



CS 315: Syllabus (Fall 2026)

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Last modified: Aug 22, 2025

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1 Basic Course Information

The course schedule is available in Canvas. The course website is located at <https://www.cs.odu.edu/~tkennedy/cs315/latest>.

1.1 Catalog Description

This course consists of talks by invited speakers, including Old Dominion University faculty and guests from different research and industry communities. The colloquium introduces the possibilities of future research and career opportunities in the various areas of the computer science field. Additionally, students will learn about available scholarships and how to apply for them.

1.2 Overall Description

Throughout this course we will cover topics (and skills) that will refine and broaden your knowledge of Computer Science. Topics will include discussions of...

- Writing a résumé
- Working with Git & GitHub
- Learning new programming languages
- Refining Knowledge of an existing language
- Code challenges (e.g., [Codewars](#))

This is by no means an exhaustive list...

1.3 Prerequisites

The prerequisites for this course are:

- CS 150, Introduction to Programming with C++
- CS 151, Introduction to Programming with Java
- CS 153, Introduction to Programming with Python

Any one of these courses can serve as the prereq to this course. You only need one.

...and junior or senior standing as a Computer Science major.

1.3.1 General Programming Knowledge

Students should be familiar with certain basic programming techniques that are largely independent of any specific programming language, e.g.,

- using editors, compilers and other basic software development tools.
- basic software design (i.e., stepwise refinement and top-down design)
- debugging, including the use of debugging output

1.3.2 General Computer Literacy

You will be studying techniques in this course for preparing professional-quality documents. Students taking this course should be able to use word processors and other common tools to produce good quality documents, including mixing text and graphics in a natural and professional manner.

1.4 When and Where

Students may attend talks by the invited speakers via a mixture of in person, via Zoom in synchronous real-time, or by viewing recordings. Other activities will be conducted here in CANVAS.

1.5 What Are Colloquia

Colloquia are talks hosted by the CS Department. There are many different kinds of colloquia in a typical semester:

- The Department sponsors an Industry Speakers Series, aimed at undergraduates, typically occurring once a month on Wednesdays at 4:00-5:00PM.

These talks often address the challenges faced and skills required to apply computer science in the real world.

- Visiting or guest researchers from other universities will give talks on more research-oriented subjects. Days and times for these will vary considerably.
- PhD students completing their degrees in the CS Department will give a thesis or dissertation defense, in which they explain the research they have done and why it qualifies as a significant and original contribution to the field.

Days and times for these will vary, but they tend to occur late in the semester.

- Any talk announced in the CS Department colloquium calendar, which can be found by going to the CS Dept. home page and clicking on [Colloquium Schedule](#).
- Additional options provided by the instructor.

You may use any combination of colloquia from the aforementioned categories to satisfy the *attend two (2) colloquia requirement* for this course.

1.6 Instructor

General Information	
Instructor	Thomas J. Kennedy
Office	Monarch Hall 2123G
Phone #	757.683.7725
Email	tkennedy@cs.odu.edu
Home Page & Office Hours	https://www.cs.odu.edu/~tkennedy

Important: All email related to this course should have the phrase **CS 315** somewhere in the subject line. This flags your message in my mailbox for faster attention.

I try to respond to all (properly marked) messages

- before I leave campus each day (Monday through Friday)
- within 48 on weekends & holidays.

This is my general email policy. However, this is usually $O(n)$ (i.e., an upper bound).

Any delays in replying to email will be noted in a Canvas Announcement.

1.6.1 Office Hours

My general office hours are available at <https://www.cs.odu.edu/~tkennedy/>. Instructions for scheduling a formal appointment are listed on the same page and [here](#). My office hours consist of web-conference (Zoom) appointments.

General questions about course content and reports of website problems should normally be asked in the Forums on Canvas or via email.

Questions about grades, how to solve assignments and other graded activities must be send to tkennedy@cs.odu.edu.

For more discussion on course communications, please refer to the [Communications policy](#).

2 Required Materials

2.1 Textbooks

Most assigned reading will be from books and other sources available on-line.

Required:

- **There is no required textbook for this course.**

2.2 Supplemental Materials

All supplemental resources and materials will be available in Canvas.

2.3 Technology Requirements

2.3.1 Computer Accounts

Students will need an account on the CS Dept. Linux network to participate in this class. This account is unrelated to any University-wide account you may have from ODU's Information Technology Services (ITS).

If you have had a CS account in the recent past, you should find it still active with your login name, password, and files unchanged. If you have had an account and it has not been restored, contact the CS Dept systems staff at root@cs.odu.edu requesting that it be restored.

If you do not yet have such an account, go to the [CS Dept. home page](#) and look for "Account Creation" under "Online Services". All students in this course are responsible for making sure they have a working CS Unix account **prior to** the first assignment.

3 Course Objectives

A student who successfully completes this course will be able to...

1. Draft a résumé.
2. Identify how to refine and improve a résumé.
3. Use provided feedback to improve a résumé.
4. Attend colloquia and summarize the foci.
5. Discuss tools and technologies that relate to courses that they have already completed.
6. Discuss tools and technologies that relate to courses in which they are currently enrolled.
7. Discuss tools and technologies that relate to courses that they will complete in the future.
8. Create a GitHub Account.
9. Create and manage a profile README on GitHub.
10. Summarize how Git & GitHub are used.
11. Complete code challenges.
12. Identify materials to facilitate learning a new programming language.
13. Identify materials to expand existing knowledge of a programming language.

4 Course Schedule

The course schedule is available in Canvas under *Modules* and *Calendar*. An alternate schedule/outline can be accessed at <https://www.cs.odu.edu/~tkennedy/cs315/latest/Directory/outline/index.html>.

5 Grading

Category	Weight
Assignments	50%
Colloquium Reports	40%
Final Exam	10%

Example 1: Grading Schema

Percent	Letter Grade	4pt Value
≥ 94	A	4.0
≥ 90	A-	3.7
≥ 87	B+	3.3
≥ 84	B	3.0
≥ 80	B-	2.7
≥ 77	C+	2.3
≥ 74	C	2.0
≥ 70	C-	1.7
≥ 67	D+	1.3
≥ 64	D	1.0
≥ 60	D-	0.7
< 60	F	0.0

5.1 Assignments

Assignments for this course must be completed individually.

5.1.1 Colloquia

Students must view and report on a minimum of two colloquia. Colloquia may be attended in real-time or viewed afterwards through recordings.

Students will complete a brief quiz after viewing each colloquium, discussing what they have learned.

5.1.2 Resumes

Students will prepare their personal résumé, in anticipation of future searches for employment, and submit it for review and commentary.

5.2 Incomplete Grades

A grade of “I” indicates assigned work yet to be completed in a given course, or absence from the final examination, and is assigned only upon instructor approval of a student request. The “I” grade may be awarded only in exceptional circumstances beyond the student’s control. The “I” grade becomes an “F” if not removed by the day grades are due for following term based on specific criteria: [Incomplete, Withdraws and Z grades.](#)

6 Expectations

6.1 Assignment Expectations

It is my expectation that you have completed approximately 70% of each assignment once half the allotted time has passed. For a two week assignment this would be one week. This will allow you sufficient time to address any issues, refine your testing process, and discuss your solution with me during my office hours.

I expect every student to discuss each assignment with me at least once.

7 Course Policies

7.1 Due Dates and Late Submissions

Late papers, assignments, projects, and make-up exams will not normally be permitted.

Exceptions will be made only in situations of unusual and unforeseeable circumstances beyond the student’s control, and such arrangements must be made prior to the due date in any situations where the conflict is foreseeable.

*“I’ve fallen behind and can’t catch up”, “I’m having a busier semester than I expected”, or “I registered for too many classes this semester” are **not** grounds for an extension.*

Extensions to due dates will not be granted simply to allow “porting” from one system to another. “*But I had it working on my home PC!*” is not an acceptable excuse.

7.2 Academic Honesty

Everything turned in for grading in this course must be your own work. If an assignment is **explicitly** described as a team assignment, it must be the work of the team members only.

The instructor reserves the right to question a student orally or in writing and to use his evaluation of the student’s understanding of the assignment and of the submitted solution as evidence of cheating. Violations will be reported to the Office of Student Conduct & Academic Integrity for consideration for possible punitive action.

Students who contribute to violations by sharing their code/designs with others may be subject to the same penalties.

- Students are expected to use standard Unix protection mechanisms (chmod) to keep their assignments from being read by their classmates. Failure to do so will result in grade penalties, at the very least.

This policy is *not* intended to prevent students from providing legitimate assistance to one another. Students are encouraged to seek/provide one another aid in learning to use the operating system, in issues pertaining to the programming language, or to general issues relating to the course subject matter.

Students should avoid, however, explicit discussion of approaches to solving a particular programming assignment, and under no circumstances should students show one another their code for an ongoing assignment, nor discuss such code in detail.

7.2.1 Use of Online Resources

You may **not** post details of course assignments, projects, or tests at online Forums, Bulletin Boards, Homework sites, etc., soliciting help.

You may use information that you have not solicited but have located, subject to the following restrictions:

- Just as when writing a paper, if you use someone else’s ideas, you must cite your sources appropriately. Within code, such citations appear in comments.

Example:

```
:
double x = 23.0;
double xsqrt = sqrt(x);
// Search algorithm based upon code by S Zeil at
// https://www.cs.odu.edu/~zeil/cs361/latest/Public/functionAnalysis/index.html#orderedsequ
int loc = 0;
while (loc < arraySize && numbers[loc] < xsqrt)
:
```

- Just as when writing a paper, if you use someone else’s words (code), you must cite your sources

appropriately **and** mark the quoted text. Within code, such citations appear in comments.

Example:

```

:
double x = 23.0;
double xsqrt = sqrt(x);

// Begin quoted code from S Zeil at
// https://www.cs.odu.edu/~zeil/cs361/latest/Public/functionAnalysis/index.html#orderedsequ
int loc = 0;
while (loc < listLength && list[loc] < searchItem)
{
    ++loc;
}
// End quoted code

:

```

- Failure to appropriately cite any such “found code” will be taken as evidence of plagiarism.
- The overall principle stated in the first sentence of this section remains in effect. “Everything turned in for grading in this course must be your own work.” If the bulk of your assignment, project, test answer, etc., are copied, even with appropriate citation, to the degree that, in the judgment of the instructor, you have not demonstrated your own knowledge of the course material, you will receive a zero for that submission.

7.2.2 ChatGPT and Similar Tools

ChatGPT and similar tools are not prohibited. However, any use must be properly cited in a form similar to all other online resources.

8 University Policies

8.1 Code of Student Conduct and Academic Integrity

The Office of Student Conduct & Academic Integrity (OSCAI) oversees the administration of the student conduct system, as outlined in the Code of Student Conduct. Old Dominion University is committed to fostering an environment that is: safe and secure, inclusive, and conducive to academic integrity, student engagement, and student success. The University expects students and student organizations/groups to uphold and abide by standards included in the [Code of Student Conduct](#). These standards are embodied within a set of core values that include personal and academic integrity, fairness, respect, community, and responsibility.

8.2 Honor Pledge

By attending Old Dominion University, you have accepted the responsibility to abide by the Honor Pledge:

I pledge to support the Honor System of Old Dominion University. I will refrain from any

form of academic dishonesty or deception, such as cheating or plagiarism. I am aware that as a member of the academic community it is my responsibility to turn in all suspected violations of the Honor Code. I will report to a hearing if summoned.

8.3 University Email Policy

Reformatted to follow <https://www1.odu.edu/about/policiesandprocedures/computing/standards/11/02>.

8.3.1 Student Email

With the increasing reliance and acceptance of electronic communication, email is considered an official means for University communication. Old Dominion University provides each student an email account for the purposes of teaching and learning, research, administration, and service. It is important that all students are aware of the expectations associated with email use as outlined in the [Student Email Standard](#).

8.3.2 Email Account Activation

It is the responsibility of every eligible student to activate MIDAS, the Monarch Identification and Authorization System, in order to obtain email access.

8.3.3 Expectations Regarding Use of Email

The email account provided by the University is considered to be an official point of contact for correspondence. Students are expected to check their official e-mail account on a frequent and consistent basis in order to stay current with University communications. Mail sent to the ODU email address may include notification of University-related actions, including academic, financial, and disciplinary actions. For more information about student email, please visit [Student Computing](#).

8.3.4 Educational Uses of Email

University offices and instructors cannot validate that a communication coming by email is from an ODU student unless it comes from a valid ODU email address. If students send mail from non-ODU email accounts (e.g., Hotmail or Yahoo), faculty and staff are not obligated to respond and may request that official e-mail accounts be used.

8.4 Withdrawal

Enrollment in this course indicates your acceptance of its teaching focus, requirements, and policies. Please review the syllabus and the course requirements as soon as possible. If you believe that the nature of this course does not meet your interests, needs or expectations, if you are not prepared for the amount of work involved – or if you anticipate assignment deadlines or adherence to course policies will constitute an unacceptable hardship for you – you should drop the course by the drop/add deadline, which is listed in the [ODU Schedule of Classes](#). Visit the [Office of the University Registrar](#) for more information.

8.5 Educational Accessibility

Old Dominion University is committed to ensuring equal access to all qualified students with disabilities in accordance with the Americans with Disabilities Act. The Office of Educational Accessibility (OEA) is the campus office that works with students who have disabilities to provide and/or arrange reasonable accommodations.

- If you experience a disability which will impact your ability to access any aspect of my class, please present me with an accommodation letter from OEA so that we can work together to ensure that appropriate accommodations are available to you.
- If you feel that you will experience barriers to your ability to learn and/or testing in my class but do not have an accommodation letter, please consider scheduling an appointment with OEA to determine if academic accommodations are necessary.

The Office of Educational Accessibility is located at 1021 Student Success Center and their phone number is (757) 683-4655. Additional information is available at the [OEA website](#)



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