

Harding Fine Arts Academy - Course Syllabus

Course: Advanced Computers (Computer Programming)

Course Description:

Advanced Computers

Course Objectives:

The goal for this course is to provide students with an insight into one dimension of computers: software. Up to now, students have used software others have written. In this course, students will start by learning a basic markup language: HTML. HTML is not really programming, it is scripting, but there are opportunities to learn programming in HTML by doing Dynamic HTML.

I do not intend to decide at this point exactly which programming language I will ask the students to study after we spend a few weeks on HTML. However, the likelihood is that we will begin PHP programming (web programming). PHP has a number of advantages that I believe make sense for these students:

- 1) It is free. Therefore, it costs the school nothing to provide it and it costs the students nothing to use it at home.
- 2) It is powerful. If one can program in PHP, one can write routines that not only produce web pages but one can endow those web pages with database and graphics resources.
- 3) It is very similar to C in many respects.
- 4) It interfaces with the MySQL database engine and many other resources.

If it works out and if the students desire, we shall follow our study of HTML and DHTML with PHP and hopefully be able to learn how to interface PHP with MySQL and possibly Templating.

A future course might consider taking students to the next level of understanding computers, and that is a course that explores computer hardware. Such a course would include assembly language programming, microprocessors, and input-output techniques, such as using and programming UARTS (Universal Asynchronous Receiver Transmitters).

Text and Resources Required:

- * No text is required.
- * Paper
- * An open mind and a willingness to learn and follow instructions.

Classroom Rules

Raise your hand to speak.

Treat all persons with respect.

Be on time, prepared with all necessary materials, ready to give your best effort.

Speak and act in a way that is supportive of a safe, comfortable learning environment for everyone in the room.

Have with you only those things that are needed for class work.
(I.e., no makeup, no cell phones, no game systems, etc.)

If I see you with a cell phone, with a pager, with makeup, etc., I will ask you to put it on my desk. If you quickly put it on my desk and do not argue with me, you may retrieve the item after class. If you argue with me, I will take the item anyway but it will be turned over to the Principal. The Principal will decide if and when and under what circumstances you get it back and whether a parent needs to be called in on it. If you argue with me much at all, I may consider your arguing to be a Level III violation of the school rules ("Defiance of Authority").

Department Policies

Attendance/Participation:

To achieve success in any course of study, it is essential for students to attend class regularly and be involved in all class work and discussions. **Many students have great difficulty learning any subject on their own after an absence.** Attendance is taken every class period. Students must bring a note from a parent for each day missed which explains the reason for the absence. Students have two days following an absence to make arrangements with the teacher to make up work. Tests and make-ups are usually given after school on Fridays or at the teacher's availability and convenience. Failure to make up work and assignments after an absence is one of the major reasons why a student might do poorly in any class. **Remember: the absence may be excused but the necessity to acquire the skills missed on the those absent days is not excused.**

Assignments:

There are generally no take home assignments in this class, although on occasion students may be required to create plans concerning the design of a software project. Due to the nature of the programming resources we will be using, it would be impractical if not impossible to expect students to do this at home.

Parental Contact:

I will contact the student's parents if a student has missed five or more days in class over a semester. Contact is also made at interim report time when signed interim reports are not returned to the teacher. Contact is also made during progress report time when a student has a grade below 70%.

Classroom Behavior:

Students are required to follow the rules set forth in each teacher's classroom in addition to the HFAA rules. The student will be taught the rules and discipline policies on the first day of class. Students are not allowed to bring food, drink, candy, cell phones, makeup, entertainment electronics, or anything else I deem distracting. If a student has anything with them that I have either listed here or I deem distracting, I will ask the student to put it on my desk. If they do so immediately without argument, they will get it back at the end of the period. If they argue with me about it, they will not get it back. It will be given to the Principal, and they will have to convince her to give it back to them.

Students are allowed to bring water so long as the container has a lid on it.

Cheating:

The nature of this class is such that I do not believe there will be any issues whatsoever with cheating. However, should it arise, **students caught cheating will be given a zero for that assignment.** This applies to both the student giving the answer as well as to the student receiving the answer. Additionally, both students will be reported to the school office for disciplinary procedures. Plus, I will be personally really, really annoyed.

Prerequisites:

Academic: A class in using a computer.

Personal: This is an elective class. I am assuming that a student will take this elective because they have some interest in computers. Even if they do not think they are interested in computers, this

class will most likely be an enjoyable experience for them.

Teacher:

The instructor for this course is W.C. Nedbalek. I hold a B.S. in economics from the University of Oklahoma, an M.S. in agricultural economics from the University of Arizona, and a J.D. from Oklahoma City University. I am a private pilot (working on an instrument rating), a skilled cabinet maker, a Cisco Certified Network Associate, an officer in the United States Civil Air Patrol, and a licensed attorney in Oklahoma. I taught 7th and 8th grade math and Algebra in the Los Angeles Unified School District for five years prior to coming to Harding Fine Arts Academy. I also designed and built my school's (Fulton Middle School) computer lab.

Please feel free to contact me at any time if you have any questions or if you are concerned about your child. I am always happy to speak with you. I have a fifteen year old daughter and I understand what you are going through!

The preferred way to contact me is through email: cnedbalek@HardingFineArts.org.

You may also leave a message with the school office (702-4322), and I will call you as soon as possible.

The school's website is: www.HardingFineArts.org. I intend to have a page there up soon as another source of contact information.

Classroom Motto:

"The man who says it cannot be done should not bother the man doing it."
(Chinese proverb)

Grading Policy

This class is an elective, and it should be a fun elective. My experience with this sort of class is that students generally work very hard on it.

"In class work":

Most classes will consist of the students applying techniques I show them in class. Students will be graded on simply trying. No student is expected or required to meet any specific standard of programming competency, as it were. This is simply a class to introduce students to programming. There will be no pressure on anyone to "perform."

So a student will be graded on (1) listening to the instructions they are given; and (2) their good faith effort to apply those instructions to whatever programming product they work on.

Homework:

There will generally be no homework assigned for this class.

Exams:

There will be no exams in this course.

Summary of Grade Calculation

Here is how the final grade is calculated:

The (1) daily application of the student to the task at hand; (2) the completion of class projects; (3) regular and consistent effort at trying to understand the reasoning behind our programming approaches will constitute 100% of their grade.

If students spend their time in the lab surfing the Internet or otherwise wasting time, their grade will be seriously compromised. I record a zero for any day I observe a student doing such. Since by Oklahoma law five unexcused absences requires a student to fail a class, I consider it reasonable to infer that if a student wastes five class periods, they may likely qualify for a failing grade.

Statement of Understanding and Agreement to Comply

Note to Parents on cell phone usage at school: We all understand that cell phones are ubiquitous. We also understand that parents like for their kids to have a cell phone so that the parent can reach the child. However, you can also understand that if cell phones are ringing during class, or students are texting (usually each other but sometimes you) during class, that it is not supportive of the student learning. Therefore, please understand that students may possess a phone, and may have it with them, but it is not to be used (or be in ring or vibrate mode) during class. If I see a student using their phone during class, I ask them to put it on my desk. If they don't argue with me, they get it back at the end of class. If they do argue with me, I give the phone to the principal and they have to negotiate with the principal to have the phone returned. **If the student leaves the phone off during class and does not use it during class, there will never be any problems for either of us.**

I appreciate your cooperation with this cell phone usage policy. I'm sure you agree that we must have some policy to deal with the situation, and my policy seems reasonable and balanced.

Please do not call your child on their cell phone while they are in school. If you need to communicate with your child during school hours, the appropriate means of communication is through the school office at 702-4322. Or, if you call them and leave a message, they can check their voicemail between classes or during lunch. Thank you.

I, _____, (Student: print your name) an entering student of Algebra I, have read this entire Syllabus. I understand it, and I intend to be held accountable for everything in it. If there was anything in it that I did not understand, I have asked about it and have obtained a satisfactory explanation.

(signature of student)

(date)

I, _____, (Parent: print your name) the parent of a student entering Algebra I, have read this entire Syllabus. I understand it, and I agree that it is reasonable, and I agree that my child shall be held accountable for everything in it. If there was anything in it that I did not understand, I have asked about it and have obtained a satisfactory explanation. I support these policies.

(signature of parent)

(date)