

CSC104, Winter 2013

course information sheet

Danny Heap

CSC104, “The why and how of computing” introduces undergrads to Computer Science, with the aim that they should change the world of computing, rather than just observe it. Here’s a summary of the administrative details for Winter 2013. Please visit the course web page [web page](#) often, and read email sent to your U of T email for important announcements.

Contact: I’ll meet you each Tuesday and Thursday in FG 103 (Fitzgerald room 103) at 9 a.m. (!) for discussion, worked examples, and programming demonstration. Fridays 9 a.m. will be tutorial (locations will be posted on the course web page), where you can get your teaching assistant’s help understanding weekly exercises, and then write a short quiz based on them. If you have questions that aren’t answered in class, I’ll be available for office hours Fridays, 3–5, in BA4270.

Textbook and computing: I will provide slides and links to readings online, and I will use [Picturing Programs](#), in PDF form. I think you should pay \$4.99 for *Picturing Programs*, and we can argue about why when we discuss intellectual property. You’ll get email from [CDF](#) with your account and password. You’ll also be introduced to the lab during your first tutorial.

Syllabus: We’ll discuss the following topics:

- Problem solving and algorithms
- History of computing machines, data representation and manipulation
- Modern computers: hardware, software, operating system
- Outside the box: the internet and the web
- Computers and society: privacy, property, work, democracy

In parallel with these discussions we will be constantly messing with a programming language called **racket** and its favourite environment **DrRacket**. Your understanding of computers, and the culture associated with them, will be enhanced by a gentle introduction to programming.

Marking scheme: The marking scheme is designed to place a low weight (40%) on the final exam, since I believe this reduces a potential source of stress for students. In order to do this, I have to introduce frequent-but-smaller sources of stress: 8 quizzes during the tutorial time, two term tests (written in the lecture hall), two projects, a blog, and a Wikipedia entry. These are timed, and weighted, as follows:

Work	Due	Weight
8 Quizzes	January 18th, 25th February 1st and 15th March 1st, 8th, and 22nd April 5th Quizzes are brief, and meant to verify basic concept acquisition.	12% (total)
4 Assignments	Wikipedia: February 1st, March 1st, and March 22nd Project #1: March 8th, 11:59 p.m. Project # 2: April 5th, 11:59 p.m. course bLOG (SLOG), January 18th – April 5th, 11:59 p.m.	32% (total)
2 Term tests	Term test #1, Thursday February 7th, 9:10–10:00 am Term test #2, Thursday March 14th, 9:10–10:00 am	16% (total)
Final exam	Some time during exam period	40%

Nuances: Everybody has better and worse days. I aim to give higher weight to your better work. For example, the weights of the assignments, projects, and Wikipedia entry sum to 32%, so your best effort will have weight 10%, next best 9%, next best 7%, and least-best 6%. Similarly, the term tests sum to 16%, so your best effort will have weight 10% and your lesser effort will have weight 6%. The 40% weight of the final is, however, not changeable.

Lateness, sickness, natural disasters: I don't accept late work, since I have to arrange in advance for grading it. However, if you have special circumstances that force you to miss a deadline, please contact me immediately (usually before the work is due) and fill out either the "Request for special consideration," or the standard medical excuse form (link on this web page) and provide all supporting documentation. I will do my best to ensure there is no penalty for a deadline missed for a valid reason.

Independent work: It is a serious academic offense to pass of somebody else's work as your own for credit. Be sure to give full and generous credit to any person or book (except this course's instructor and teaching assistants) you consult in solving assignments. If you take notes when you consult a source, quote that source in full.

If you intend to present work as your own, for credit, then you should avoid looking at similar work by other students, in written or electronic form, since looking can easily turn into plagiarism. Avoid showing your own assignments to other students. Take a couple of hours' break after even verbal discussions of the assignment before writing it up.