Applied Information Technology Department

Course Syllabus

IT 106 - Introduction to IT Problem Solving Using Computer Programming

revised 01.10.2015

Catalog Description

Introduces techniques for developing solutions to business problems through an iterative design and implementation approach. Students apply problem solving concepts by analyzing problems and constructing, testing, and implementing algorithms using pseudocode, desk checking, and procedural programming. Topics include: program flow, control structures, programming fundamentals, and integrating program modules into a cohesive solution. (MATH 112 prior completion or co-registration is required.)

Prerequisites

The prerequisite for this course is IT 103 (or an approved equivalent course). A grade of "C" or better must be achieved in the prerequisite course before a student is qualified to take this course. The prerequisite course must be completed prior to, not concurrently with, this course.

This requirement will be strictly enforced. Any student who does not meet the prerequisite requirement will be dropped from the course by the department at the start of the semester and the student will be responsible for any consequences of being dropped.

Co-registration

Simultaneous registration in, or prior completion of, a course covering Discrete Mathematics (MATH 112 or MATH 125), is required.

IMPORTANT! If you have not taken a course covering Discrete Mathematics (MATH 112 or MATH 125) previously, to remain registered in IT 106, you must also remain registered in Discrete Mathematics (MATH 112 or MATH 125). If at any point in the term you drop/withdraw from Discrete Mathematics (MATH 112 or MATH 125), you must simultaneously drop/withdraw from IT 106, even if it is after the add/drop deadline. Students that do not drop/withdraw themselves from IT 106 will be administratively withdrawn and responsible for any financial or academic consequences.
Rationale

Problem Solving and Programming are essential skills for all IT students and IT professionals. Understanding how a computer is instructed to accomplish tasks leads to an appreciation of the underlying concepts of the Information Technology discipline. Learning how to solve a problem using a high level, structured programming language provides a strong foundation that will be used in higher level AIT courses.

Educational Objective

To introduce students to problem solving with a procedural approach using a high-level programming language as a tool.

Course Outcomes

1. Utilize primitive data types and built-in data structures.
2. Use procedural programming techniques effectively and efficiently (including expressions, decisions, repetition structures, methods, parameters, arrays and variable scope).

Supported Student Outcomes at the Program Level

(a) Apply knowledge of computing and mathematics
(c) Design, implement and evaluate a computer-based system, process, component, or program
(j) Ability to use and apply current technical concepts and practices in the core information technologies

Major Topics

On successful completion of this course, students will be able to:

- Discuss the importance of algorithms in the problem-solving process.
- Identify the necessary properties of good algorithms.
- Create algorithms for solving simple problems.
- Use a programming language to implement, test, and debug algorithms for solving problems.
- Define and use data of both primitive and reference types effectively.
- Create and use simple and complex static data structures.
- Design solutions to problems using procedural techniques.
- Decide on an appropriate repetition and/or selection structures for given problems.
- Apply the techniques of structured (functional) decomposition to break a program into smaller pieces.
- Describe the mechanics of parameter passing and the issues associated with scoping.
- Apply effective debugging strategies.
Textbooks

** BOTH TEXTBOOKS ARE REQUIRED **

By: Lesley Anne Robertson
Publisher: Course Technology
Publication Date: September 29, 2006
ISBN: 978-1-4239-0132-7

** BOTH TEXTBOOKS ARE REQUIRED **

Big Java Late Objects
By: Cay S. Horstmann
Publisher: John Wiley & Sons, Inc.
Publication Date: February 1, 2012
ISBN: 978-1-118-08788-6

Administrative Support

Fairfax campus
Nguyen Engineering Building, Room 5400
Phone: 703-993-3565

Prince William campus
Bull Run Hall, Suite 102
Phone: 703-993-8461
Grading

Grades will be awarded in accordance with the GMU Grading System for undergraduate students. See the university catalog for policies: http://catalog.gmu.edu for more information.

The grading scale for this course is:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Percentage</th>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>97 – 100%</td>
<td>A+</td>
<td>Passing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>93 – 96%</td>
<td>A</td>
<td>Passing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>90 – 92%</td>
<td>A-</td>
<td>Passing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>87 – 89%</td>
<td>B+</td>
<td>Passing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>83 – 86%</td>
<td>B</td>
<td>Passing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>80 – 82%</td>
<td>B-</td>
<td>Passing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>77 – 79%</td>
<td>C+</td>
<td>Passing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>73 – 76%</td>
<td>C</td>
<td>Passing*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>60 – 72%</td>
<td>D</td>
<td>Passing*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0 – 59%</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>Failing</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* A grade of "D" is considered a passing grade for undergraduate courses. However, a minimum grade of "C" is required in the AIT department for any course that is a prerequisite for one or more other courses. For AIT majors, a grade of “C” or better is required in this course because it is a prerequisite for other courses in the program. For IT minor/undergraduate certificate students, a grade of “D” or better is required in this course for it to count towards the minor/undergraduate certificate, provided that you will not be taking any other courses for which this course is a prerequisite.

Raw scores may be adjusted by the instructor to calculate final grades.

Final grades will be determined based on the following components:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Graded Activity</th>
<th>Weight</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Face-to-Face Sections:</strong> Lab Participation (lowest 1 dropped)</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Online Sections:</strong> Discussion Board Lab Participation (lowest 1 dropped)</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Programming Assignments (lowest 1 dropped)</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lab Exam 1</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lab Exam 2</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Midterm Exam</td>
<td>25%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Final Exam</td>
<td>35%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

There are no extra credit opportunities. Students may not do any additional work for extra credit nor resubmit any graded activity to raise a final grade.
Late submissions will not be accepted for any graded activity for any reason. All graded assignments must be posted to Blackboard by the due date/time. Assignments may not be submitted through any other medium (e.g. email). Any missed assignment or lab is simply missed, regardless of the reason why (e.g. illness, work, traffic, car trouble, computer problems, death, etc.), and earns a grade of zero. A number of lowest grades (as identified above) will be dropped to handle all of “life’s situations” without the need for any type of instructor permission to be excused or for you to submit documentation. If you choose not to do a number of assignments or participate in a number of labs, and then later on have to miss an assignment or lab for a valid reason, you will be out of luck if you have already exhausted the number of grades that have earned zeroes because you did not complete the work. You are strongly encouraged to complete all assignments and participate in all labs so that you can check that you understand the material and can throw out bad grades, or grades for which you had to miss an assignment or lab for a valid reason.

Students have one week to request the re-grading of an assignment. All requests for the re-grading of an assignment must be requested to the instructor, in writing (email), within one week of the date grader feedback was posted. In the email request, the student must write a clear explanation of why they believe they should earn more points than were previously earned. The entire assignment will be re-graded (i.e. there are no partial re-grades). It is possible that the resulting assignment grade will be higher due to errors in grading, or lower if it is discovered that a sufficient amount of points were not subtracted the first time. Please carefully consider this before making a request. No requests for re-grading will be considered one week after the date grader feedback was posted and the grade will be considered final.

Exams will be conducted on-campus, in a classroom. The exams will be written and “closed book, closed notes, closed friends” – no reference materials other than those provided with the exam will be permitted. Exams are retained by the AIT department and will not be returned to students.

Final grades will be posted to PatriotWeb, which is the only vehicle for students to obtain those grades. A student with a "hold" on his/her PatriotWeb account will be unable to access final grades until the hold has been removed by the Registrar.

Important Dates

Dates for adding, dropping the course, etc. are available via: http://registrar.gmu.edu.

Religious Holidays

A list of religious holidays is available on the University Life Calendar page. Any student whose religious observance conflicts with a scheduled course activity must contact the instructor at least 2 weeks in advance of the conflict date in order to make alternative arrangements.
Attendance Policy

Students are expected to attend each class, to complete any required preparatory work (including assigned reading) and to participate actively in lectures, discussions and exercises. As members of the academic community, all students are expected to contribute regardless of their proficiency with the subject matter. **Final grades may be adjusted (upward or downward) by the instructor based on student participation, or lack thereof, during lecture.** Students that fail to attend lecture are unable to participate.

Students in face-to-face sections are also expected to attend each lab, to complete hands-on activities and exercises. Each lab will require the student to sign-in to indicate their presence. Labs contain a “present for credit” policy. Students must be present for the full duration of the lab to earn lab participation points. **Students that do not attend, arrive late, or leave early will earn a grade of zero (0) for the lab, even if they complete the lab on their own or outside of class.**

Any student who expects to miss more than one class or lab session is strongly advised to drop the course and take it in a later semester when he/she can attend every class and lab.

Departmental policy requires students to take exams at the scheduled time and place, unless there are truly compelling, severe circumstances supported by appropriate documentation. Except in such circumstances, failure to arrive to the exam site on time for a scheduled exam will result in a score of zero (0) for that exam, in accordance with **Mason policy on final exams.** Students should not make travel plans or other discretionary arrangements that conflict with scheduled classes and/or the final exam period listed on the Registrar’s website. If the University is closed due to weather or other unforeseen conditions, final exams may be rescheduled – **students are strongly advised not to make plans that would prevent them from attending exams that may be rescheduled during the entire exam period.**

Classroom Conduct

Whether the course is face-to-face or online, students are expected to conduct themselves in a manner that is conducive to learning, as directed by the instructor. Any student who negatively impacts the opportunity for other students to learn will be warned – if disruptive behavior continues, the student will be removed from the course.

Communications

Registered students will be given access to a section of the **Blackboard Learning System** for this course. Blackboard will used as the primary mechanism to disseminate course information, including announcements, lecture slides, assignments, and grades.
Communication with the instructor on issues relating to the individual student should be conducted using Blackboard Mail, GMU email, via telephone, or in person - not in the public discussion board on Blackboard. GMU Mail is the preferred method – for urgent messages, you should also attempt to contact the instructor via telephone. Federal privacy law and GMU policy require that any communication with a student related in any way to a student's status be conducted using secure GMU systems – if you use email to communicate with the instructor you MUST send messages from your GMU email account.

**Privacy**

Instructors respect and protect the privacy of information related to individual students. As described above, issues relating to an individual student will discussed via email, telephone or in person. Instructors will not discuss issues relating to an individual student with other students (or anyone without a need to know) without prior permission of the student.

Graded work other than exams will be returned to individual students directly by the instructor (or by a faculty or staff member or a teaching assistant designated by the instructor or via another secure method). Under no circumstances will a student's graded work be returned to another student.

Faculty and staff will take care to protect the privacy of each student's scores and grades.

**Disability Accommodations**

The Office of Disability Services (ODS) works with disabled students to arrange for appropriate accommodations to ensure equal access to university services. Any student with a disability of any kind is strongly encouraged to register with ODS as soon as possible and take advantage of the services offered.

Accommodations for disabled students must be made in advance – ODS cannot assist students retroactively, and at least one week's notice is required for special accommodations related to exams. Any student who needs accommodation should contact the instructor during the first week of the semester so the sufficient time is allowed to make arrangements.

**Honor Code**

All members of the Mason community are expected to uphold the principles of scholarly ethics. Similarly, graduating students are bound by the ethical requirements of the professional communities they join. Ethics requirements for some communities relevant to IT graduates are:

ACM Code of Ethics and Professional Conduct
IEEE Code of Ethics
EC-Council Code of Ethics

On admission to Mason, students agree to comply with the requirements of the GMU Honor System and Code\(^1\). The Honor Code will be rigorously enforced in this course. The instructor will use several manual and automated means to detect cheating and/or plagiarism in any work submitted by students for this course, and to direct teaching assistants and/or other faculty and/or staff members to do likewise in support of this course.

**WARNING! This course has a zero tolerance policy for violations of the Honor Code.** There are no second chances. First offenses carry a minimum recommended sanction of: an assignment grade of 0, one letter grade (10%) reduction in the final grade, and a requirement to complete an academic integrity seminar. Second and third offenses (and egregious first offenses, as determined solely by the instructor/course coordinator) carry stiffer minimum recommended sanctions, including but not limited to: F in the course, academic suspension, and expulsion. Please do not even think about violating the Honor Code. There are many ways to receive help. You are strongly encouraged to use these methods if you are struggling, so that you can get the help you need. If you have any questions about what does/does not constitute an Honor Code violation, please contact your instructor.

Additional information on the enforcement of the George Mason University Honor Code policy can be found at: [http://oai.gmu.edu](http://oai.gmu.edu).

For this course, the following additional requirements are specified:

- Students may work with other current IT 106 students on assignments. However, students are expressly prohibited from:
  
  - Obtaining assistance, program design, algorithm logic, or code from individuals other than the course’s instructor, current IT 106 graduate teaching assistants, or current IT 106 students
  
  - Posting questions or a partial, complete, or graded solution on the Internet.
  
  - Incorporating program design, algorithm logic, or code found on the Internet.

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\(^1\) Available at [www.gmu.edu/catalog/apolicies](http://www.gmu.edu/catalog/apolicies) and related GMU Web pages.
• All work must be newly created by the individual student for this course for this semester. Any usage of work developed for another course, or for this course in a prior semester, is strictly prohibited without prior approval from the instructor.

• Posting or sharing course content (e.g. instructor provided lecture notes, assignment directions. . . anything not created solely by the student), using any non-electronic or electronic medium (e.g. web site, FTP site, any location where it is accessible to someone other than the individual student, instructor and/or teaching assistant(s)) constitutes copyright infringement and is strictly prohibited without prior approval from the instructor.

If you have any questions on these requirements, please discuss them with your instructor. Any deviation from these requirements is considered a violation. All suspected violations of the Honor Code are required to be taken seriously and reported!