CMSC 295 Special Topics: CS Scholars Seminar I
Fall 2023

Instructor: Robert Marmorstein, 434-395-2185, marmorsteinrm@longwood.edu
Meeting: 2:00pm – 2:50pm Monday (Stevens 109)
Office Hours (Stevens 109): 2:00 – 2:45pm (TWR) 1:00 – 2:45pm (F)

I am also available by appointment. To schedule a visit, contact me at least 24 hours in advance.

Course Description: Selected topics in computer science. The topics may vary from semester to semester. May be repeated for credit when topics change. **1 credit.**

Section Description: This course is designed to prepare students in the CS Scholars program for active scholarship by developing the skills needed for college and research success. Students will participate in community-building activities, discuss study and research skills, and practice reading academic papers.

Course Student Learning Objectives: By the end of the course, the successful student will be able to:
– Describe differences between high school and college classroom expectations
– Identify campus learning resources and how to find them
– Complete a four-year academic plan
– Read a scholarly journal and outline the main points

Course Requirements: You will attend regular small group meetings to discuss course topics. These meetings will include several in-class homework assignments or quizzes. Occasionally, I will also assign out-of-class homework. These homework assignments and quizzes will constitute 75% of your grade. The remaining 25% will come from a final presentation given during the exam period for the course.

Course Structure and Student Expectations: This is an activity-driven course intended to prepare students for college success and introduce them to academic scholarship in Computer Science. We will meet in small groups roughly once a week for about fifty minutes. You should expect to spend an additional hour or two each week reading articles, working on homework assignments, and preparing your final presentation.

Textbook: There will be no textbook for this class. However, I will assign readings from free online sources, including "Dragons, History Professors, and Other Hazards of College Life: An Incomplete Guide to College Success", which is available for free at https://apps.northern.edu/flippingbook/dragonbook/HTML/files/assets/common/downloads/dragonbook.pdf

Grading Policy: I use the following grading scale in this course:

A: 91-100, A-: 90,
B+: 89, B: 81-88, B-: 80,
C+: 79, C: 71-78, C-: 70,
D+: 69, D: 64-68,
F: below 63.

There is no grade of D- in this course.

Grades will be weighted as follows:
Homework and quizzes: 75% of your grade
Final Presentation: 25% of your grade

Attendance: I expect you to attend class unless you are sick or participating in an official school sponsored activity (such as a varsity athletics competition) for which you have been excused. Should you need to miss class, please contact me within twenty-four hours of the absence to explain why you have missed and to discuss any make-up work you will need to complete. In accordance with Longwood policy, missing more than 10% of classes to unexcused absences will result in the loss of a letter grade. Missing more than 25% of classes (whether excused or unexcused) will result in an automatic failure of the course.

Honor Code: I take the honor code very seriously. I encourage you to take advantage of the freedom it gives you to collaborate with other students and to use print and Internet resources to better understand the material.

Because it is possible to abuse these resources in a way that actually hinders you from learning or disadvantages other students, I have established some guidelines for their use that you MUST follow.

Please read these rules carefully. It is your responsibility to know them and follow them.

Exams and quizzes are to be completed entirely on your own. Exams and quizzes will be closed book/closed notes tests on which you may receive no external help and may use no resources other than your brain and a writing instrument (unless explicitly stated otherwise in class).

On homework assignments and projects, you may discuss your work with other students subject to these restrictions:

1. Turn in only your own work

The work you submit should, in general, be your own original work or material which I have provided and you have suitably modified. You **MAY** discuss problems with others in a general way. You **MAY** assist other students (or get assistance) with simple problems like syntax errors, but you **MAY NOT** copy solutions or large blocks of code from each other. You **MAY** use web sites, books, and other resources as references, but you should not use large blocks of code from these sites, either.

The definition of "large" in this case varies somewhat based on context, but a good guideline is that while copying one to three lines of code is usually okay, copying a complete function, class, or file is usually too much.

The purpose of this rule is to ensure that you understand the code or answers you are submitting. If you don't think you could explain your work to me without help or looking at a book or web page, you probably should not submit it.

2. Give proper attribution

If you **DO** get help or use an online resource to complete a project, you **MUST** give credit to your source. Taking credit for someone else's work is a form of intellectual theft called plagiarism. To cite a source for most homework assignments, you can simply add a note in the margin next to the answer on which you received help. To cite a source in a paper, you must include a correct in-text citation AND properly identify the source in your works cited. If you do not know how to properly provide an in-text citation, please ask! I'm happy to help.

Note: You do not need to cite help you have received directly from me.

Infractions of these policies will be dealt with harshly under the Longwood Honor Code. Any student convicted of an honor offense involving this class will automatically receive a final course grade of **F** in addition to any penalties imposed by the Honor Board. You should consider all work in this class to be pledged work, whether or not the pledge appears on the assignment.

Sexual Misconduct, Mental Health, Intellectual Property, and Disability Statements: This class follows Longwood policy as described at http://www.longwood.edu/academicaffairs/syllabus-statements/.

Students that require accommodations are encouraged to contact the professor and the Accessibility Resources Office to work out a plan. See http://www.longwood.edu/accessibility/

Longwood is an Honor Code institution, and students in this course are expected to abide by the tenets of the Honor Code. See http://www.longwood.edu/studentconduct/honor-code/

Speaking Intensive Evaluation: Your end-of-course presentation will be evaluated using these criteria:

Content Knowledge

– Technical content must be presented clearly, correctly, and demonstrate clear mastery of the material. Questions must be answered with clear, complete explanations.

Time Management

– The presentation should be neither rushed nor distractingly slow. You should allocate sufficient time for each of the main points and for questions.

Verbal Delivery

– You should use clear and audible speech. You must use language appropriate to the audience and presentation topic. Your language should be descriptive, accurate, and engaging.

Organization

– The presentation should be well-organized and include the following structure:

- Introduction:
  - Motivation
  - Background
- Main Points:
  - Project Design
  - Project Implementation
- Data and Results
- Conclusion:
  - Summary
  - Future Work

Presentation Skills

– You should prepare slides, board notes, or other presentation aids.
– You should be poised, natural, and confident.
– You should make appropriate gestures and facial expressions.
– You should make eye contact with each person in your audience.
– You should hold the audience's attention and stay focused on topic.

Tentative Schedule:

Aug. 21:	Welcome to the CS Scholars Community
Aug. 28:	Introduction to College Life: Pitfalls and Opportunities
Sept. 4	**Labor Day Holiday: NO CLASS**
Sept. 11:	Community-building activities
Sept. 18:	Student Organizations and Campus Resources
Sept. 25:	College Success: Note Taking and Office Hours
Oct. 2:	College Success: Time Management and Attendance
Oct. 9:	Academic Advising: Understanding major and general education requirements
Oct. 16:	Academic Advising: Creating a four-year plan
Oct. 23:	Introduction to Academic Research: Reading an Academic Paper
Oct. 30:	Introduction to Academic Research: Citing Sources
Nov. 6:	Academic Research: External Research Opportunities

Nov. 13: Academic Research: Research Opportunities at Longwood

Nov. 20 – Nov. 27: Community building and Final Presentation Preparation