Queens College of CUNY
Department of Computer Science
Principles of Programming Languages
CSCI 316
(3 credits)
Winter 2026
Instructor: Lawrence Teitelman

Course Overview and Syllabus

Introduction:

Welcome to the Winter 2026 session of "Principles of Programming Languages" (CSCI 316) offered by Queens College's Department of Computer Science. This course is mostly "in-person", meaning that students are generally expected to physically attend and actively participate in the lectures on the Queens College campus. Students must also complete daily assignments and quizzes, and take midterm and final exams on the scheduled dates. Students who cannot meet these expectations will unlikely pass the course and should not remain enrolled in it.

As a winter-session course, we will necessarily adhere to a very aggressive schedule:

- a regular fifteen-week semester condensed into three weeks
- a regular week's worth of lectures condensed into each daily lecture
- a regular week's worth of homework assigned each day

At the same time, this condensed model does offer some pedagogic advantages including

- reduced overhead time each lecture due to the contiguous double-lecture model
- a sense of continuity as we meet five consecutive days a week, instead of just twice a week
- greater focus as students are not juggling as many other courses as in a regular semester
- increased retention toward the final exam; as all material was studied within the previous 21 days

Please carefully read the entire syllabus below, which will also be reviewed during the first lecture. Minor changes to the syllabus, should they be needed, will be announced in class and posted on the "Announcements Page" in our Google drive. (Other than one initial announcement on Brightspace and via CUNYFirst, we will not be using either of those mechanisms as our regular means of notification.)

Official Course Description (per QC Catalog):

Topics include: the procedural, object-oriented, functional, and logic programming paradigms; syntax (BNF, expression grammars, operator precedence and associativity); variables (scope, storage bindings, and lifetime); data types; control structures; function call and return (activation records and parameter passing); formal semantics. Programming assignments.

Course Prerequisites:

- CSCI 220, 240, 313, and 320

Course Objectives:

- experience with a range of programming languages, both new and those previously studied
- distinguish between different types of programming languages
- understand the implementation of language constructs and intelligently decide when and where to use them
- assess runtime cost of these features
- learn the fundamentals of designing languages and building interpreters
- entertain combining / integrating multiple languages to achieve specific objectives

Lectures:

- Dates: January 2-23, 2026
- Days: Monday - Friday
- Times: 1:00 p.m. - 3:50 p.m.
- Mode: In-Person Monday thru Thursday, Remote Friday (except in-person Final Exam)
- Room: SB B145

Zoom:

As stated above, this course is generally "in-person" and students are expected to attend each lecture. However, we will also aim to have Zoom running and the lecture recorded for the following reasons:

- to enable remote participation as officially scheduled on Fridays, and if further needed (e.g. college snowday, instructor / student extenuating circumstances)
- to facilitate class "polling" as an additional method of course engagement
- to allow students to watch or re-watch the recording as necessary (good for review!)
- to facilitate screen-sharing by a student during "class coding"
- to use Zoom's AI feature to generate lecture summaries which are then posted to the Google drive

Below is the connection information. Note that registration on Zoom is required before one can join the session.

- Meeting Id: 854 6720 2729
- Password: 316316
- Registration: link

Please note that the Zoom is being offered on a "best effort" basis and not necessarily a "reliable" one. The instructor and college do not guarantee that the Zoom connection or recording will necessarily be available. It is ultimately the student's responsibility to ensure that he/she has access to the in-person lectures and the material taught therein.

Office Hours:

- Monday - Thursday, 12:00 - 1:00 p.m. (SB B145)

Google Drive:

- We will use a Google drive for various course resources including lecture slides, lecture recordings and summaries, assignments, ons, etc. It is recommended that you bookmark this drive in your web browser.

Text:

- Robert Sebesta, *Concepts of Programming Languages*, 12th edition, Peasron, 2019. ISBN-13: 978-180134997186. Pearson Booksite

Grade Composition:

The course grade is computed as follows:

- Course Engagement (10%)
- Quizzes / Review Questions (15%)
- Programming Assignments (20%)
- Midterm Exam (25%)
- Final Exam (30%)

Additional information about each of these requirements and expectations appear below.

Course Engagement:

- Regular attendance for the entire duration of the lecture
- Class participation
- Serving as "class coder" when volunteers are requested
- Working toward resolution of errors - both one's own and those of other students
- Researching and presenting approaches to solve a problem under discussion
- Sharing course-related resources that benefit the class

Missed classes due to late registration, illness, work / internship, vacations, extracurricular activities, etc. do not count as attendance for the purpose of Course Engagement. For an officially remote class, attendance will be based on a combination of the registration report for that lecture and one or more "polls" through the Zoom platform.

Students who - for one reason or another - are unable to regularly attend lectures and satisfactorily achieve adequate "Course Engagement" have the option to instead count their Midterm and Final Exams as 30% and 35% respectively.

Assignments:

- Students are expected to regularly complete homework assignments - approximately one per lecture
- Programs must be accompanied by the requested output to be graded
- You may work individually or in pairs; however, all students must have a working copy that they run in their environment and produce and explain their own results.
- The submission form for assignments will close at the due date and late assignments will not be accepted.
- However, students may make up any *one* assignment of the student's choice - that was previously either missing or unsatisfactory - during the course without penalty. A separate dropbox will be provided for this makeup opportunity.

Quizzes:

- There will be a quiz associated with each lecture topic
- Quizzes are online, administered through Google forms, and multiple-choice or short-answer format
- The primary goal of the quizzes is to increase course engagement and reenforce understanding of concepts
- Quizzes are open-book, and you are encouraged to use the Internet to research the material in the questions
- The informational survey sent at the beginning of the semester counts as a quiz ("Quiz 0")
- Quizzes are due by 11:59 p.m. on the date indicated. There are no makeups or extensions.

Exams:

- There will be two exams: a Midterm Exam on Tuesday, January 13, and a Final Exam on Friday, January 23.
- The Final Exam will be cumulative, but will emphasize skills and concepts from the latter part of the course.
- The exams will be on campus. You must be physically present and take that exam to pass the course.
- No written resources (books, notes, etc.) or electronic devices (phones, calculators, computers, smart-watches, etc.) may be used during the exam. Using them is cheating and will be dealt with accordingly.
- Detailed information about the structure of our particular exams will also be provided.
- Exams may include information from the lectures, review quizzes, programming assignments, and will recognize those who have completed their coursework in earnest.

Grades:

- Passing grades for this course that count toward the Computer Science major range from **C** to **A+**.
- **F** is assigned to those who fail the course.
- **WN** is assigned to students who missed the first few lectures. This grade cannot be reversed.
- **WU** is assigned to students who do not show up for the final exam
- **INC** is assigned to students in the rare event of a documented medical emergency at the time of the final, for students who were otherwise performing satisfactorily in the course. It will be the responsibility of the student to (a) notify the instructor, (b) provide sufficient documentation, (c) make arrangements with the department to take the replacement exam during the regular semester, and (d) request of this instructor to update the INC to a regular letter grade.

Please note that in the instructor's 30+ years teaching at Queens College, he has only changed grades a handful of times, and those were due to computational errors on his part. You should assume that the grade that you earn - the grade that you are assigned - is the grade that will stay.

Academic Support:

Queens College "Learning Commons" offers various forms of academic support to its students. For more information, visit https://www.qc.cuny.edu/academics/qclc/

Special Services:

Students with special needs requiring academic accommodation should: 1) register with and provide documentation to the Special Services Office, Frese Hall, Room 111; 2) bring a letter indicating the need for accommodation and what type. This should be done during the first week of class. For more information about special services available to Queens College students, visit https://www.qc.cuny.edu/sp/, email them at QC.SPSV@qc.cuny.edu. or contact the Special Service Office; Director, Dr. Mirian Detres-Hickey, Kiely Hall, Room 108; 718-997-5870, Monday to Thursday, 8:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m.; Friday, 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.; and Saturday, 9:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m.

Academic Integrity Policy:

Academic Dishonesty is prohibited at CUNY and Queens College and is subject to penalties including failing grades, suspension, and expulsion as provided in the CUNY Integrity Policy. Please read this document, paying careful attention to the sections on regular and Internet plagiarism. If you are not sure how to cite work you have found on the internet, please review the APA Guidelines provided by the Purdue OWL.

Submission of someone else's work - wholly or partially - as your own, whether taken from another student, a third party, a text, an online resource, or any other source not explicitly permitted on the assignment or test will be regarded as plagiarism and cheating and dealt with accordingly. Instances of cheating (suspected or confirmed) will be reported to the Department and penalties may include a score of zero on that assessment, failure or reduction of one's overall final grade in the course, or other disciplinary action as deemed appropriate by the Department or College

Schedule of Lectures and Exams:

This is a tentative schedule. Actual coverage of the topics may vary according to our progress through the material.

No.	Date	Topic	Text Chapters
1.	Fri. Jan. 2*	Course Overview. Intro. to Programming Languages	1
2.	Mon. Jan. 5	Evolution of the Major Programming Languages	2
3.	Tues. Jan. 6	Describing Syntax and Semantics	3
4.	Wed. Jan. 7	Lexical and Syntax Analysis	4
5.	Thu. Jan. 8	Names, Binding, and Scopes	5
6.	Fri. Jan. 9*	Data Types	6
7.	Mon. Jan. 12	Expressions and Assignment Statements	7
8.	Tue. Jan. 13	**MIDTERM EXAM**	
9.	Wed. Jan. 14	Statement-Level Control Structures	8
10.	Thu. Jan. 15	Subprograms: Design and Implementation	9-10
11.	Fri. Jan. 16*	Abstract Data Types and Object-Oriented Programming	11-12
12.	Mon. Jan. 19**	Concurrency and Event Handling *MLK Jr. Day - officially no classes; remote makeup date for January 21*	13-14
13.	Tue. Jan. 16	Functional Programming Languages	15
	Wed, Jan. 21	*No class due to instructor personal conflict - Makeup on Jan. 19*	
14.	Thu. Jan. 22	Logic Programming Languages	16
15.	Fri. Jan. 23	**FINAL EXAM**	

* Remote Lecture, attendance will be taken
** As many students cannot be present even remotely on this makeup date, attendance will not be taken