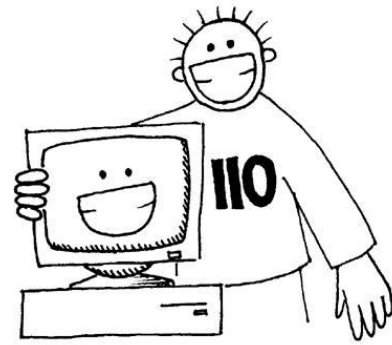


# COSC110

## course outline

Computer Studies – Course Outline for 2012



Course supervisor: *Ray Hunt*

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All information for COSC110 (including this document) will be available from the COSC110 Learn site, located at

<http://learn.canterbury.ac.nz>

You should regularly refer to this site for updated information, copies of course handouts, due dates, and discussions about course topics.

### Who is this course for?

This course assumes that you already have a basic idea of how to use computers for everyday applications, but would like to find out more about what's really going on in this digital world that we live in, and how to improve your efficiency and effectiveness using digital tools. We'll look at things like what makes a good and bad interface, what can cause computers to run slowly, and what sort of threats you should worry about (and not worry about). It is recommended whether or not you're majoring in Computer Science, as it provides a general background that all computer users will benefit from, and will give insights about the users' experience to those who are likely to be designing new computer systems.

COSC110 is intended to help both digital natives (people who grew up with a computer in the home) and digital immigrants (new users) make sense of the digital world we live in. Natives, who have grown up with computer technologies, are probably used to accepting them too uncritically, while immigrants may be wary of adopting new software or gadgets because they feel that the anticipated cost of learning their use will outweigh any benefits.

In this course we will help you to better understand the digital devices you use every day and show you how to work more efficiently and effectively with computers and computer-based devices. We will also examine the effect digital technologies have on society and individuals, including new risks and new ethical issues.

In lectures we will look at the world of computing in general: how to assess "usability", how digital devices can make people more or less productive, what aspects of devices make one a better product than another, and some of the problems that computers have caused. Laboratory exercises will be used to give concrete examples of the general principles we discuss during lectures. There you will learn how to use personal computers efficiently and effectively.

### Will I learn how to program?

*No* programming will be taught in this course. If you wish to learn programming, you should enroll in COSC121, which is an advancing Computer Science course teaching Python programming.






You must, however, be aware that COSC110 is a university level course and you *will* be expected to be self-motivated and able to analyze and think critically about relevant issues.

### What is this course trying to teach?

The goal of the course is that students will be able to work efficiently and effectively in our digital world. The emphasis is not so much on how to use existing technologies, but to evaluate whatever new technology they may encounter, and be discerning when using digital technology in their work so that their use of technology is both efficient and effective; this may include choosing *not* to use a technology

if it has a negative impact, whether on efficiency, effectiveness, or in terms of ethical or societal implications.

## Who teaches and tutors this course?

	<p><b>Associate Professor Ray Hunt</b></p> <p>Ray is the course supervisor.</p> <p><a href="mailto:Ray.hunt@canterbury.ac.nz">Ray.hunt@canterbury.ac.nz</a>, Room 314</p>
	<p><b>Associate Professor Tim Bell</b></p> <p><a href="mailto:tim.bell@canterbury.ac.nz">tim.bell@canterbury.ac.nz</a>, Room 303</p>
	<p><b>Dong Seong Kim</b></p> <p><a href="mailto:dongseong.kim@canterbury.ac.nz">dongseong.kim@canterbury.ac.nz</a>, Room 304</p>
	<p><b>Yalini Sundralingam (Senior tutor)</b></p> <p>Yalini is the main contact for COSC110 enquiries, although your lab tutor (during lab sessions) should be your <i>first</i> point of enquiry.</p> <p><a href="mailto:yalini.sundralingam@canterbury.ac.nz">yalini.sundralingam@canterbury.ac.nz</a>, Room 322</p>
	<p><b>Amali Weerasinghe (Senior tutor)</b></p> <p>Amali is another contact for COSC110 enquires.</p> <p><a href="mailto:amali.weerasinghe@canterbury.ac.nz">amali.weerasinghe@canterbury.ac.nz</a>, Room 321</p>
	<p><b>Phil Holland</b></p> <p>Phil is the lab technician for the course. He looks after lab equipment, lab test extensions due to medical reasons, and lab test re-sits.</p> <p><a href="mailto:phil.holland@canterbury.ac.nz">phil.holland@canterbury.ac.nz</a>, Room 112</p>

In addition, there will be a number of student tutors whose photos and contact details are available on the department's web pages.

## Textbooks

The recommended main text for this course is *Digital Planet: Tomorrow's Technology and You*, by Beekman and Beekman (tenth edition). It is available from the University Bookshop (for \$135 before the 10% student discount).

The COSC110 Laboratory book will be available online (no cost).

We will also make use of Internet sites with relevant material, such as [howstuffworks.com](http://howstuffworks.com) and [wikipedia.org](http://wikipedia.org). References to these sites will be given throughout the course, but you should also use them when you need more detailed explanations of terms used in the course.

Additional notes and documentation will be handed out during lectures. Electronic copies will be available on the COSC110 Learn site. Note that this material is not all available from the library, since using the Learn system will be part of your COSC110 learning experience! The main textbook will of course be available in both the Main (Hight) Library.

## Assessment

- Mid-semester test: 20% of final grade, end of term 1, one hour on-line test.

This test will cover lecture material up to the week before the test.

- Exam: 55% of final grade, date to be announced, two hour closed book.

This exam will cover the whole semester's work (including that covered in the mid-semester test), but will primarily focus on material covered in lectures in the latter part of the course.

- Laboratory work: 25% of final grade.

The laboratory work is assessed in labs as the course progresses. See below for more details.

- Practice assessment will be available through the Peerwise system ([http://peerwise.cs.auckland.ac.nz/at/?canterbury\\_nz](http://peerwise.cs.auckland.ac.nz/at/?canterbury_nz)).

Details will be available on Learn at the start of term1.

## Grading Policy

The Computer Science department has the following grading policy. In order to pass a course you must meet two requirements:

- The university has adopted a common scale for converting marks to grades. According to this scale, an average mark of 50% is sufficient to pass the course (i.e. to achieve a C-), with an average mark of 55% a C grade is achieved and so forth. We apply this conversion scale to the average marks students achieve over all assessment items.
- You must achieve an average mark of at least 45% on invigilated assessment items. As nearly all the assesment items are invigilated for COSC110, this requirement rarely becomes an issue.  
Marks are sometimes scaled to achieve consistency between courses from year to year.

## Other important information

There are several important documents available online about departmental regulations, policies and guidelines at the following site. We expect all students to be familiar with these.

<http://www.cosc.canterbury.ac.nz/policy/>

Notices about this class will be posted to the class forum in the Learn system ([learn.canterbury.ac.nz](http://learn.canterbury.ac.nz)). COSC students will also be made members of a class called "CSSE Notices", where general notices will be posted that apply to all classes (such as information about building access or job opportunities).

## Lectures

There is just one lecture stream, with two lectures per week. Please check the course information page (CIS) for the scheduled times and the location.

## Course Topics

The following table tentatively lists topics that we are likely to cover, although the schedule won't be adhered to strictly. Chapter references relate to the recommended text (Beekman and Beekman, 10th edition); more detailed page references will be given in class.

Lecture	Topic	
1	Human-Computer Interaction	Lab book (introduction)
2	Document processing (1)	Chapter 5
3	Big words for simple ideas: Inside the box	Chapter 2
4	Introduction to Hardware	Chapter 3
5	Introduction to Software	Chapter 4
6	Graphics & multimedia	Chapter 6
7	Social networking	Chapter 8
8	New Media	
9	Spreadsheets	Chapter 5
10	Presentation tools & techniques	Chapter 6
11	Document Processing (2)	Chapter 5
12	HTML and Web publishing	
13	Information seeking	
14	Networks	Chapter 8
15	Internet	Chapter 9
16	Databases	Chapter 7
17	Ethics 1	Chapter 10
18	Ethics 2	Chapter 10
19	Recent developments Digital Technology	
20	Computers in the future	
21	Revision	

## Laboratories

COSC110 *laboratories* will be on Level 1 (the ground floor) of the Erskine building. Details will be available on Learn at the start of term1.

Your first lab will start in the second week of lectures, i.e. the week which begins on the 27<sup>th</sup> of February. Lab allocations will be organised in the first week of term1.

## Computing Equipment

The practical part of this course uses personal computers (Windows PCs), which are available in the COSC110 computer laboratory on level 1 of the Erskine building. You will be shown where this equipment is located within the laboratory, and will be allocated two hours per week of tutor-assisted lab work. Your student card will provide access for some after-hours work in this lab.

Note that outside of lab times the Computer Science Department's computers may only be used for assigned course work!

The ICT Services department (ICTS) makes PCs available in various workrooms around campus. Most of these facilities are available 24 hours per day, although some of the workrooms can be booked for classes and access may be limited at certain times. Further information can be found at:

<http://www.icts.canterbury.ac.nz>

## Laboratory Schedules

There are two hours of scheduled laboratory work (sometimes referred to as *tutorials*) per week. They are designed to complement lectures by giving you very practical tuition on the use of selected computer software. During laboratory sessions you will work through a series of topics at your own pace. A tutor will be available to help you, should you get stuck.

Initially you will work on some general topics (word processing, spreadsheets and presentations). In addition there are three *extension* topics you can choose from a list of options. There is one lab test for the word processing and spreadsheet topics, and you will present your work individually to your tutor for the presentation and extension topics.

Completing a topic involves mastering the material and gaining some practice in applying it. It is strongly advised that you present your work to a tutor for checking once you complete each of the topics. Topic checking can be done only in your own lab time during the allocated period. This will record that you have achieved the topic's goals and will become part of your record of progress. Such information may later be useful for aegrotats and marking of borderline cases.

It is *very important* that you complete these and not invite failure by presenting yourself for the lab test without having completed as many as possible.

You will be allowed to present a maximum of *two* extension topics to be checked per week, so don't leave them all to the end.

The lab test is in the third week of term 2, during your normal lab time. This test is practical and notes are allowed. You will be given a series of tasks to perform, using skills you should have acquired while learning the topic. Time for these tasks will be limited and your mark will depend on the number of tasks you manage to complete.

Refer to the general course regulations at the end of this handout for policies regarding re-sits of the lab test.

Note that you should carefully monitor your progress through the topics. Do not leave work until the last moment. There are many students competing for available computer resources, and there will also be times (especially near the end of topics) when tutors will become very busy. Although you should make good use of your allocated COSC lab time, you may also wish to take advantage of any of the central ICTS labs around the University.

Note that all testing finishes on the last day of lectures in term 2. If you are forced to miss the lab test due to illness etc. you should consult *Phil Holland* (room 112) about catching up. A doctor's certificate or relevant documentation will be required in *all* cases.

The main dates for the topics are:

Topics	Date	Marks
Word processing, spreadsheets	Feb 27 to May 4	
Lab test on the above	May 7 to 11	15%
Presentations (Power Point)	Any time to June 1, but	2.5%

Topics	Date	Marks
	should be possible to complete by May 4	
Extension topics (3 topics)	May 14 to June 1	7.5%

## Extension Topics

The following list is indicative of the *extension* topics from which students must choose three. A final list will be published nearer the time.

- Advanced word processing topics
- HTML authoring
- Advanced spreadsheets
- Database design
- Programming in Visual Basic.

## General Course Regulations

All general rules regarding university courses also apply to COSC110. Additionally:

1. COSC110 cannot be split over two or more years; e.g. lab work in one year and the exam in another.
2. Checking of topics can only be done during your allocated lab time. During an allocated period you can ask that a maximum of two topics be checked per week.
3. The lab test must be carried out at the scheduled time during your allocated lab slot. At least one week before the test, test times will be posted on the COSC110 notice board. On the day of the test it is your responsibility to ensure that you arrive at the lab slightly earlier than scheduled, so that you can sit your test on time.
4. You will be required to present your student id before you are allowed to sit a test.
5. Resits: If, after your lab test, you feel that you have made a serious mistake that will have a major impact on your mark (such as deleting all of your work :), you may re-sit the test with different material. Note that you are only allowed one re-sit, that there will be a 25% penalty on the maximum mark, and that the second mark (i.e. the one from the re-sit) will be the one you will get.

The re-sit must be carried out within one working day of your lab test. See Phil Holland (lab supervisor) regarding such re-sits.

6. Absence from a lab test for medical and other reasons: In the case of a short term illness, where you cannot sit a test or topic, do not go to the registry and apply for an aegrotat. Instead see Yalini or Phil and present them with a medical certificate within two working days of the test you have missed. We will then reschedule the test without penalty. In other cases you should telephone the lab supervisor (Phil Holland) prior to the scheduled test time, and then follow up with a medical certificate as soon as you are able.

Only in very exceptional cases will consideration be given to students who make contact after the time of their test. We do not accept aegrotat applications for lab work, but instead reschedule tests to a suitable time.

7. Alteration of test times: If you have a good reason (apart from illness) to change your test time (only within the specified week), we will permit this with a 10% of the maximum test mark penalty.

In all cases this change must be made prior to the scheduled test time. No changes will be possible after this time.