

## Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

### IS 115

#### **WARNING: Computer Programming CAN be time-consuming. Users Beware!**

**QUESTION:** Are there tutors available for this course?

**ANSWER:** YES. The best way to get a tutor for this course is to visit: <http://www.csn.edu/pages/1902.asp> They have all the information and phone numbers to call. PLEASE do not wait till it's too late to get tutoring help.

**QUESTION:** Which computer platform can I use for the course? What Internet browser can I use for the course?

**ANSWER:** You can use an IBM-compatible PCs running the Windows Operating system. You can also use a Mac for this course. Other operating systems such as Linux and Unix can also be used. The key is to download and install the correct version of the JDK for your platform. Angel only supports the Internet Explorer 7 and above. You can use the other Internet browsers at your own risk!

**QUESTION:** What is my grade based on?

**ANSWER:** Your grade is based on the exams and quizzes you take online, and your assignments. It is **HIGHLY RECOMMENDED** that you do the exercises in the book and participate in the online class discussions, if you seek to LEARN!

**QUESTION:** Do I have to follow any online attendance policies?

**ANSWER:** YES. You must post to a discussion thread at least 4 times a week on 4 different days to meet the attendance requirement. This must be done every week from the beginning to the end of the semester. Your grade will fall one letter grade if you do not adhere to this attendance policy. So, if you login on Monday and post 4 messages, you will not have met the attendance requirement.

**QUESTION:** Do I have to participate in any online discussions?

**ANSWER:** YES. However, your grade is not based on your class participation.

**QUESTION:** I think that I should not be responsible for CSN's computer problems. So, if the Angel site goes down while I am taking a test, will I be able to retake the test?

**ANSWER:** If the Angel system goes down while you are taking a test, you will be given another opportunity to retake the test. However, if you have any computer related problems that are NOT the fault of CSN, no extension will be granted. How will I know whose system is at fault? Well, Angel records all of your entries along with the exact time in which you made them. CSN records all instances of Angel outages. If an outage occurs while you are taking a test, I will know. If CSN was up and running and you experience computer-related troubles, the troubles must reside with you and/or your computer.

**QUESTION:** Do I need any software installed on my personal computer to do my work?

**ANSWER:** You could do all your work at any CSN computer lab. Java is installed on most lab computers. However, if you want to do the work at your own computer, you will need Java installed and configured on your machine. Java is available as a free download as specified in your syllabus and I will have more information in the online class material.

**QUESTION:** I'm a very busy person. I have eight bratty kids, two full time jobs, a car that runs only on alternate weekdays, and a live-in mother-in-law. I don't have time to read. What specific pages should I read?

**ANSWER:** Some students skip many pages of the book, refusing to read and study each page. They want to take a shortcut. Really, I'm not kidding! They really do! After taking a test or two, these folks are surprised and bewildered to see how LOW their test scores are and eventually they are totally perplexed at the dismal grade they earned. After years of teaching programming classes, I have discovered the following two facts: Students who read and study the book and who do all the programming exercises until they thoroughly understand the material covered do very, very, very well in this class. Students who take shortcuts tend to do poorly in this class.

**QUESTION:** Why does my Grade report show that I have an "F" for the class when I haven't completed anything yet?

**ANSWER:** Angel calculates each student's grade based on the number of points each student has earned. If you now have 0 points, you now have . . . . an "F". As you complete work, your points will be recorded and once you've earned enough points to earn a "D", Angel will show that. Once you've earned enough points to earn a "C", Angel will show that, etc. At any given point, Angel is simply providing the grade you will earn if you don't do any additional work.

**QUESTION:** When I'm in a class and ask a question, I get an instantaneous answer. If I ask a question in this online class, when should I expect to receive a response?

**ANSWER:** I will read my Angel mail at least twice a day (once in the morning and once in the evening). Most days I will check it more than that. Therefore, you should expect prompt, but not instantaneous, responses from me. I can also be reached via phone. Please call me and leave a message so I can call you back. Some students have found that making a phone call to me makes their programming lives much easier.

**QUESTION:** Can I practice taking a test to see how the test is arranged and to get used to timing constraints?

**ANSWER:** Yes. There is a quiz on the course syllabus that is meant to help you review the syllabus and shows you the format of the online exams. I will open this so you can take it as many times as you want. This test is worth 10 points and I will record your highest grade across all your attempts.

**QUESTION:** The syllabus states that I need a copy of the newest edition of our textbook. But, I have a copy of an older edition. Do I need to buy a copy of the newest edition?

**ANSWER:** Nope. Some of the exercises are different, but most of it is the same. Some of the material may be in different order. Some of the homework assignments are based on questions from the newest edition. So, my page numbers stated in an assignment file may not be the same across the two versions. PLEASE call me or e-mail me and I will be glad to help you decipher page numbers across different versions.

**QUESTION:** Do I have to follow the schedule outlined in the syllabus and in the Angel calendar?

**ANSWER:** No. You may work at your own pace. All exams and quizzes will be available within pre-specified time periods as outlined in Angel. All homework assignments have specific due dates.

**QUESTION:** How do I know how long I have for each test? How do I know how many questions each test will have?

**ANSWER:** The length of each test and quiz varies and will be stated in the discussion forum. The Angel system will let you know exactly how many minutes is allotted for each exam. The numbers of questions vary with each exam. I can assure you that the allotted time is more than sufficient for each exam.

**QUESTION:** What if I really goof up and forget to take a test or cannot meet the deadline for an assignment. Is this instructor flexible enough to work with me?

**ANSWER:** YES, depending on the situation. Normally, you CANNOT make up a missed exam, but I will work with you with missed assignments. My primary goal is for you to SUCCEED. So, e-mail me or call me if you have problems meeting a deadline or if you missed a quiz, or if you have any difficulties completing your tasks. As long as you don't abuse me, I will not abuse you. There is nothing wrong with ASKING if you feel like you should.

**QUESTION:** What if I think that my answer to a question on an exam or homework is correct, but the instructor deducted points anyways. Can I send an e-mail to the instructor asking him to take re-examine my grade?

**ANSWER:** By all MEANS. Please let me know as soon as possible via an e-mail message, and I will take care of any issues.

**QUESTION:** I travel a lot, will this instructor let me turn in assignments early and take my quizzes and exams earlier than the rest of the class? Is he willing to work with me not to fall behind because of changes to my schedule?

**ANSWER:** By all MEANS. I'll be more than happy to work with you. I do NOT want you to lose a job or an opportunity because of this class's work. As I said before, as long as you don't abuse the policy, all should be fine.

**QUESTION:** What if I have fallen behind and feel that I cannot continue with the class and cannot get a good grade? Can I wait till the end of the semester to withdraw from this course?

**ANSWER:** YES. You can always wait till the last day of this class and withdraw from it if you don't like the grade you get. So, if you have concerns about your grade, I suggest that you wait till the end of the semester and see if you like your grade. If not, I will withdraw you from the class and this will not affect your GPA.

On the last days of the semester, you will have to e-mail me and let me know what the grade that you can live with is. For example, the following might be an e-mail message:

Withdraw me from this course if my grade is below C. So, when I calculate your overall grade and you have an A, B, or C, I will ignore your message and will give you your earned grade of A, B, or C. If your overall grade is D, I will withdraw you from the class, thus not affecting your GPA. This should put your mind at ease about your grade and allow you to concentrate on the learning part.

Please note that your other instructors may not have a similar policy, so please do not bug them to do the same thing. This is also NOT the official college policy. As you may have seen in the course schedule, the College has strict withdrawal dates. However, I have decided to have my own withdrawal policy.