Overview CMSC131: An introduction to programming using the Java language

T. Reinhardt
What is on the Syllabus

How to succeed in this class

- Read and understand the Syllabus.
- Ask lots of questions.
- Put learning first, grades second.
- Put away the device.
- Do you own work.
- Know the solution before attempting to write the program.
How you are assessed

A lot of this is from the Syllabus, but as we’re talking face to face . . .

- **Major Grading Events** Includes **Projects** and **Exams**.
  - Dates for the Midterms and Final are fixed on the Syllabus.
  - Delivery Dates for Projects are available on the **Submit Server**. When in doubt, the date that appears on the Submit Server is the official date/time for Projects.
  - Please don’t ask us to change delivery dates or times for Major Grading Events.

- **Minor Grading Events**: Include near-weekly **Labs** and **Quizzes**.
What we are about

Pure and simple: we’re about learning how to use algorithmic thinking in a broader, life-long context. To do this, we must master:

- **Logic**: the glue that holds everything together and the final arbiter of what’s right.
- **Formal Language**: how problems and their solutions are expressed in a non-ambiguous way.
- **Abstraction**: Reconstructing the “problem” in a variety of settings.

Of these, the last is usually the most difficult.
Elements of Programming

But, I thought this class was about “computer programming” in the Java language?

- Learning a language is not learning how to program, any more than learning English prepares you to write a novel or poetry.
- Learning a particular language is best done “on the job,” or in a specialized vocational setting.
- We wish to learn something bigger and more comprehensive than a language or a set of unrelated programming “idioms.”
My responsibilities . . .

- Present this material in a variety of formats and from a variety of perspectives;
- Listen to you and adapt my instruction, whenever feasible.
- Bring the subtleties to the surface.
- Provide an equitable learning environment.
Your responsibilities . . .

While everyone and every situation is “different,” history shows that successful students:

- Step away from the device. No electronic devices are welcomed in regular lecture.
- Attend lectures and recitations. Procrastination leads to stress and ill-formed solutions.
- Attempt the assignments—on your own. Reading a great novel is not the same as writing a good one yourself.
- Ask lots of questions: assume nothing until you understand it.
- Put learning ahead of the “grade.”