

COMP 1260 - Introductory Computer Usage 1

Introduction to the Course

Course description

The University of Manitoba course calendar describes this course as follows:

This course offers an introduction to modern computer services. Areas covered will include word processing, spreadsheets, data management systems and graphics. No prior computer knowledge is necessary.

May not be taken within the Computer Science Honours or Major program.

Since the material for this course is only available on-line, some familiarity with using the Internet is required. The ability to navigate to this page is all that is necessary; everything else will be learned.

This course will emphasize learning how and why common software packages operate the way they do. It does not require memorizing by rote a series of steps needed to perform a particular operation; instead, you will learn both by reading and by exploring the software yourself. Your learned knowledge will be applied in the assignments, where you create documents for purposes that simulate a real-world scenario. It is not a course in programming or the theory of computer science.

There are four important learning materials for this course:

- the notes (offered through this web site), which discuss the concepts that provide the foundation;
- the textbook, which demonstrates how those concepts are applied;
- the software, where you can apply those concepts yourself; and
- the discussion board, where you can communicate with other students and the instructor in an open forum.

All these elements are necessary for a full understanding of the course concepts. Spend some time browsing through both the web site and the textbook, to familiarize yourself with their layouts. Make sure you carefully read through the rest of this introductory section on the site, which acts as your course outline. Then, you can check out the messages on the discussion board, and join in by introducing yourself.

Course goals

Upon completion of the course, you should be able to:

- describe the fundamental hardware and software components that make up a modern computer system;
- effectively use technical terms (jargon) to communicate with other knowledgeable computer users;
- organize and manipulate the files stored on a computer;

- recognize in very general terms how computer networks are organized;
- apply this knowledge of networking to your usage of the Internet;
- create both structured and creative text documents using a word processor;
- build flexibility and consistency into structured word processing documents using styles;
- design and create spreadsheets for ease of storing and processing numeric data;
- produce spreadsheets that effectively communicate complex numeric data, using formatting, layout, and charts;
- create documents that integrate data from different application software, using techniques such as mail merges or embedded objects;
- use database software to create a complete database with multiple views of the contents for input and output; and
- design simple relational databases consisting of a small number of related tables.

Course overview

The course material is divided into eleven units, where every unit should be completed in approximately a week. Each unit consists of a series of learning activities, involving reading from the notes and textbook, use of the software, and (for some units) completion of work for evaluation. You will have to schedule these units to complete the assigned work before certain due dates. A sample schedule is given in the "At a glance" calendar that can be found on this site.

Work must be completed and submitted by the due date. Since some assignments take quite a bit of time, you should plan on starting each assignment at least two weeks before its scheduled due date. It is also acceptable to work on assignments even earlier (if they are available) and to submit your solution as early as you like; note that you should still check the discussion board to see if any changes or clarifications posted there could affect your work.

The following sections discuss how you use these materials in greater detail. Please read them carefully before you begin the course.

The eleven units of the course cover the following topics:

1. **Introduction to computers**
A brief introduction to the hardware and software of a computer system.
2. **About the Internet**
Networking basics; browsing and searching the World-Wide Web.
3. **Introduction to word processing**
Using computer software, particularly word processors.
4. **Operating systems and file management**
How to organize your information.
5. **Advanced word processing**
Using styles, tables, and other more advanced word processing techniques.
6. **Introduction to spreadsheets**
Writing basic spreadsheets for numeric data.
7. **Computers, networks, and security**
A more detailed view of how computers and networks work.
8. **Advanced spreadsheets**
Formatting and charting your data for presentation.

9. Introduction to databases

Using relational database software.

10. Software packages and integration

Making different programs talk to each other.

11. Advanced databases

Database design, views, and more complicated database elements.

Note that the units become increasingly challenging as the course progresses. For some of you, the first few units may cover familiar ground; later material will likely introduce you to unfamiliar topics.

Course notes

Part of the required work for each unit will be to read the course notes. They include course material independent of the textbook. Some topics may be covered in both sources, some in only one or the other. You are responsible for learning *all* of the material in the course, whether it is from the notes or the textbook.

Each unit of the notes begins with a brief introduction, followed by a list of learning activities for the unit. The activities will include readings and applications. Even though only some activities (such as the assignments) are submitted for evaluation, you can assume that the other activities are required in order to prepare you for that work. It is strongly recommended that you complete all the activities in the order they are listed.

The content of the notes is very similar to the material covered during a lecture. The material covered in this course, however, may or may not be the same as that covered in the on-campus course. The content of the two are not interchangeable.

To make the notes easier to follow, certain typographical conventions have been used:

- **Definitions** — words appearing in this format are terms defined in the course glossary (they only appear in this format the first time they are used).
- *Citations* — the names of portions of the textbook or this web site.
- *Output* — represents things you may see on your screen.
- Filenames — the names (or portions of names) of files saved on a computer.
- Menu Items — the names of pull-down menus or menu options.
- Keyboard Commands — the names of keys to press to perform certain actions.
- *Versions and Standards* — indicates that a certain operation will only work (or will not work) in a specific version of a software package or according to a certain standard.

Text that describes an action specific to a certain computer system or application program will be set off from the rest of the notes:

This may be a description of something that you can do in a certain program. For example, hit the close button on your web browser if you no longer want to read this web page.

Some examples and problems are set apart from the rest of the text. These may be examples of problems that will be solved in the notes, or complete problems that you might try on your own:

Problem: Add a single-page section to the end of a Word document that contains a small (about five rows tall) table of text vertically centered on the page.

At the end of a particularly in-depth or complicated discussion, a highlight box summarizes the main point:

If you are printing these notes, you may want to consider investing in a colour printer.

Finally, some interesting or relevant facts which do not quite fit with the rest of the text are given as asides:

You can learn a lot from these asides. Sometimes, they tell you about the requirements of the course, while other times, they point out exceptions to what you've just learned; on some occasions, they just tell a story.

Another very important component of the notes is the glossary. Computer users toss around technical terms on a regular basis; many times, the key to answering a question may be knowing how to describe it using the correct terms. Knowing these terms let you look up help, search the Internet, or talk to customer support effectively. By the end of the course, you will be expected to be able to use and define all the terms in the glossary. Keep an eye out for the **definitions** in the notes, and note that they also act as clickable links to their glossary entry.

Textbook readings

Readings will be assigned from the required textbook. Note that while different editions of the textbook may be acceptable, different books are not, because they will not likely cover the same material.

If you have a different edition of the textbook, it should be possible for you to translate the required readings into pages in your edition. You may ask your instructor for help, but they may not have a copy of your edition of the book.

While it is possible to read the textbook by itself, it is written as a series of tutorials that you can work through as you are reading. It is strongly recommended that you work through the activities as you read about them; in other words, plan on reading the textbook while you are sitting in front of the computer.

The textbook also has a glossary. Some terms will be defined in both the on-line glossary and the textbook glossary: the definitions may be different, but they likely will not be contradictory. You can consider the on-line glossary to be more important, but you should be familiar with the terms from the textbook glossary as well.

Assigned work

The assigned work in this course is designed to give you an opportunity to apply

the techniques you have learned from your readings. You will create documents similar to the kinds that you would create at work or for your other courses. You will be given a list of requirements which must *all* be met. For full marks, your work must appear presentable and professional.

Note also that in a course of this nature, it is not just the contents of your document which you must create: you are also responsible for all of the formatting and layout of your work as well. The majority of the marks will be based on appearance. It is important to remember that all of the work needed to do this must be your own; no sharing of documents is allowed.

More details about assigned work can be found in the *Evaluation and grading* section of this introduction.

Communication

To help you achieve the goals of this course, there are a number of resources available.

The first is the discussion board, where important announcements will be posted, including information about the assignments and exam, and any changes that occur mid-term. You are required to read all of these announcements; you will find they answer many of your questions.

Some — though not all — of these announcements may be posted on the course home page as well. You should still check the discussion board for more details.

The second is direct communication with your instructor, either through e-mail or telephone. Your instructor can answer any of your questions about the material, provide help or hints on the assignments, or let you know how you are doing in the course. You should assume that your instructor will make reasonable effort to respond to your questions, but without in-person contact, you can expect there will be a delay between having a question and getting it answered. The effect is much less dramatic if you build it into your expectations: start your work early, and you will have plenty of time to ask questions and get feedback.

See the instructor's letter for more information about contacting your instructor. If you are on campus, your instructor may have office hours for in-person contact as well.

One thing your instructor may not be able to do is answer technical questions, either about the computer system you are using for the assignments, or issues with the web site. However, it doesn't hurt to ask.

You can also look for help from your fellow classmates. The discussion board is open to communication from everyone in the class, you can post your own questions and respond to others. In a large class, with good participation, you may be able to get a very fast response to your postings.

The discussion board is as useful as you make it. Everyone who participates contributes to the common good.

The one restriction with the discussion board is that you cannot post any complete or partial answers to the assignments. Hints are OK, though if

you aren't sure if your message gives a hint or an answer, it's better to ask your instructor before posting it.

Course materials

In addition to access to this web site, there are a number of items which you must have available to you as you are working on the course.

Computer system and software

For this course, you need to use a computer capable of running Microsoft Windows and Microsoft Office. You should also have some kind of removable media (like a USB flash drive) for storing back-up copies of your work.

Microsoft Windows Vista or any newer version, including Windows 7 or Windows 8, is acceptable.

Microsoft Office 2010 or any newer version, including Office 2013, is required. In this course you will be using three Office applications: *Microsoft Word*, *Microsoft Excel*, and *Microsoft Access*. Note that *Microsoft Access* is only available in the Professional suite of Microsoft Office.

Microsoft Access is **required** for this course. It is **only** in the Microsoft Office Professional suite, and is **not** part of the Microsoft Office Home, Student, or Business suites.

If you need to purchase the Microsoft Office Professional suite, visit the [University of Manitoba bookstore](#). They have a heavily-discounted academic version of the software available for purchase.

If you are near the University of Manitoba campus, there are computer labs which are accessible to any student registered in university courses. A user ID and password are required for these systems, but they may be obtained when using the computers for the first time. These computers have all of the required software installed.

Microsoft Office is also available for Mac computers. You can use newer versions (like *Office 2011*) for the units on *Microsoft Word* and *Microsoft Excel*. However, *Microsoft Access* is **not** available for the Mac. You will either need to purchase Microsoft Office Professional for Windows and run it under Windows using software like [Boot Camp](#), or find a Windows computer to run *Microsoft Access*. Note that the the textbook and assignments are based on the Windows versions of Microsoft Office. You will be responsible for researching any differences yourself; your instructor may not be able to offer help.

Textbook

There is a **required** textbook for this course available through the University bookstore or other booksellers. There are three revisions available, based on the versions of Microsoft Office and Microsoft Windows you are using. The course is compatible with any of these books.

Note that regardless of which revision you choose, you **must** have the "First Course" edition of the textbook.

Any other editions, such as the "brief edition", are **not** acceptable.

Microsoft Office 2013

This book is based on the current version of Microsoft Office. You should use this revision of the textbook if you are purchasing the Office software new, or if you are using the computer labs on the University of Manitoba campus. This revision covers *Windows 7* and *Windows 8*.

Title: *New Perspectives on Microsoft Office 2013, First Course*
Authors: *Ann Shaffer; Patrick Carey; Kathleen T. Finnegan; Katherine T. Pinard; Roy Ageloff; Sharon Scollard; S. Scott Zimmerman*
ISBN: 1-285-16764-3 © 2014

Microsoft Office 2010 (or Office 2011 for Mac)

This book is based on a previous version of Microsoft Office. You should use this revision of the textbook if you have that version of Microsoft Office on your computer system. This revision covers *Windows 7*.

Title: *New Perspectives on Microsoft Office 2010, First Course*
Authors: *Ann Shaffer; Patrick Carey; June Jamrich Parsons; Dan Oja; Kathleen T. Finnegan*
ISBN: 0-5387-4653-X © 2011

Evaluation and grading

Your mark in this course is based on a number of activities which are discussed in greater detail here.

Assignments

There are five assignments in this course, all of which contribute to your final mark. Assignments may consist of one or more questions, and involve creating documents in one of the required software packages (see the *Course materials* section of the introduction). All the requirements of all of the questions must be satisfied, as described on the assignment. Your work must be free of other errors even if not explicitly stated in the requirements; for example, spelling errors are not acceptable. On some questions, you may be free to make creative choices about the content or formatting of your document. When you do so, you are expected to put a reasonable amount of effort into it.

Your documents should achieve the same level of professionalism that you would use at work or in another university-level course.

The assignments are equally-weighted in their contribution to your final mark. Each assignment will be marked according to a guide, which will compare your work to the list of requirements and ensure they have been met. The guide may or may not list *all* of the requirements from the original assignment: it is your responsibility to check feedback about your marked assignment to see what was missing.

Final exam

The final exam will be conducted at the University of Manitoba, Fort Garry

campus or at an alternate location off-campus. **All students must declare an exam location.** The Registrar's Office is responsible for scheduling the final exam. Once finalized, the exam date and time information will be posted on the University of Manitoba Exam site.

While the exact format of the exam may change each term, the layout is generally the same. The exam is written, on paper, without access to a computer. It is closed-book, and no notes or other materials are allowed. The questions are a combination of multiple-choice and written answers, and will focus on both the concepts and the application of the material, rather than very specific details of a particular software package.

The above information about the exam is subject to change; your instructor will notify you early in the term if the exam will be given in a different form.

Distribution of marks

Your final mark will be calculated according to the following formula.

| Item | Percentage |
|--|------------|
| Assignments (all of 1 through 5, each worth 10%) | 50% |
| Final Exam | 50% |
| Total | 100% |

Academic honesty

In this course, you are required to do all of the work on all of the assignments independently. Since the material focuses on the creation and formatting of documents, all of the production of every document you submit must be entirely your own work. At no point should you share your documents (directly, by copying files, or indirectly, by copying and pasting portions of your work) with any other students in the class.

Violations of this rule are treated very seriously, and have significant consequences. Also note that in the case of violations, both the person who originally did the work and the person who copied that work are subject to the same penalties.

All assignments in Computer Science must be accompanied by a signed Honesty Declaration that states that you are aware of the regulations regarding academic honesty. In a distance course, this Honesty Declaration must be signed and submitted before you complete your first assignment; it applies to all of your work in the course. See the *Assignments* page for more details.

The Honesty Declaration is a contract that binds you explicitly to the rules of academic honesty. Assignment marks will be withheld until a completed and signed declaration is received.

The official description of academic dishonesty follows:

Academic dishonesty is a very serious offence and will be dealt with in accordance with the University's discipline bylaw. Examples of academic dishonesty include:

- submitting assignments which are not entirely your own work;
- letting others copy work that you created;
- use of unauthorized material during a test or examination;
- writing an examination for another person; or
- having another person write an examination for you.

Please see section 7 of the *General Academic Regulations and Requirements* in the University of Manitoba general calendar for details.

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