CS 0060 Course Missive

Course Information

Hours: TTh 4-5:20pm
Location: CIT 477
Instructor: Leonhard Spiegelberg
Teaching Assistants: Sam Oliphant (HTA), Anina Hitt, Hersh Gupta, James Rolfe, Lena Renshaw, Raymond Cao

Introduction

CS6 is an introduction to develop hands-on-computing skills necessary to comfortably work within a UNIX-like operating system. Topics include the shell, its filesystem, bash scripting, SSH, version control, as well as how to locally develop, deploy and publish a website.

While there are no formal prerequisites for this class, we expect students taking this course to have some prior programming experience. This could come from having taken an introductory CS course at Brown (CS111, CS15, and CS19 all qualify), high school programming courses, or self-study.

Students should feel comfortable with:

1. Basic data types (integers, strings, booleans)
2. Basic data structures (lists, arrays, trees)
3. Sequential and conditional expressions (for/while loops, if statements)
4. Functions

Inclusiveness

It is our goal that all students in CS 6 feel welcome, included, capable, and that the class environment feels safe for all. How we treat each other is an important part of achieving that goal. You are required to treat all students and staff in the course, regardless of their identity, with respect. Behavior that violates this rule will not be tolerated. Sadly, there have been occurrences in the Brown CS community of hurtful and discriminatory speech and behavior. We ask that you do your part to prevent and deter such incidents.

If you want to report or discuss an incident, you can contact:

- Leonhard Spiegelberg, the course lecturer (leonhard_spiegelberg@brown.edu)
- Laura Dobler, CS Staff Diversity Liaison (laura_dobler@brown.edu)

- John Hughes, Department Chair (john_hughes@brown.edu)

You can also discuss any related issues with the CS Department's student advocates for diversity and inclusion (diversity.advocates@lists.cs.brown.edu). Finally, if you want to report an incident without talking with someone, you can use the CS Inclusivity Feedback Form.

We, the teaching staff of CS 6, are committed to celebrating diversity and difference and to making CS 6 a positive, supportive, and welcoming learning experience for all of our students. If we fail to uphold this, please let us know with whatever means you feel most comfortable. The CS Department takes seriously all complaints about unprofessional or discriminatory behavior. See also Title IX for information on the university's legal obligation to respond to sexual and gender-based harassment and discrimination. Finally, if you feel you have any disabilities that may affect your performance in doing your coursework, please contact SEAS. We will support accommodations recommended by SEAS.

Materials

There is no official textbook for this course. However, we may assign readings along with a homework that complement class material. In such cases, online access will be provided for the readings. For students interested in deepening their understanding of course materials, there are 5 optional, recommended books listed on the course site.

Laptops are not required for this course. If you have a laptop, you will be able to use it for all course assignments. Otherwise, assignments can be completed using CS department machines.

Class Components

Lectures

Lectures will be held in CIT 477 (Lubrano) twice a week. Lecture recordings may be available on the course website.

Homeworks

There will be 10 homeworks throughout the course consisting of both written and coding problems. Homeworks will build upon and reinforce material learned in class. They will be released roughly once a week; check the website for updated release dates and due dates.

Exams
There will be two midterm exams in this course. They will be cumulative, and you will be allowed to bring a single 8.5" x 11" cheat sheet with your personal, handwritten notes on both sides. Other than your cheat sheet, the only allowed materials are pencils/pens and blank scratch paper. Exam dates are posted on the website. Please contact the HTA e-mail list (cs0060headtas@lists.brown.edu) as soon as possible if you have a conflict with either date.

Recitations
Recitations will be held once a week in CIT 201 on each Tuesday 8pm-10pm. While not mandatory, they are meant to deepen your understanding of course material. Some will cover in-class material with additional depth; others will cover topics not discussed in class that we think you will benefit from.

Final Project
The goal of the final project is to serve as a cumulative representation of knowledge gained throughout the course. It will be completed in groups of 3, with guidance from a project TA.

Office Hours
Walk-in office hours will be held separately by the instructor and the TAs. Instructor office hours will be held before each lecture (TTh 3-4pm) in CIT249. TAs will hold weekly office hours as well; the full schedule and locations can be found on the course calendar. Please make sure you are subscribed to the CS6 mailing list and Piazza in case office hours are moved or cancelled due to time conflicts.

Attending office hours does not send a message to your professors or peers that you are falling behind. Rather, the most successful students are usually those who come to hours early and often—whenever they have questions about topics covered in lecture or would like some guidance as they work through an assignment. We, as teaching staff of CS6 are curious to get to know each student who attends CS6. Hence, do not hesitate to make use of office hours and stop by frequently if you have any questions or problems.

Piazza
We will be using Piazza as an announcement board and question/answer forum. Check it often: sometimes, course-related announcements will be posted only on Piazza. You are responsible for any information the TAs post there.

If you have a generic question that you feel the rest of the class would benefit from, ask it publically. If your question might break any collaboration policy rules, post it privately. If you see a public question that you know the answer to, don't hesitate to respond! Piazza works best when it's used actively by all students, so we want you to participate in the conversation.

Grading Policy

Your assignments will mostly be graded by the TAs. The professor may also participate in grading of some assignments. If you have a question about the grading of an assignment, please use the Regrade Request feature on Gradescope or e-mail your grader directly. If you are unable to resolve your grade complaint in this way, please contact the HTA email list to schedule a time to meet.

Although this course is mandatory S/NC, you will receive percentage grades on most assignments. These are meant to:

a) Serve as feedback for you on how to improve
b) Give you a solid sense of how you're doing in the class

The expected cutoff for a pass will be at most 70%. Depending on student performance overall, we may lower this cutoff when calculating final grades. This does ***not*** mean that the course will be graded on a curve: our goal is for anyone who invests time in the course to be able to pass it.

Grade Breakdown

Homeworks: 50%
Midterm 1: 15%
Midterm 2: 15%
Final project: 20%

Homeworks

For homeworks, you will receive a percentage grade based on the correctness of your answers and the functionality of your code. While we do not expect you to hand in formal tests, we do expect you to test the functionality of your code before handing it in. We will not grade for code style unless explicitly stated in a problem. However, we expect that your code will be well-organized and commented enough for a TA to be able to understand your logic. This is for your own benefit: if a TA cannot understand your code, you are less likely to be awarded partial credit.

Exams

For midterms, you will receive a percentage grade based on the correctness of your answers.

Final Project

For the final project, you will receive an aggregate grade based on:

a) Project checkpoints
b) Code correctness and functionality
c) Individual project contributions
d) Successful completion

Project checkpoints will involve meeting with a TA as a full group to discuss design choices and progress made on the project. Each project checkpoint will have a rubric that is released ahead of time.

The final project rubric will also be released ahead of the project, and will contain a detailed breakdown of point distributions.

Participation

While participation is not a formal part of your grade in this class, we still expect you to engage with class materials via lectures and recitations. To this end, we will make note of students who come to class or recitation consistently and participate in discussions. Lack of participation will not hurt your grade (except in its impact on your understanding of class material), but we will look at class participation in cases where a failing student is close to the cutoff for a pass.

Late Policy

Homeworks are due Tuesdays at 4:00pm (right before class). We deduct 25% for homeworks turned in up to 24 hours late. Homeworks turned in more than 24 hours late will not be graded. If you are in an emergency situation, please get help first. You may send a request to the instructor along with a note from a dean or a doctor. It will be decided on a case-by-case basis how to help you best in this situation.

Midterms can *only* be made up with either prior approval or documentation from a dean or doctor in an emergency situation. Late final projects will ***not*** be accepted without either prior approval or documentation from a dean or doctor in an emergency situation.

In either situation, please send documentation from any doctor's office (including Health Services) or a dean's note to the instructor along with your request.