

# CIS 115 - Introduction to Computing Science

Fall 2016

## Syllabus

<b>Instructor:</b> Russell Feldhausen <a href="mailto:russfeld@ksu.edu">russfeld@ksu.edu</a> <b>Office:</b> 2214 Engineering Hall (DUE) <b>Phone:</b> Office - (785) 532-7929; Mobile - (785) 292-3121 (Call/Text) <b>Website:</b> <a href="http://people.cs.ksu.edu/~russfeld">http://people.cs.ksu.edu/~russfeld</a> <b>Office Hours:</b> MWF 10 - 11A in 2214 Engineering Hall or by appointment <b>Classroom:</b> 1116 Engineering Hall (DUE)	<b>Instructor:</b> Nathan Bean <a href="mailto:nhbean@ksu.edu">nhbean@ksu.edu</a> <b>Office:</b> 2216 Engineering Hall (DUE) <b>Phone:</b> Office - (785) 532-7942; Mobile - (785) 294-6649 <b>Website:</b> <a href="http://people.cs.ksu.edu/~nhb7817">http://people.cs.ksu.edu/~nhb7817</a> <b>Office Hours:</b> TBD in 2216 Engineering Hall or by appointment <b>Classroom:</b> 1116 Engineering Hall (DUE)
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Class Times	Teaching Assistant 1 - 5	Teaching Assistant 6 - 10
A: TU 9:30 - 10:45A	Hunter Goddard (hbgoddard)	Mary Pat Siebert (marypatsiebert)
C: TU 2:30 - 3:45P	Casey Poole (caseypoole)	Lizzy Hall (lizzyh19)
D: TU 4:00 - 5:15P	Casey Lafferty (rclafferty)	Eujun Chin (eujun)
E: TU 8:00 - 9:15A	Hayden Woods (hwoods01)	Anastasia King (ananking33)
F: TU 11:00A - 12:15P	Wesley Good (wjgood)	Shelby Coen (shelby88)

**Required Texts** - *Amazon & Chegg links provided for convenience, not endorsement*

“The Pattern on the Stone: The Simple Ideas that Make Computers Work” by W. Daniel Hillis.  
ISBN 046502596X - <http://www.amazon.com/dp/0465066933/> Kindle edition available  
<http://www.chegg.com/textbooks/0465066933>

“Nine Algorithms That Changed the Future: The Ingenious Ideas That Drive Today’s  
Computers” by John MacCormick.

ISBN 0691158193 - <http://www.amazon.com/dp/0691158193> Kindle edition available  
<http://www.chegg.com/textbooks/0691158193>

“Tubes: A Journey to the Center of the Internet” by Andrew Blum.

ISBN 0061994952 - <http://www.amazon.com/dp/0061994952/> Kindle edition available  
<http://www.chegg.com/textbooks/0061994952>

**Optional Reading** - *These are books we've found to be interesting and/or useful:*

"Blown to Bits: Your Life, Liberty, and Happiness After the Digital Explosion" by Hal Abelson, Ken Ledeen, and Harry Lewis. ISBN 0137135599 - <http://www.amazon.com/dp/0137135599/>  
Creative Commons digital edition available **FREE** at <http://www.bitsbook.com/>

"Code: The Hidden Language of Computer Hardware and Software" by Charles Petzold.  
ISBN 0735611319 - <http://www.amazon.com/dp/0735611319/> Kindle edition available

"How Not to be Wrong: The Power of Mathematical Thinking" by Jordan Ellenberg.  
ISBN 0143127535 - [http://www.amazon.com/dp/0143127535](http://www.amazon.com/dp/0143127535/) Kindle edition available

### How to Get Help in this Course

CIS 115 can be an interesting course due to the large amount of material covered and the fact that much of the material is brand new to students. Therefore, you are encouraged to seek help whenever you feel you are being overwhelmed or don't understand a topic. **You are not alone!** Most students in CIS 115 have never studied anything relating to Computing Science before, so it is new to everyone. The instructors and TAs are **always** willing to help students with **any** questions you may have about the class or other issues related to Computing Science. So please, don't be afraid to ask questions.

Here are the 5 **recommended ways to get help** on CIS 115:

- Review the course materials posted on K-State Canvas and the course website
- Ask your teammates for help or advice on assignments or projects
- Send assignment questions to your teaching assistant (TA) or instructor via email
- Visit your instructor's office hours, or the office hours for your TA if available
- Schedule a one-on-one meeting with your instructor

### Course Description

This course is an introduction to the history, fundamental theories, and research areas within Computing Science and its related disciplines. It is **NOT** an introductory programming course, though we will be learning a bit of computer programming to help understand many of these topics. Computing Science has a direct impact on many facets of daily life, but very few of us ever take the time to wonder how it all works. This course aims to fill that void.

To accomplish this goal, we will do several hands-on learning activities, have meaningful in-class discussions, write about our own thoughts and opinions on various subjects, and research topics that are central to Computing Science. While doing so, we will try to relate the concepts we are learning to real-world problems and ideas.

## Course Objectives

By the end of this course, we expect each student to be able to:

- Describe the history of Computing Science and list some of the important devices, innovations, and people that got us to where we are today.
- Relate Computing Science to a variety of other disciplines and describe how they are interconnected with each other.
- Apply and use Computing Science tools and techniques to solve real-world problems.
- Research and learn about new ideas and areas in Computing Science and share those ideas with others, all without direct guidance.
- Develop a personal understanding of how Computing Science affects his or her own life.
- Understand many different subject areas within Computing Science and how they are changing our understanding of the field.

## Major Course Topics

- The history of Computing Science and early computing machines
- The basics of binary representation, boolean logic, data encoding, encryption and error checking
- Computational thinking, programming, and algorithm design
- The history and technology behind the internet and how it affects our world
- Traditional Computing Science areas such as artificial intelligence, human-computer interaction, high performance computing, big data, robotics, and more
- Cybersecurity in a modern, interconnected world
- Other disciplines and how they relate to Computing Science.

## Course Structure

This course will be drastically different from the “traditional” lecture-based college courses you are likely familiar with. Instead, it will focus on several hands-on learning activities designed to engage and interest students in a variety of topics while helping them think more deeply about each topic and why it is important in Computing Science. While there will be some bits of lecture material to introduce topics, it will be kept to a minimum and designed to be interactive in order to encourage discussion and analysis.

In short, this class will require a considerable, but reasonable, amount of effort, not only from the students but the instructors and TAs as well. In addition to the in-class exercises and activities, there will be several assignments and group projects to be completed outside of class.

Therefore, in this course there will be:

- *No Midterm Examinations*
- *No Final Examinations*
- *No Multiple Choice Quizzes*
- *No Lists of Facts to Memorize*

## **Individual Assignments**

Throughout this course, each student will be responsible for a number of assignments to be completed independently, without collaborating with others in the class unless otherwise noted.

### *Attendance and Participation in Class Activities*

Each class period will include many hands-on activities to be completed in class that will help illustrate the topic of the day. Collaborating and communicating with others in the class is a large part of these activities and is encouraged. Participating in each of these activities is key to learning, so failing to attend class or participate in the in-class activities will result in a grade of zero for that day's work. **Simply attending class does not guarantee that you will receive points**, especially if you are not actively engaged in learning. This means that if you are on your mobile device, chatting with other students, or using a computer without engaging in the lecture and activities, you may not receive your attendance points for that day.

### *Programming & Written Assignments*

There may be some programming or written assignments given from time to time that must be completed outside of class. It is acceptable to communicate with other students about the concepts in the assignment if you do not understand it, but you should not discuss the details of how the assignment should be completed. Your submission should be your own work, or the work of your small group if allowed by the instructor.

### *Online Blog*

Each student is responsible for publishing blog articles based on topics or prompts given in class. These blog articles will give the student a chance to articulate his or her own opinions about a topic or learn more about a particular area that wasn't covered very deeply in class. Each blog article should be original work, and should clearly show independent thought and opinions wherever appropriate.

## **Team Assignments**

Students will be assigned to a team at the beginning of the semester. Each team will be responsible for completing two major projects during the course of the semester.

### *Topic Research*

Each team will be given a topic to research. The team will locate and organize materials to use when presenting the topic to the class. The materials should include both online and offline resources. The team will then create a presentation to share the information about their topic with the class. That research will then be used to write the wiki article.

### *Wiki Article*

Each team will use the material collected for the topic research project, as well as information from the resulting class discussions, to create an article to be added to the final course wiki. The article is expected to be a thorough examination of the topic and should be written in such a way that others taking this course can read it and understand the material. The class as a whole will be responsible for finalizing the entire draft of the wiki and making sure it has a consistent design and feel to it.

### **Grading**

In theory, each student begins the course with an A. As you submit work, you can either maintain your A (for good work) or chip away at it (for less adequate or incomplete work). In practice, each student starts with 0 points in the gradebook and works upward toward a final point total out of the possible number of points. In this course, it is perfectly possible to get an A simply by completing all the individual assignments and team projects in a satisfactory manner, as well as attending and participating in class each day. Each assignment constitutes a portion of the final grade, as detailed below:

15% - Topic Research\*

15% - Wiki Article\*

28% - Class Attendance and Participation (1% each, 30 lectures total)

*(You are allowed 2 unexcused absences without affecting your grade)*

21% - Individual Programming & Written Assignments (3% each, 8 total)

*(The single lowest assignment score will be dropped)*

21% - Online Blog Assignments (3% each, 8 total)

*(The single lowest blog score will be dropped)*

\* All group work will include a **REQUIRED** peer evaluation component which can adjust that portion of the individual's grade up to 50%. If a student should fail to contribute to a group assignment at all, their grade for that assignment will be reduced to a zero. **Failure to complete the peer evaluation will result in a 10% grade deduction for that assignment.**

Letter grades will be assigned following the standard scale:

90% - 100% - A; 80% - 89.99% - B; 70% - 79.99% - C; 60% - 69.99% - D; 00% - 59.99% - F

### **Late Work**

Every student should strive to turn in work on time. **Late work will receive penalty of 10% of the possible points for each day it is late.** Missed class attendance cannot be made up, though as mentioned above some areas will drop the lowest two scores. If you are getting behind in the class, you are encouraged to speak to the instructor for options to make up missed work.

## Excused Absences

Excused absences will only be given in 2 situations:

- You are absent due to a **university activity** and have given the instructor **prior notice** of the absence. Excuses after the absence will not be accepted, even for university activities
- You have a “major life event” that prevents you from attending class, such as an illness or family emergency. These events must be verified through the K-State Office of Student Life. Contact them **AS SOON AS YOU CAN** once you know you will be away from class. They will work with your instructors while you are gone. Contact your instructor once you return to discuss make-up work and absences.

## Software

We will be using the Scratch programming language developed by MIT for many in-class activities and individual programming assignments. It can be found online at <http://scratch.mit.edu>. Students may also choose to complete some assignments using Blockly, which is available at <http://blockly.russfeld.me/>. (A newer version of Blockly may be announced in class, so stay tuned!)

## Subject to Change

The details in this syllabus are not set in stone. Due to the flexible nature of this class, adjustments may need to be made as the semester progresses, though they will be kept to a minimum. If any changes occur, the changes will be posted on the K-State Canvas page for this course and emailed to all students.

## Academic Honesty

Kansas State University has an Honor System based on personal integrity, which is presumed to be sufficient assurance that, in academic matters, one's work is performed honestly and without unauthorized assistance. Undergraduate and graduate students, by registration, acknowledge the jurisdiction of the Honor System. The policies and procedures of the Honor System apply to all full and part-time students enrolled in undergraduate and graduate courses on-campus, off-campus, and via distance learning. The honor system website can be reached via the following URL: <http://www.ksu.edu/honor>. A component vital to the Honor System is the inclusion of the Honor Pledge which applies to all assignments, examinations, or other course work undertaken by students. The Honor Pledge is implied, whether or not it is stated: "On my honor, as a student, I have neither given nor received unauthorized aid on this academic work." A grade of XF can result from a breach of academic honesty. The F indicates failure in the course; the X indicates the reason is an Honor Pledge violation.

**For this course, a violation of the Honor Pledge will result in an automatic 0 for the assignment and the violation will be reported to the Honor System. A second violation will result in an XF in the course.**

### **Students with Disabilities**

Students with disabilities who need classroom accommodations, access to technology, or information about emergency building/campus evacuation processes should contact the Student Access Center and/or their instructor. Services are available to students with a wide range of disabilities including, but not limited to, physical disabilities, medical conditions, learning disabilities, attention deficit disorder, depression, and anxiety. If you are a student enrolled in campus/online courses through the Manhattan or Olathe campuses, contact the Student Access Center at [accesscenter@k-state.edu](mailto:accesscenter@k-state.edu), 785-532-6441; for Salina campus, contact the Academic and Career Advising Center at [acac@k-state.edu](mailto:acac@k-state.edu), 785-826-2649.

### **Expectations for Classroom Conduct**

All student activities in the University, including this course, are governed by the Student Judicial Conduct Code as outlined in the *Student Government Association By Laws, Article V, Section 3, number 2*. Students that engage in behavior that disrupts the learning environment may be asked to leave the class.

### **Campus Safety**

Kansas State University is committed to providing a safe teaching and learning environment for faculty members and students. In order to enhance your safety in the unlikely case of a campus emergency make sure that you know where and how to quickly exit your classroom and how to follow any emergency directives. To view additional campus emergency information go to the University's main page (<http://www.ksu.edu>) and click on the Emergency Information button.

### **Academic Freedom Statement**

Kansas State University is a community of students, faculty, and staff who work together to discover new knowledge, create new ideas, and share the results of their scholarly inquiry with the wider public. Although new ideas or research results may be controversial or challenge established views, the health and growth of any society requires frank intellectual exchange. Academic freedom protects this type of free exchange and is thus essential to any university's mission.

Moreover, academic freedom supports collaborative work in the pursuit of truth and the dissemination of knowledge in an environment of inquiry, respectful debate, and professionalism. Academic freedom is not limited to the classroom or to scientific and scholarly research, but extends to the life of the university as well as to larger social and political questions. It is the right and responsibility of the university community to engage with such issues.