1 Course Description

CS 252 is an introduction to Unix with emphasis on the skills necessary to be a productive programmer in Unix, Linux, and related environments.

The focus of this course is on learning enough Unix for students to function productively in CS courses at the 300 level and beyond. Because working directly from a workstation console in a CS Dept lab is no longer the dominant mode of interacting with our Unix systems, this course will emphasize connecting via the Internet from a remote PC to our Unix systems. Both text-based (ssh/shell) and window-based (X) connections will be covered.

This is a self-paced course delivered via the Internet and may be taken for P/F grades only. There are no regularly-scheduled class meetings. Students will be able to work through the material at any time, including taking automatically graded assignments. At the end of the semester, a final exam will be issued. Students who have successfully completed a sufficient number of assignments and achieved a sufficient grade on the exam will be given a grade of P. More detailed information is in the Grading section of this document.

2 Basic Information

2.1 Instructor
When sending e-mail to the instructor, please put include the course number (“CS252”) as part of your subject line. Messages with that in the subject are flagged by my email program for faster attention and are less likely to be lost amid my daily dose of spam messages.

2.1.1 Office Hours

Students may meet with the instructor in person, by telephone, or via internet-conferencing (Hangouts). A week-by-week schedule of available meeting times can be found by going to the instructor’s home page (http://www.cs.odu.edu/~zeil) and clicking on “Office Hours and Appointments”.

2.2 Location

This course is hosted on ODU’s Blackboard server.

2.3 Text

The readings for this course available on-line.

- The lecture notes, denoted in the course outline by the symbol 📚, are required readings.
  - All information necessary to do the assignments and complete the course is in the lecture notes.

- Various textbook chapters, identified in the course outline by the symbol 📖 are also listed. These are optional readings.
  - If you are struggling with some of the ideas presented in the lecture notes, you may find that the texts provide alternative viewpoints or explanations.
  - These texts are available on-line via the ODU Library through the Virtual Library of Virginia (VLVA).

2.4 Course Prerequisites

- CS 150 (Introduction to Programming), or an equivalent, or current registration in CS 333

Students are also expected to be familiar with the use of standard Internet-based tools including email and web browsers.

2.5 Hardware and Software Requirements

Because this course is hosted on the Internet, you will need to make sure that you have access to the appropriate computing equipment and software to participate in the course activities.

You will not need your own access to a Unix or Linux machine. The CS Dept provides such machines, and learning how to use them from both on and off-campus locations is a major theme of the course.

You will need hands-on access to a PC of some kind. Windows (XP or later), Mac, or Linux boxes are all acceptable,
Software requirements are fairly relaxed. You will need a reasonably up-to-date version of the Internet Explorer, Firefox, or Chrome web browser. Other browsers or older versions of these may also be acceptable, but cannot be guaranteed so, because the course materials are not tested with other and older browsers. When in doubt, try this browser test.

You may need to install software on your hands-on PC over the course of the semester. All such software is available in free, open-source distributions and will be introduced as it becomes relevant during the course.

3 Course Policies

3.1 Meeting Times

This is a self-paced Internet-delivered course. There are no regularly scheduled class meetings.

3.2 Computer Access

All students taking this course must have activated a login and e-mail account on the CS Dept.’s Unix network. (This is distinct from any Midas or other account you may have from the general University computer center – the ODU ITS).

You may have a CS account already if you were registered for a CS class last semester. If not, you will need to create a new account. Instructions on how to do so are in the course materials for the first module/section of the course.

3.3 Communications

Because this course does not have traditional lectures, most communication between instructor and students will need to be conducted electronically. Options include email and Forum postings. Details can be found in the Communications Policy.

When sending email related to this course, please remember to include “CS252” as part of the email subject line. This will flag your email for my attention and may also help avoid its getting lost amid my daily spam.

As noted earlier, I will hold regular office hours. Off-campus students can contact the instructor by telephone or by network conferencing during these times.

3.4 Academic Honesty

Everything turned in for grading in this course must be your own work.

- If you have questions about the readings or the general subject matter, you may ask me, your classmates, other students, tutors, or anyone else you think might be helpful.

- If you have questions about assignments (or any other graded activity), you may ask me, the course TA (if I have one – I usually do not have one for this course), or official tutors provided by the CS Dept. or ODU.

You may not discuss possible solutions to assignments or other graded activities with your classmates, other students, TAs for other courses (including TAs for CS 150, 250, or 333), tutors
who you may have hired on your own, forums and help sites on the web, etc.

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 Judicial Affairs for consideration for punitive action.

Students who contribute to violations by sharing their code/designs with others are subject to the same penalties as those who misrepresent such work as their own.

### 3.5 Grading

This is a Pass/Fail course. No letter grades are assigned. The only possible grades are P, F, and WF.

#### 3.5.1 Requirements

To obtain a pass (P) grade, students must accumulate 18 points out of a possible 24.

Points are awarded as follows:

- One point for each assignment completed, up to a total of 14.
  - All assignments are automatically graded. Students can check their assignment status at any time by using the Grades button on the various course directory pages.

- One point for each 10% correct on the final exam.
  - The final exam is a multiple-choice exam and will be available on line during exam week on dates listed in the course outline.

For example, a student who completes all 14 points need score only 40% on the final exam. A student who completes 12 assignments must score a 60% on the final exam.

Students who fail to achieve the required 18 points will be given an F if they took the final exam, a WF if they did not attempt it.

It is worth noting that the course is designed with the assumption that students will make a serious attempt to complete all assignments, even though this is not strictly required. The assignments give you practice with and help to reinforce the lessons tested by the exam.

Historically, there is a strong correlation between the number of assignments completed and the chances of scoring high enough on the exam to pass the course:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th># assignments completed</th>
<th>% of students passing the course</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>&lt; 8</td>
<td>mathematically impossible to pass</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>33%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>60%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### 3.5.2 Due Dates

Assignments are due by the end of the day prior to the opening of the final exam. Refer to the [outline/schedule](https://www.cs.odu.edu/~zeil/cs252/s17/Public/syllabus/) for the exact date.

The final exam will be available on-line. Refer to the [outline/schedule](https://www.cs.odu.edu/~zeil/cs252/s17/Public/syllabus/) for the dates. Detailed instructions will be posted in the Exams area on Blackboard.

### 3.5.3 Extensions, Exceptions, and Incomplete (I) Grades

Exceptions to the due dates or grading policy will only be granted under the conditions defined by the [ODU policy on Incomplete (I) grades](https://www.cs.odu.edu/~zeil/cs252/s17/Public/syllabus/): “exceptional circumstances beyond the student’s control”. Except in such circumstances, students who fail to complete the course in the time allowed will not be permitted to resume the course without re-registering, and would then be expected to complete all assignments from the beginning of the course.

Reasons that are most likely to justify an exception include extended illness, military deployments, or job transfer/relocation, but you should be prepared to document these if requested.

The following are usually *not* valid reasons for an extension:

- “I forgot that I was signed up for this course.” or “I didn’t know what the Grading policy was.”
  
  This was not beyond your control.

- “I have a part-time (full-time) job.”
  
  This is not exceptional. Most of your classmates work, many of them full-time.

- “I have a heavy course-load this semester.”
  
  Neither exceptional nor outside your control.

- “I got stuck on assignment X and was never able to catch up.”
  
  Actually, this *might* qualify, but *only* if you made good use of email and/or my office hours to resolve your problems with that assignment in a timely fashion. Your chances of getting an exception in this case will also depend upon just how many assignments you have remaining to complete. You are far more likely to get a short period of time to complete one assignment than to get any extra time at all to complete 7 assignments.

- "I had trouble completing some assignments and haven’t sent you an email or attended your office hours because I’m not the kind of person who likes to ask for help.
  
  Then you shouldn’t be the kind of person who asks for exceptions either. A significant part of a college-level education is learning to exploit the information resources available to you. Deliberately refusing to do so is not a behavior that I’m inclined to reward.
Requests for an “I” grade or extended time to complete the course should be made before the actual end of the semester, whenever possible. Requests made after grades have been submitted will need to include an explanation of why the request was delayed.

3.5.4 Fourth-Week Grade Report

University regulations require that all instructors of 100 or 200-level courses provide students with an interim grade report by the end of the 4th week of the semester. Obviously, such a report is of questionable utility in a self-paced course like this one.

Students may obtain this report from Leo Online (the same system used to retrieve end-of-semester grades). Students who, by the end of the 4th week of the semester, have completed at least 4 assignments are considered to be “on a pace” to successfully finish the course by the end of the semester.

4 Getting Started

A typical work session for this course starts by entering the course via the course BlackBoard site (linked at the bottom of this page) to check for announcements. Then click on “Modules” to reach the course Outline page.

On the Outline page, you will see the list of topics, with on-line lecture notes, textbook readings, and assignments. You can then begin working through the course material, or pick up from wherever you last left off.

1: Although there are few deadlines associated with CS 252 itself, other CS courses may list CS 252 as a co-requisite, and instructors in those other courses may impose their own deadlines as to when they expect portions of CS 252 to have been completed.

For example, a CS 250 instructor may want to give an assignment on October 15 in which the g++ compiler will be used, and so may inform CS 250 students that they must have completed the CS 252 assignment on “compiling using g++” by October 7.