrRacket**

In this course we will be using DrRacket.

Install DrRacket [www.racket-lang.org/download/](http://www.racket-lang.org/download/)
Choose Distribution: **Racket** and Variant: **Regular**.

Exercise

Install the **waterloo-racket-tools** package in DrRacket, as follows:

- In DrRacket, from the menus, select **File → Package Manager**.
- Click the tab named **Available from Catalog**.
- In the **Filter** box (1), type **uwaterloo-racket-tools**, click the package (2), then **Install** (3). See below.
Goals of this module

- You should understand how the course is organized.
- You should be familiar with the course resources available to you.
- You should know what you need to do to earn the mark you desire.
- You should know how to avoid plagiarism.
- You should have DrRacket and the `waterloo-racket-tools` package installed on your computer.