

Syllabus TL;DR

CMSC 140: Introduction to programming

Fall 2026

Section 2: MWF 12 noon, Rotunda 356
Section 3: MWF 1pm, Rotunda 356
Websites: <https://longwood.instructure.com/courses/1325385>
<https://cs.longwood.edu/courses/cmssc140>
Professor: Don Blaheta, Rotunda 334, blahetadp@longwood.edu
100% Office hours: Mondays 3–4pm; Tuesdays 11am–noon;
Wednesdays 11am–noon; Thursdays 1–2pm

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: JuiceMind

<https://juicemind.com>

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.

Zoom link for
SEC 2 (noon)



Zoom link for
SEC 3 (1pm)



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 Collaborative to 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 10% 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 October and one in our assigned Non-collaborative exam period in early December. **You are not permitted to discuss the exams at all, with anyone other than me.** The first exam is worth 25% of the grade, the second 30% of the grade. (55% total)

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	24 — Introduction The idea of an algorithm	26 –L — How to read/use a textbook Hello world	28 Ch. 1 Input/output, comments
2	31 * Ch. 2 for loops range	September	
		2 –L — (continued)	4 — Quantitative Reasoning
3	[Labor Day no class]	9 — What makes a workable quantitative question?	11 Ch. 3 Arithmetic Order of operations
4	14 –L — Random, Math	16 — Limitations of a QR process	18 Ch. 4 if and blocks Comparisons and booleans and or not
5	21 –L — Blocks and nesting Flowcharts	23 — else, elif	[prof absent no class]
6	28 — Interpreting results of a quant question	30 — Test cases Practicing with codingbat	October
			2 — Exam 1
7	5 Ch. 6 Strings	7 –L — String slicing More string practice	[Fall Break no class]

* **31 August:** Deadline to add/drop classes (5pm)

Wk	M	W	F
October			
8	12 Ch. 7 Lists List operations Looping over lists	14–L Ch. 5 Standard list-loop algorithms	16–L — More list practice
9	19 — QR: reasonability Resolving limitations Putting it together Writing the quant program Project overview	21 — <code>split</code> , <code>join</code> Multiple assignment Adding/removing items	23–L — List-loop practice
10	26–L Ch. 12 Text files	28–L — CSV files Project proposal due	30 TBD
November			
11	2 Ch. 11 Dictionaries	4 * Ch. 8 Dictionary practice List comprehensions	6 8.5 2D lists
12	9 Ch. 13 Function basics	11–L — Speech practice Project work day	13–L — Scope Using functions practically
13	16 — Elevator speeches	[Research Day] no class	20 Ch. 9 while loops <code>break</code> , <code>continue</code>
14	23 — Lightning talks	[Thanksgiving] no class	[Thanksgiving] no class
December			
15	30 — Review	2 — Work day	4 — Elevator speeches Project code due
Final exam, Section 2 (noon section): Wed 9th, 11:30–2pm Final exam, Section 3 (1pm section): Mon 7th, 3–5:30pm Project writeup and code revision due at exam period			

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