JMC 102: Coding for Journalists
MCO 102: Topic: Fundamentals of Coding

Course and Faculty Information

Course Description: This course is required of all students entering the Cronkite School as journalism or sports journalism majors and is also available to other students. Understanding how the internet works, how to create basic web pages, and the basics of programming will give students a significant advantage in the digital world of journalism and communications today. You do not need any previous knowledge of any of the topics to be covered, but we do expect you to have basic knowledge of how to use a web browser and navigate the web.

Credits: 1

Instructor:

Roddy Nikpour
Faculty Associate, Cronkite MMC Graduate, Public Radio Producer
Walter Cronkite School of Journalism and Mass Communication
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Need Help?

This is an online course, and students are free to work on each module at their own pace with no required classroom attendance. However, help is available whenever you need it.

- For questions about **grades, enrollment or personal issues**, email the instructor, Roddy Nikpour.
- For questions about **assignments, quizzes, and the final exam**, we strongly encourage students to use the weekly discussion boards, which the instructor checks regularly. We encourage you to respond your classmates' questions--you will receive extra credit for doing so. This is often the fastest route to help.
- For **specific questions and extended tutoring,** students can also contact the instructor directly by email. I am always available to arrange online tutorial sessions via video chat as necessary.
- For **technical issues**, please reach out to ASU Tech Support by calling 855-278-5080. Be sure to record your case number. Remember, it is your responsibility to make sure you start assignments early enough to be able to address any technical issues before the deadline. If a technical problem arises, contact tech support immediately.

Course Learning Outcomes

At the completion of this course, students will be able to:

- Demonstrate basic knowledge of how web pages are delivered over the internet
- Demonstrate basic knowledge of how internet users are tracked
- Create a basic web page by hand using HTML, CSS and simple JavaScript

Textbooks

There is no textbook required for this class. All learning materials are contained in modules on Canvas.

Course Access

You can access your ASU courses
via canvas.asu.edu, my.asu.edu, and myasucourses.asu.edu.

Canvas how-to guide: If you have a question about how to complete a task in Canvas, try searching the Canvas Student Guide for instructions here:
https://community.canvaslms.com/docs/DOC-10701 (Links to an external site.)Links to an external site.

Computer Requirements

This course is fully online. Students must have reliable access to a computer with a modern web browser and internet access fast enough to watch videos online. **Students can choose between two required browsers: Chrome or Firefox.** Please download one of them if you haven't already.

Note: A smartphone, iPad, Chromebook, etc. will not be sufficient for completing your work in ASU Online courses. While you will be able to access course content with mobile devices, you must use a computer for all assignments, quizzes, and virtual labs.

Student Success

To be successful:

- Check the course daily
- Read announcements
- Read and respond to course email messages as needed
- Complete assignments by the due dates specified
- Communicate regularly with your instructor and peers
- Create a schedule to stay on track with studying and completing assignments
- As needed, access ASU Online Student Resources

Course Time Commitment

This one-credit course requires approximately six hours of work for each module to prepare and complete assignments and quizzes. Questions on quizzes and assignments will come directly from the readings and activities presented. Read all assigned material and take your time going through the activities.

Classwork

The course is divided into seven modules.

For each module, students must read the learning materials then complete the module's quiz and assignment.

Students must submit all module assignments and complete all quizzes in the designated areas in Canvas. The quizzes are "open book" and not timed. Students can turn in quizzes and assignments multiple times. We will accept the best quiz grade, and we will grade the latest assignment submission.

During the final (seventh) module, there isn't a quiz, and the only assignment will be a final project that will cover key learning objectives for the course.

Quizzes and assignments are to be completed individually. We grade assignments by looking at your source code, and it is apparent when students copy one another. Any sharing of answers on quizzes or completing work on assignments not your own is a violation of the Cronkite Academic Integrity Policy and grounds for an XE in the course and dismissal from the Cronkite School. (Please see Academic Integrity below.)

The Cronkite School has a very strict deadline policy. Assignments or quizzes submitted even one minute late will not be accepted. They will receive a zero. There are no exceptions for technical difficulties of any kind, so students are advised not to wait until the last minute to submit their work.

If you are student on active duty with the military and, because of deployment or service responsibilities, experience internet connectivity issues that prevent you from participating in course activities or meeting assignment deadlines, you must notify the instructor as soon as possible to discuss appropriate accommodations.

Grading

Your grade for the course comes from assignments, quizzes and a final project submitted via Canvas. The breakdown for each module’s grades is as follows:

50% Quizzes
30% Assignments
20% Final Project

Assignments will be graded on a 10-point scale, which will vary by assignment, but it generally goes as follows:

0 – Assignment not turned in or turned in late
1-4 – Assignment turned in, but has little or no functionality, few or no instructions completed
5-8 – Assignment has partial functionality, instructions partially completed
9-10 – Assignment mainly functions as directed, all or most instructions completed

As this course is taught through the Cronkite School of Journalism, grammar and spelling are crucial. In assignments where you create your own content, **any glaring errors will be graded down one letter grade.**

Your grade will be determined based on the following grading schema:

Grade	**Percentage**
A+	97 - 100%
A	94 - 96%
A-	90 - 93%
B+	87 - 89%
B	84 - 86%
B-	80 - 83%
C+	76 - 79%
C	70 - 75%
D	60 - 69%
E	< 60%

Rounding Grades: Final grades will not be rounded up.

Extra Credit: Students can earn extra credit by answering questions from their classmates on the discussion board. Extra credit is capped at 3 percent of the final grade.

Academic Integrity: The Cronkite School has a zero-tolerance policy toward academic dishonesty that is enforced within every course and educational activity offered or sanctioned by the school. Any allegation of academic dishonesty will be referred to the school's Standards Committee for review and recommendation to the dean of the school. If any student is found to have engaged in academic dishonesty in any form – including but not limited to cheating, plagiarizing, and fabricating – that student shall

receive a grade of XE for the class and will be dismissed from the school. There will be no exceptions.

In Module 0, you will find a copy of the full academic integrity policy, along with accompanying information on plagiarism. You must sign a pledge that indicates you have read and understood the material and agree to abide by the policy. This signed pledge must be uploaded through the Academic Integrity Policy assignment before you can access the rest of the course content.

The policy, along with guidance on how to avoid plagiarism and fabrication, can be found at http://cronkite.asu.edu/assets/pdf/Academic_Integrity_Policy.pdf

Collaborations: All assignments must be your own work from concept to execution unless the instructor specifies some type of collaboration. Even in those cases where you are assigned to a team, not all elements of the assignment may be team-based. For instance, the assignment may call for a team discussion of a topic, but a writing assignment based on the discussion must be your individual work.

Use of Outside Work: All work, including photos, text, video and other images, submitted for this class must be original work. You may not submit work done for any other class.

Topics Covered

The following is an overview of topics to be covered throughout the seven-module course.

Module 1: Internet Basics

This module will provide a basic technical introduction to how the internet works. Most of us are reliant on (or addicted to) our web pages and apps, yet few have a working knowledge of how they function. A single click on a web link fires multiple requests to different servers around the world, with each requesting and bringing different resources back to the browser. We are also watched by a wide variety of advertisers and marketers while we are online, yet many of us have only a vague idea of how this is accomplished.

Topics covered:

- Open-source versus proprietary software
- What does the "http://" mean in front of a domain name?
- What actually happens when you enter a URL and press enter?
- How many http requests does it take to complete a modern web page?
- How web content is delivered
- How to examine the "guts" of a website

Module 2: Adding to the Internet

In the second module, students will build on what they've learned about how the internet works by participating in it themselves. They will develop a simple web page from a template and upload it to a web account. They will then add an image, as well as embed a third-party service such as a Google map or Twitter feed.

Topics covered:

- Online user tracking
- How ad blockers work
- Business models of major internet and technology companies
- How to create and post a bare bones web page from scratch
- How online URLs correspond to the file system of a web server
- "Hot-linking" images
- How to embed services from third-party websites

Module 3: HTML

Having covered the basics of how the internet works and how to upload pages, students will progress to creating more advanced web pages. Specifically, they will learn how to use HTML tags to create and modify basic web pages by hand.

Topics covered:

- How HTML tags work
- Text tags (paragraphs, line breaks, bold, italics)
- Title tags
- Headline tags
- Image tags (“hot-linking” vs. uploading images)
- Linking and link tags
- List tags
- Nesting tags
- Tag attributes

Module 4: CSS

At this point, students should know how to create and upload basic (but functional) HTML pages. In this module, they learn how to give their pages some sass. They will be introduced to CSS, a simple scripting language that works with HTML to add color and style to pages.

Topics covered:

- The basic concepts behind CSS and "cascading"
- CSS predefined colors
- Using HTML "RGB" colors (#RRGGBB format)
- Styling web pages (background color, font color, etc.)
- Styling specific tags
- Styling using classes and ids

Module 5: Introduction to Programming and JavaScript

Students will be introduced to the basic concepts of programming. The lesson begins with an overview of what a programming language is and how it interacts with other software and hardware. Students will then learn a few very basics of programming using the JavaScript language.

Topics covered:

- Program flow
- Variables (numbers and strings)
- If/then statements

Module 6: Putting It All Together

In this module, students will apply what they have learned about JavaScript and programming to web pages. They will learn the basics of using JavaScript to interact with other elements on web pages, adding interactivity to web pages.

Topics covered:

- The script tag and how to include JavaScript in web pages
- JavaScript functions and how to connect them to buttons and other HTML elements
- Default variables in web pages
- How to include popular JavaScript libraries

Module 7: Final Project

In the final module, students will apply what they have learned in a "real life" setting. They will create a website using a template, using the skills they have learned to personalize it and add custom content. There is no quiz for this module in order to give students more time to focus on the assignment.

Submitting Assignments

All assignments, unless otherwise announced, must be submitted to the designated area of Canvas. Do not submit an assignment via email.

Assignment due dates follow Arizona Standard time. Click the following link to access the Time Converter (Links to an external site.)Links to an external site. to ensure you account for the difference in Time Zones. Note: Arizona does not observe daylight savings time.

Grading Procedure

Grades reflect your performance on assignments and adherence to deadlines. We aim to have everyone's grades returned within 72 hours of the due date.

Late or Missed Assignments

The Cronkite School has a very strict deadline policy. Assignments submitted even one minute late will not be accepted. They will receive a zero. There are no exceptions for technical difficulties of any kind.

Students must submit all assignments to the designated area of Canvas unless otherwise announced. Do not submit an assignment via email. Notify the instructor before an assignment is due if an urgent situation arises and you cannot submit the assignment on time.

Follow the appropriate University policies to request an accommodation for religious practices or to accommodate a missed assignment due to University-sanctioned activities.

Communicating With the Instructor

Assistance for quizzes, assignments, and other course-related issues is available as described in the "Need Help?" section above.

If you have a personal concern to discuss, please email the instructor, Roddy Nikpour, directly. We can handle most concerns via email. If a “virtual” meeting is necessary, we can schedule a video chat session or phone call. You can expect a response within 24 hours (and often much sooner).

Community Forum

This course uses a discussion topic called "Community Forum" for general questions and comments about the course. Prior to posting a question or comment, check the syllabus, announcements, and existing posts to ensure it's not redundant. We encourage you to respond to the questions of your classmates.

Chat

The Chat tool in Canvas allows students and teachers to interact in real time. Use Chat only for informal course-related conversations unless your instructor informs you otherwise. Chat is not ideal for questions about assignments; instructors are not required to monitor it and conversations may be buried or lost.

Email

ASU email is an official means of communication among students, faculty, and staff. Students are expected to read and act upon email in a timely fashion. Students bear the responsibility of missed messages and should check their ASU-assigned email regularly.

All instructor correspondence will be sent to your ASU email account.

ASU Online Course Policies

View the ASU Online Course Policies here.

Accessibility Statements

View the ASU Online Student Accessibility page to review accessibility statements for common tools and resources used in ASU Online courses.

If any other tools are used in this course, links to the accessibility statements will be listed below this sentence.

Syllabus Disclaimer

The syllabus is a statement of intent and serves as an implicit agreement between the instructor and the student. We will make every effort to avoid changing the course schedule, but the possibility exists that unforeseen events will make syllabus changes necessary. Remember to check your ASU email and the course site often.