

Syllabus TL;DR

CMSC 140: Introduction to programming

Fall 2025

Section 3: MWF 11am, Rotunda G54
Section 1: MWF 1pm, Rotunda 350
Section 2: MWF 2pm, Rotunda 350
Websites: <https://longwood.instructure.com/courses/1318112>
<https://cs.longwood.edu/courses/cmssc140>
Professor: Don Blaheta, Rotunda 334, blahetadp@longwood.edu
100% Office hours: Mondays 3–4pm; Tuesdays 11am–noon;
Thursdays 1–2pm; Fridays 3–4pm

Textbook and resources

A Practical Introduction to Python Programming, by Brian Heinold.

https://www.brianheinold.net/python/python_book.html




Python 3 editor/classroom support: Codeboard.io

<https://codeboard.io/>

Things you must have: a laptop (which you bring on designated lab days); internet access (for homework and, as needed, Zoom attendance)

Zoom attendance quick links

These can also be found on the Canvas page for the course. Don't forget to click the "Why am I zooming" link in Canvas.

<p>Zoom link for SEC 3 (11am)</p> 	<p>Zoom link for SEC 1 (1pm)</p> 	<p>Zoom link for SEC 2 (2pm)</p> 
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Content

Engagement. You need to be an active participant in this class: engaged during class time, and participating in (relevant) discussion with me and with your classmates. 10% of the grade is for all of that.

Lab work (and homework). The central goal of the course is that you learn to Collaborative
program, so the bulk of the work you do will be “lab” work, i.e. writing programs. Homeworks can be revised to recover up to 90% of the points on the assignment. This work will make up 15% of the grade.

Course project. Your course project will involve working with a data set in your Collaborative
area, building a program to process that data, and writing up your results. Evaluation will be based on the program code itself as well as your written and verbal proposals and conclusions based on the results; all that together will be worth a total of 25% of the final grade.

Exams. There will be two exams, one in early March and one in late April. **You Non-collaborative
are not permitted to discuss the exams *at all*, with anyone other than me.** Each exam is worth 25% of the grade (total of 50%).

Grading scale

I tend to grade hard on individual assignments, but compensate for this in the final grades. The grading scale will be approximately as follows:

A–	[85, 90)	A	[90, 95)	A+	[95, 100]
B–	[70, 75)	B	[75, 80)	B+	[80, 85)
C–	[55, 60)	C	[60, 65)	C+	[65, 70)
D–	[40, 45)	D	[45, 50)	D+	[50, 55)

While there will be no “curve” in the statistical sense, I may slightly adjust the scale at the end of the term if it turns out some of the assignments were too difficult. Final grades of A+ are recorded as an A in the grading system. Final grades below the minimum for D– are recorded as an F.

Note that *individual* grades recorded in Canvas should be accurate (and you should let me know if there’s a data entry error!), but *averages* as computed by Canvas sometimes are not, if the averaging is complex or (especially) if an individual student has a special case scenario. The reference gradebook is my own spreadsheet, and while I will try to make Canvas reflect it (including averages) as well as I can, Canvas can’t always handle it.

Calendar

Days marked **-L** mean you should bring your laptop that day, as we will be doing lab work.

Wk	M	W	F
August			
1	25 — Introduction The idea of an algorithm	27 -L — How to read/use a textbook Hello world	29 Ch. 1 Input/output, comments
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September			
2	[Labor Day] no class	* 3 Ch. 2 for loops range	5 -L — (continued)
3	8 — Quantitative Reasoning	10 — What makes a workable quantitative question?	12 Ch. 3 Arithmetic Order of operations
4	15 -L — Random, Math	17 — Limitations of a QR process	19 Ch. 4 if and blocks Comparisons and booleans and or not
5	22 -L — Blocks and nesting Flowcharts	24 — else, elif	[prof absent] no class
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6	29 — Interpreting results of a quant question	October 1 — Test cases Practicing with codingbat	3 — Exam 1
7	6 Ch. 6 Strings	8 -L — String slicing More string practice	[Fall Break] no class

* **2 September:** Deadline to add/drop classes (5pm)

Wk	M	W	F
	October		
8	13 Ch. 7 Lists List operations Looping over lists	15–L Ch. 5 Standard list-loop algorithms	17–L — More list practice
9	20 — QR: reasonability Resolving limitations Putting it together Writing the quant program Project overview	22 — <code>split, join</code> Multiple assignment Adding/removing items	24–L — List-loop practice
10	27–L Ch. 12 Text files	29–L — CSV files Project proposal due	31 TBD
	November		
11	3 Ch. 11 Dictionaries	5 * Ch. 8 Dictionary practice List comprehensions	7 8.5 2D lists
12	10 Ch. 13 Function basics	12–L — Speech practice Project work day	14–L — Scope Using functions practically
13	17 — Elevator speeches	[Research Day] no class	21 Ch. 9 while loops break, continue
14	24 — Lightning talks	[Thanksgiving] no class	[Thanksgiving] no class
	December		
15	1 — Review	3 — Exam 2	5 — Elevator speeches

Project program and writeup due at end of exam period
Exam time reserved for (online) speech overflow if needed

* **5 November**: Deadline to elect pass/fail or withdraw from a class (5pm)