Course Syllabus - Information and Policies

S.1 Course Description and Prerequisite

CS 49 is an introduction to computer programming using the Python language. Absolute beginners or students already familiar with other programming languages will learn how to write Python programs that cover a wide range of applications. The ability to work with computers and access to the Internet are the only prerequisites. For success, however, you will also need both a desire to learn and a positive attitude.

A working facility with simple algebra as well as good written English comprehension skills are both strong advisories.

S.2 Instructor

I am Allie Xiong. Typically, you will ask questions through the Canvas public discussion forum or inbox. Only use email if you have trouble logging in. You can email me at xiongallie@fhda.edu

S.3 Text and References

All of the important concepts will be covered in my modules. The text for the course is *recommended*, not required. It is E-book
Think Python – *August 23, 2012* by Allen B. Downey
http://www.greenteapress.com/thinkpython/

S.4 Required Software

We will mostly use (free) open source. In this class we will be using Python IDLE from Python.org. If you are facile on another Integrated Development Environment (IDE), you are welcome to

use that, instead. However, my assistance in the forums regarding software specifics will be limited to Python IDLE.

S.5 Communication

Public Forums

Besides raising your questions in class, you can post questions and comments to the **Discussions Tool (DT),** which you can reach by clicking on **Discussions** on the left menu. I will usually reply the online questions within 24 hours. It may take longer during weekends. Unless a question is of a private nature (i.e. grades, registration issues), please use the public **Discussions**. Also feel free to answer your fellow student questions, even if you only have a guess as to what the answer is. It's great to engage in conversation with each other in this manner.

If you have a new topic, please start a new discussion. If you want to add to or ask about an existing topic, "***Post a Reply***" to that discussion.

STEM Tutorial Center

If the online forums here are not enough, please visit the STEM Center page, and click **Schedule and Available Instructors**. These people are qualified to help you with assignments or modules without giving you an answer that will short-circuit your discovery process. Let them know that you are not to receive actual assignment solution code or even fragments. They probably know this already, but it's your responsibility to avoid submitting something that was written by a tutor or another person.

Private Messages

Please use *public* **Discussions** for any question or comment that relates to the class. If you have a confidential question (grades or registration) use the **Private Message Tool (PMT)** by first clicking

on **DT** at the left and then finding **Private Messages** along the top of the window that appears. Click **Member Listing** at the top of the page, to select a user.

Posting Program Code

You can post code to the public discussions that is not directly from your assignment. If you have an assignment question, translate that into a piece of code that does not reveal your answer or submission, exactly.

When posting code fragments (i.e., portions of your program) into questions, make sure these code fragments are perfectly indented and that they are properly formatted. For details, see the required resource module **Pasting Code into Questions**.

Do not post *entire programs* and ask "what's wrong?" or "is this good?" That's frivolous and indicates you have not tried to narrow down the problem. Find exactly what you want to know about and post only that part of the code.

S.6 Where Everything Happens

Access the various areas of your course through Canvas' **Tools** menu on the left.

- ***Modules***: weekly course readings, tutorials and instructions
- ***Assignments:*** submitted through the **Assignments, Tests and Surveys (ATS) Tool**.
- ***Quizzes:*** quizzes and exams
- ***Discussions:*** post your question or help answer your peer's question

S.7 Grading

There will be **300** points in total. Your work on the course projects will be measured on the following dimensions.

1. Completion: Does the code you wrote compile and execute to achieve the functionality it is supposed to. Have you submitted all the required files, in the required format.
2. Problem solving: Are you able to understand big picture, breakdown problem into smaller pieces, find solutions to problems.
3. Good programming practice: How well your programs are written, the clarity and usefulness of the comments you wrote in your code.
4. Submitting on time: Late submission will be deducted 10% of the points per day late. Assignments submitted after 3 days from the deadline will get no more than 70% of the points. No submission will be accepted after two weeks past the due date.

Your grades are based on the following:

- Weekly lab assignments (200 points)
- Quizzes (40 points)
- Mid-term exam (20 points)
- Final exam (40 points)

Absolute Grading Scale

Grade	Minimum %
A+	100
A	95
A-	90
B+	87
B	83
B-	80
C+	77

C	73
C-	70
D+	67
D+	67
D	63
D-	60
F	0
I	-

S.8 Drops and Withdrawal

For a complete reference of all withdrawal dates and deadlines, refer to the Foothill College registration page at the college web site here:

http://www.foothill.edu/schedule/dates.php

To continue in this class, you must participate weekly in all areas: weekly assignments, quizzes and discussion.

Any of the following behaviors are considered non-participation in the class and may be dropped from the class:

- Missing a scheduled exam without prior notice
- If you receive a zero on, or fall behind in two consecutive lab assignments.
- If you have not logged into the course online website for one week.

Drop Policies:

If you intend to drop please do so yourself, so you don't accidentally end up with an unintended "F."

If you decide to drop the class, please let me know. I cannot allow anyone who has dropped to continue to have access to the material.

S.9 Academic Integrity

Cheating of any kind will not be tolerated in this class. This class will be useful to only if you commit to making the best use of the opportunity, resources and guidance to learn. Read the academic integrity policy here:
http://www.foothill.edu/services/handbook/index.php

Any variation of collaborating or copying programming lab assignments is prohibited. The assignment must be 100% your own work.

If you have questions, there is a place to ask for help with homework: the **Public Forums** labeled for that purpose or the ***STEM Center***. You can even answer each other's questions in the **Discussion Forums**. If I think you are giving too much information away, I'll edit your post.

If you accept help from someone who is not trained to teach without giving away the answer, it will short-circuit your learning process -- you will actually become weaker. Now, you don't have to agree with me - but you do have to follow the rule.

For those of you wishing to give help, please do not give away the answer. Either tell the person where they can look to find the solution, give them a general idea or ask them to ask me. Don't post actual assignment code.

S.10 How to Ask a Question Questions

"There's no such thing as a bad question" is a myth. I don't know how the rumor got started.

It is easy to make sure your question is a good one: Make it specific. An example of a bad question is, *"My program doesn't work. Here it is. Would you please see if you can tell me what I am doing wrong? Gretel"* Gretel is *lazy*. An example of a good question is, *"My program doesn't work. Through trial and error I have determined that the problem lies in the following five lines, but I can't seem to narrow it down any further. Can you help? Hansel."* Hansel made an attempt to organize and isolate the problem prior to asking for help. When he gets my answer, he is sure to remember it because he is prepared to hear exactly what he needs to know.

Another example: BAD: *"I don't understand the assignment. I'm lost. Please help. Jack."* The reason this is a bad question is that there are a million things I might say to get Jack on the right track, but I can't know which ones to focus on because I don't know where Jack's misunderstanding lies. Jack hasn't given me any help to help him. GOOD: I *understand the homework description up until you say 'XYZ'. But I'm not sure what you mean by 'XYZ'. In the lectures 'XYZ' seems to be ... but here it seems to mean something different. From that point on, things get hazy because of this mismatch. Would you resolve this apparent difference for me? Jill."* Here, Jill has told me exactly the first point at which she is confused so I know what to tell her to set her straight.

I am not discouraging questions: I want you to ask. Through them, I get a chance to communicate with you. But narrow down the question. Show me you have tried to answer it and have made some progress. Show me exactly where you seem to be faltering so I can know how to help you. The same holds true if you are posing your question to a fellow student or to the whole class.

S.11 Respect

All students are required to show respect to their fellow students and the Instructor. Personal attacks, humiliating or degrading comments, verbal or written, are very serious matters, and will be treated as such.

S.12 To Obtain Disability-Related Accommodations ...

... please contact ***Disability Resource Center*** **(DRC)** at the start of the quarter. To contact **DRC**, you may:

- Visit **DRC** in Room 5400
- Email **DRC** at adaptivelearningdrc@foothill.edu
- Call **DRC** at 650-949-7017 to make an appointment

S.13 Weekly Activities

Every week you have **Module** to study and **Lab Assignments** to turn in. There are exceptions (see calendar, below), but this is the basic drill. This course is a lot of fun, and a lot of work. To pass it you have to make time to do both of these activities.

Weekly Time Estimate

- **Module Readings and instructions**. This includes reading materials and hands on exercises.
- **Lab Assignment - about two - four hours**. This varies greatly with individuals. Some students take one hour, some take 6 hours.

Typical Week	
Monday	Online module and assignment release by noon
Monday	Weekly assignments due mid-night