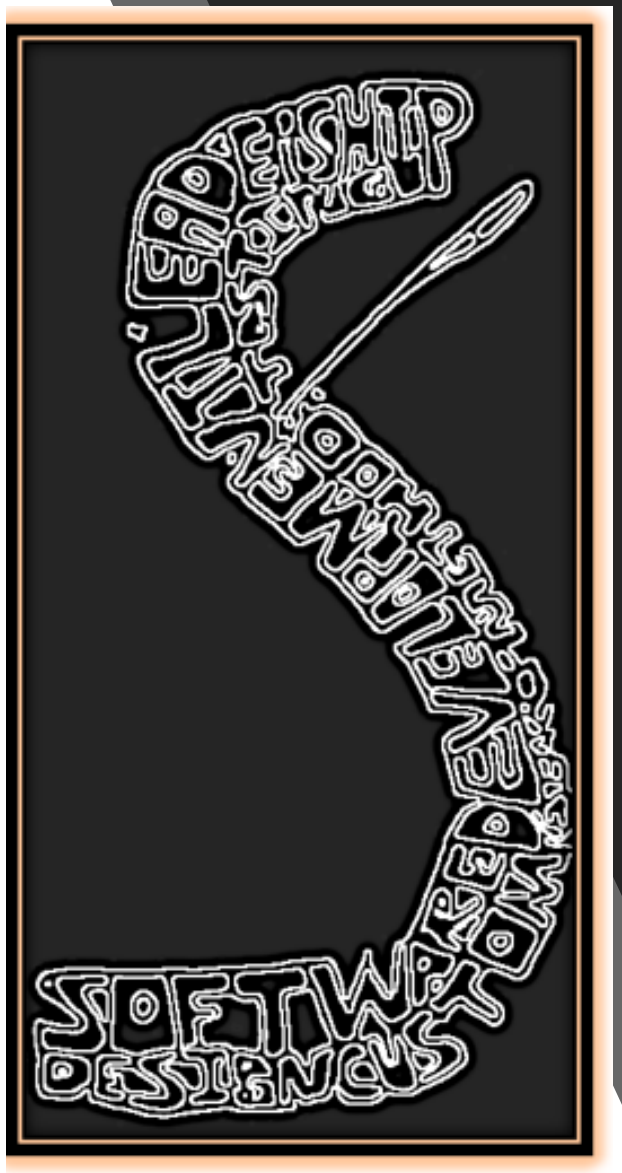

Syllabus

CSC 324

F2 – 2020

Fernanda M. Eliott, Ph.D.

Computer Science, Grinnell College

Acknowledgments: I would like to thank Dr. Barbara Z. Johnson for her generosity. (Note that her materials and feedback heavily inspired this course. I also want to thank prior iterations of this course, all led by Dr. Barbara Johnson, Dr. Sam Rebelsky, Dr. Anya Vostinar, and Dr. Janet Davis.)

Instructor

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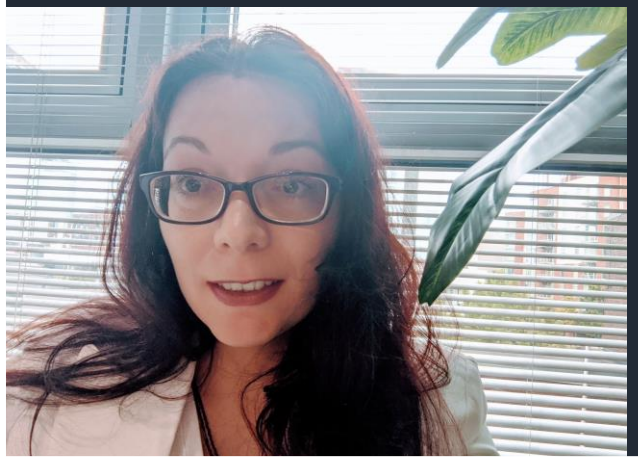


- I am happy to help you in any way that I can. Just send me an email, and we will schedule a meeting. (Remember to provide at least three different times that work for you.)
- I can be more helpful if you share the topic of our meeting in advance. (It is fine if you just want to talk, and do not have a topic in mind.)

An Intensive Course - Challenge Yourself!

- This course will demand at least 20 hours of work per week.
- Some of the work will be done during class meeting times, but **you should plan to spend about 10 hours outside** of scheduled class and lab periods, in addition to class meeting times.
- Each week, we will spend time on learning:

1. Software design principles and software engineering practices;
2. A variety of languages and related frameworks;
3. Working on the individual or team project.

It is crucial that you actively follow the class activities and work with your team.

Course Instructions and Overview

Course Instructions

- This course will be online and provided through PioneerWeb. To access the content, log into the system, and look for the “Start here” button.
- Synchronous class activities (we will use Zoom.)
- I understand if you are unable to make it to some of the synchronous class activities. **However, 11 of them are REQUIRED, and I expect you to join us.** (Every Monday, I will post an announcement on PioneerWeb to help you keep track of those). Even if you cannot join the non-required classes, you are expected to follow the content and activities.
- The lab time is reserved for team meetings and work time.

Student Participation

- In the first week of classes, I need to confirm your participation.
- To that end, you **MUST** go to PioneerWeb, access the “Start here” button, and submit the activities described there.

Policy - Expectations

- Readings are due before class.
- Team Spirit. Collaborate, respect, be friendly, and learn from your peers. Disagreements may happen, and those play an essential role in your development. However, I am here to help: just le me know if you want to talk.
- Always communicate with your team and, if you cannot make it to a group meeting, let them know as soon as possible and find ways to be helpful. At the end of the course, teams will rate each one of their peers. That will influence your final grade.
- We appreciate privacy, honorable conduct, and team spirit. Never record your classmates or share any content outside of PioneerWeb.

Accessibility and Inclusion

- I am here to help you advance and be successful in your academic journey! We all learn and get inspired differently, and accommodations help us to achieve our goals.
- If any aspect of the course prevents you from learning or excludes you, please let me know as soon as possible! I am happy to chat and looking forward to finding, together with you, strategies that fulfill both: your needs and the course requirements.
- Also, Grinnell College has a robust and supportive network of people and services ready to support you; for example: the Accessibility and Disability Services; Writing, Reading, & Speaking Center; Academic Advising; Student Affairs (including International Student Affairs (OISA); the Center for Religion, Spirituality and Social Justice (CRSSJ); or Student Health and Wellness (SHAW); finally, confidential support is available through the Office of the Ombuds.

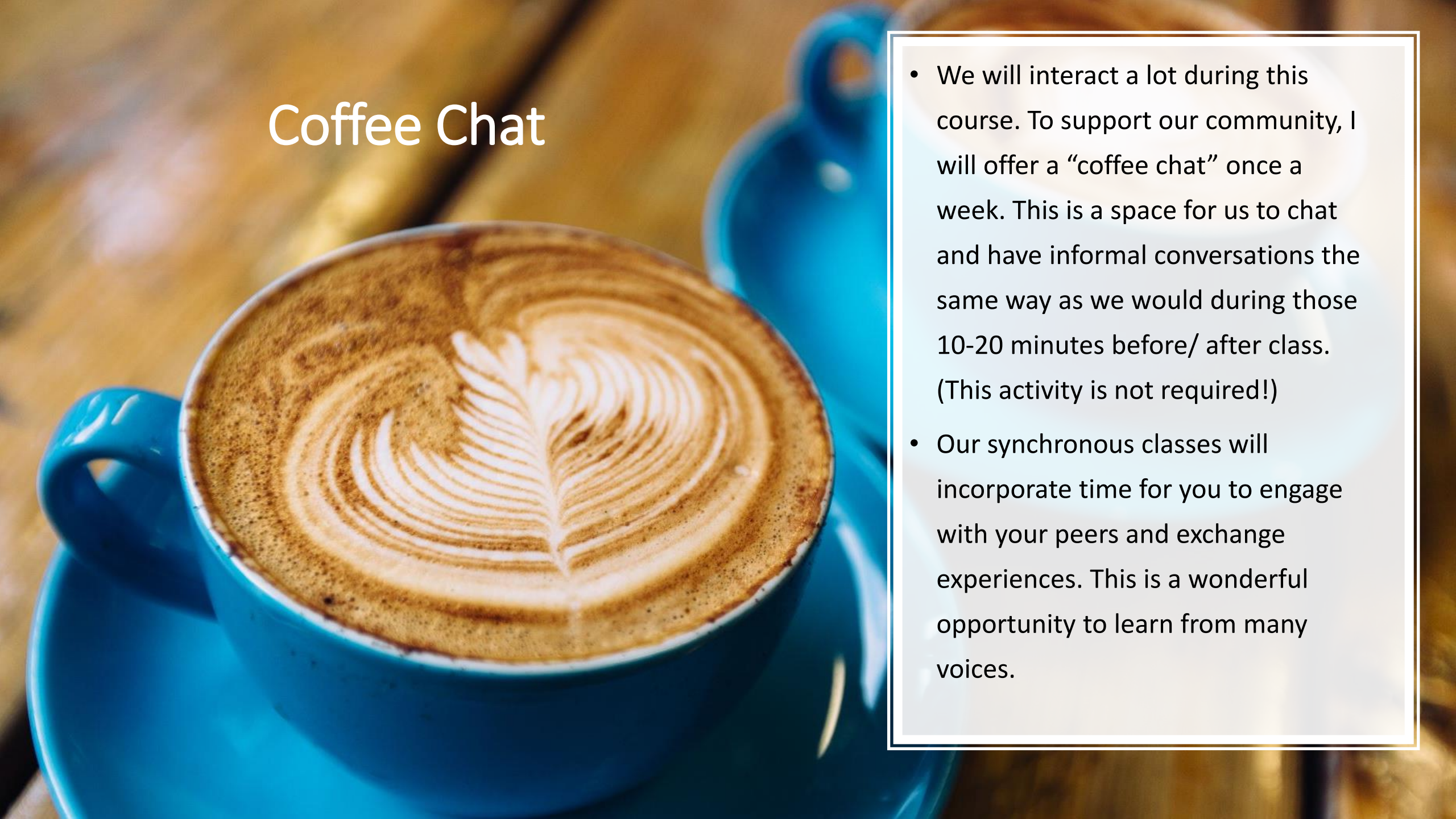
Life Events

- We all know that circumstances may change. If you experience something that impacts your learning and/or promptness to submit the deliverables, let me know, and let me help you.
    - The most important message here is **communication**.

Religious Observances

- Grinnell College offers alternative options to complete academic work for students who observe religious holy days.
- Please contact me within the first three weeks of the semester if you would like to discuss a specific instance that applies to you.
- Since this class will incorporate class discussions and working sometimes in pairs or groups, it is important that I know you will be absent ahead of time so that I can adjust the assignments.

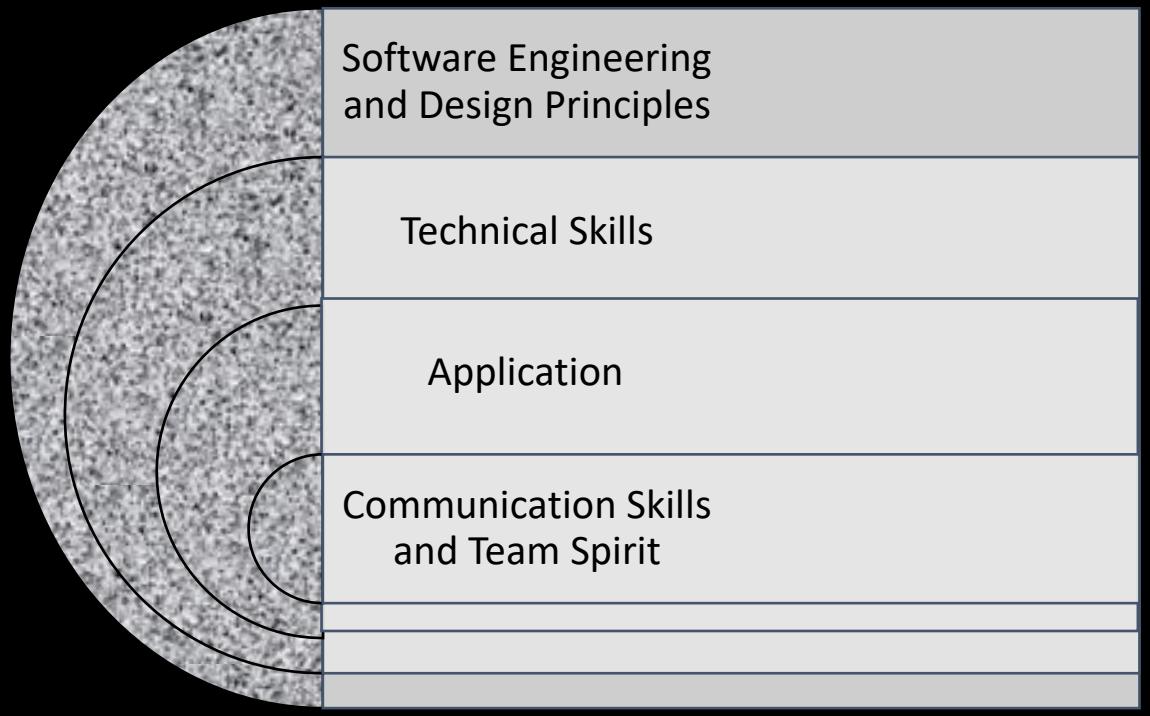
Coffee Chat



- We will interact a lot during this course. To support our community, I will offer a “coffee chat” once a week. This is a space for us to chat and have informal conversations the same way as we would during those 10-20 minutes before/ after class. (This activity is not required!)
- Our synchronous classes will incorporate time for you to engage with your peers and exchange experiences. This is a wonderful opportunity to learn from many voices.

Course Overview and Components

- This course combines software engineering theory with hands-on practice on a real project prototype.
- You will collaborate with your team to develop a real project prototype and deliver it to a community partner.
- To help you build background knowledge, we emphasize theory in the first few weeks, but then you will progressively work on the team project and focus on it.



Textbooks

Required:

1. Hartl, Michael. (2020). Ruby on Rails Tutorial 6th Edition (Rails 6). It is highly recommended that you purchase the book and create an account at railstutorial.org in order to access the most up-to-date information. (Hartl often grants discounts and scholarships to students up on request; so do not be afraid to email him.)
2. Sommerville, Ian. Software Engineering (10th Edition).

Additional readings will be assigned during the course, usually as links to online readings.

Recommended Resources

- Learn Ruby the Hard Way
- Check out the success tips from students from prior courses.
- CSC 324/326 website
- Grinnell's Writing, Reading, and Speaking Center supports students working on papers, projects, presentations, and applications. Schedule a session with one of the Center's professional instructors and get feedback as you interpret readings, talk through your ideas, analyze evidence, develop and organize arguments, craft introductions and conclusions, rewrite sentences and paragraphs, or plan presentations. Center instructors do not proofread papers, but they can show you how to edit your own work effectively. Make an appointment online: http://mywco.com/grinnell

Learning Objectives

Learning Objectives I

1

Apply Agile software development methodology, tools, and practices in real-world team projects.

2

Contrast Agile software development with plan-and-document methodologies.

3

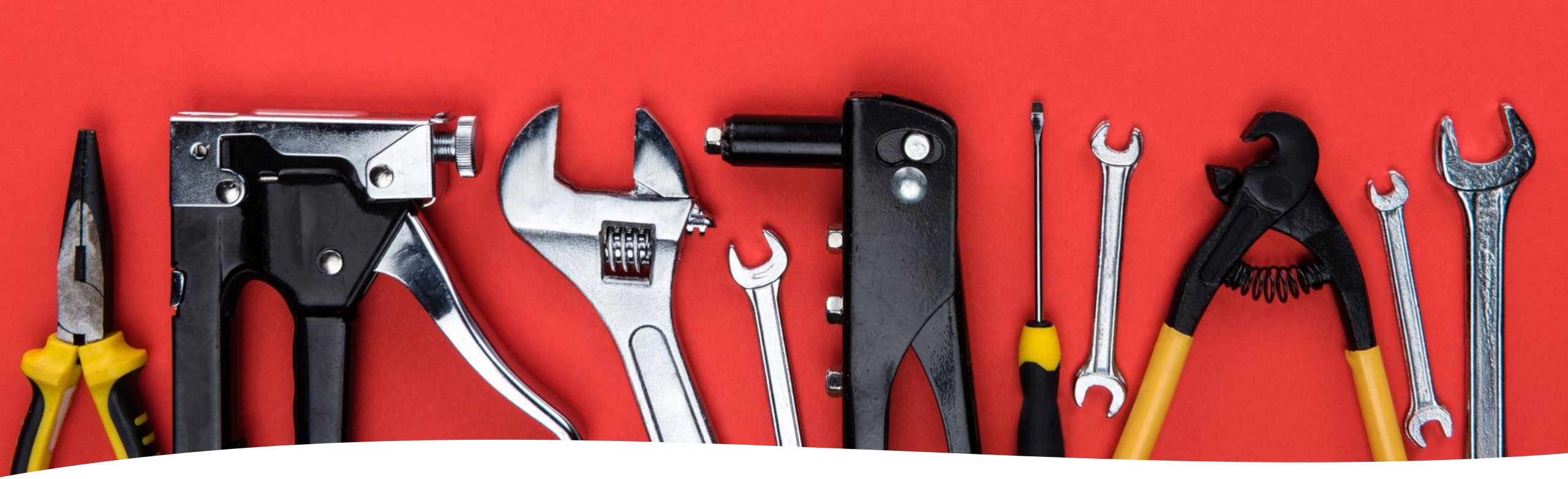
Build SaaS applications with the Ruby on Rails framework and apply those skills on a project.

Learning Objectives II

4

Gain experience with the complexities of real-world software development:

- communicating with clients;
- working as part of a team;
- self-directed technical learning;
- creating a substantial project from scratch, or learning and extending an existing code base;
- making design decisions that may have long-term consequences;
- addressing pragmatic and ethical dilemmas.



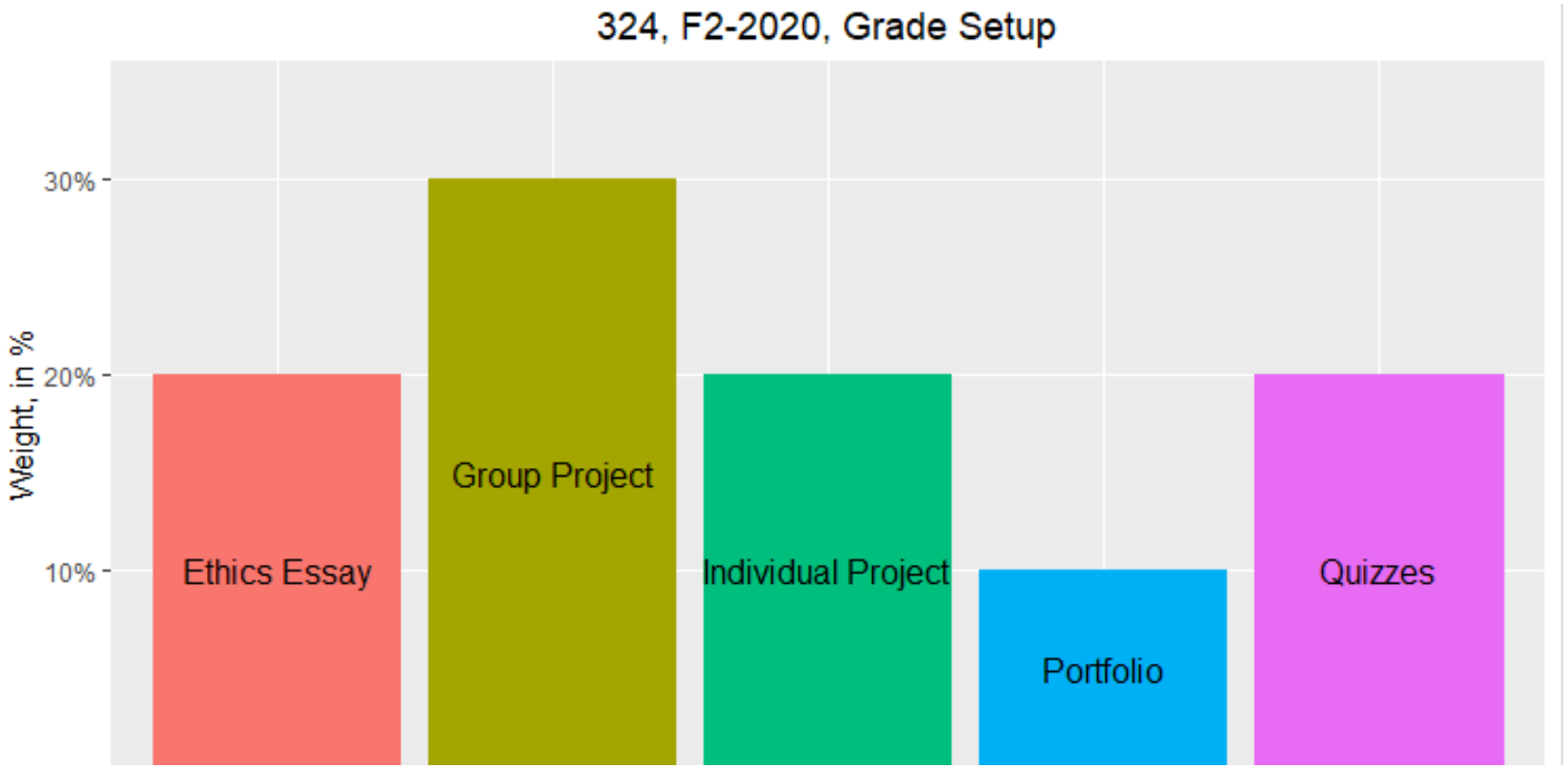
Course Outcomes

- Develop technical skills, background in software engineering, and team practices to help you pursue academic or industry positions.
- Make a substantial beginning or addition to your professional portfolio.

Deliverables – Overview

Deliverables – Reminders

- Every Monday, I will post a “Hello Monday” announcement to help you keep track of our activities and due dates.
- Due date/time: deliverables are due by 10:30pm on the due date. Late submissions (EXCEPT team deliverables) will be graded; however, you will receive a lower score: -10% per day.
- I will do my best to provide you feedback within 3 – 4 days after submission. However, if you have questions, DO email me.
- Teamwork: I will accept only ONE report per team. (I would suggest choosing a team member to submit the deliverables. It does not need to be the same person every time.)



Deliverables and Grade Setup.

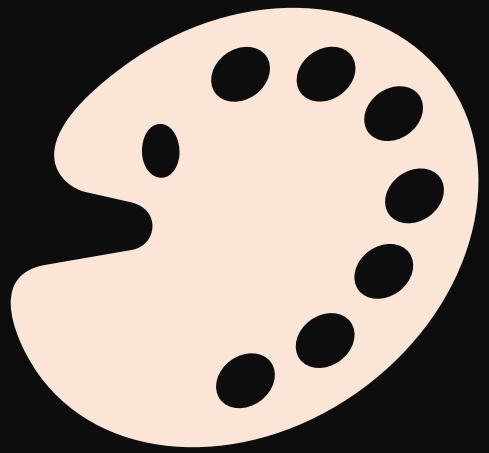
Group Project - Components

- Report 1;
- Report 2;
- Report 3;
- Demo;
- Final Presentation;
- Dossier;
- Final Report;
- Self and Peer Evaluation.

Portfolio

You will choose one option:

1. Use the materials you developed along this course to create a portfolio to advertise your work.
2. Create a collection that will help you to develop a comprehensive portfolio in the future.



Individual Project

You will choose one option:

- Open-ended. You will select a topic and develop an individual project that will help you learn the basics of Ruby on Rails and demonstrate your understanding of how to create an (eventually) interactive website. This project will incorporate HTML, CSS, JavaScript, and Ruby on Rails to create a multi-page website that showcases your technical skills.
- Exploratory. You will work through Hartl's Chapters 1-6 and customize it. In addition to the customization, you will explain your choices and what you learned along this path.