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## CSC-326 - Syllabus – Spring 2026. Computer Science, Grinnell College

Instructor [Fernanda Elliott](#), PhD (she/her/hers)

[ELBICA lab](#) (Enhancing Lives with Bio-inspired Computational Approaches)

[AI Aura](#) (Reflecting on the impacts of Generative Artificial Intelligence)

Welcome! This course combines software development theory with hands-on practice for architecting and developing computational artifacts to solve a complex problem. **Course Outcomes.** Develop leadership and coaching skills, solidify your background in software development and ethical practices. Finally, make a substantial addition to your professional portfolio.

### Learning Goals

1. Acquire sound knowledge of software development focusing on software architectural design and requirements to architect a new solution.
2. Reflect on design choices and gain experience **as a leader** of an Agile development team.
3. Develop skills to bridge theoretical reading with real practices while coaching and engaging with your group project.
4. Deepen previous experiences with real-world software development:
  - a) Communicating with a client.
  - b) Leading and collaborating with your group project to develop software solutions to meet a client's needs.
  - c) Making design decisions that may have long-term consequences.
  - d) Addressing conflict, practical and ethical dilemmas.

### Course Expectations and Instructions

You are expected to:

- **Leadership.** Proactively look for leadership resources and stay informed about leadership practices so that you can productively *lead* your group project. Also, make sure to stay in constant communication with your group.
- **Interaction.** You are expected to help your group identify effective ways to communicate and accomplish weekly tasks. If you cannot make it to a group meeting, let them know as soon as possible.
- **Participation.** You are expected to productively participate and engage with the materials, instructor, course mentor, and peers.
- **Feedback.** Getting feedback from your peers on your group project plays an important part in this course. Therefore, you are expected to listen and PAY ATTENTION to your peers' presentations to provide productive and helpful feedback (in addition to being ready to receive feedback).
- The **course schedule** will show *To Do items*. Those must be completed *prior* to the corresponding class session. Eventually, there will be optional items, which, although not required, are highly recommended. Since this course meets with CSC324 students (and you will lead a group of CSC324 students), you will follow the CSC324 course schedule.
- **Group work.** Submit a single report *per* group.

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- **Coding Policy.** You are expected to follow our course's and deliverables' policies. To accommodate a range of activities, GenAI policies will vary according to the deliverable. Therefore, make sure to read each deliverable's policies carefully.
  - A note on using Grammar Checker tools such as Grammarly to answer reflection/ textual questions: It is fine to use those as long as you DO NOT make use of generative AI features.
- **Community.** I would love to see and chat with you in my lab for our [AI Coffee Chat](#) (Optional).
- **Attendance is *required* to successfully conclude this course (of course, you must arrive on time).** The instructor will submit an alert if they notice anything likely to impact your learning. If you need to miss a class, you are still responsible for the material covered on that day, and I expect you to email me in advance so that I can check on you and provide assistance in every way possible. Please note that attendance, in addition to impacting your grade, *is required* to succeed in this course. **Finally, arriving 10 or more minutes late counts as an absence.**
- **Writing, Reading, and Speaking Center.** The center supports students working on papers, projects, and presentations, as well as applications for internships, fellowships, and graduate school. Schedule an appointment here: <http://mywco.com/grinnell>.
- **Library Research Help.** Gina Schlesselman-Tarango is our science librarian. Please don't hesitate to reach out to her if you need help finding, accessing, or managing sources for research projects. You can stop by her office in the Kistle Library, email [schlesselman], or [use this link](#) to book an appointment. You can also access resources and tips for this and other classes in relevant library guides, which can be found at <https://grinnell.libguides.com/>

## Book

- The Design of Everyday Things, Revised and Expanded Edition By Donald A. Norman.

## Grade Setup (unless stated otherwise, deliverables are equally weighted within a category):

- 50 % Group Project
- 40% Leadership Milestones
- 10% Attendance

### Letter Grades

A	95 – 100%
A-	90 – 95%
B+	87 – 90%
B	83 – 87%

B-	80 – 83%
C+	77 – 80%
C	70 – 77%
D	60 – 70%
F	0 – 60%

## Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

1. Can I fail this class by lack of attendance, even if I have high grades? Yes.
2. How can I know if I am about to fail the course due to lack of attendance? Your instructor will submit academic alerts to connect you with resources. Failure by attendance may occur starting from the third academic alert (explicitly triggered by a lack of attendance).

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3. What should I do if I receive an academic alert? In that case, you are highly encouraged to speak with your instructor, seek support from the academic advising office, and keep your academic advisor informed.
4. Do you submit academic honesty reports? Yes, if I have a concern, I will submit an academic honesty report.

## Policy – Course Culture and Interactions

- **Team Spirit.** Collaborate, respect, be friendly, and learn from your peers. Disagreements may happen, and those play an essential role in your self-development: see those as an opportunity for developing your soft skills.
- **Ideas.** Acknowledge and welcome other people's ideas, contributions and thoughts.
- **Active Listening.** Practice multiple ways of listening to others and be mindful of their voices and perspectives.
- **Integrity.** We appreciate privacy, honorable conduct, and team spirit. Kindly read and follow Grinnell College's Academic Honesty and the CS [Academic Integrity Policy](#).
- **Coding and Professional Policy.** You are expected to follow CSC324's coding policy (make sure to read each deliverable's specific policy) and the [professional conduct policy](#).

## Life Events

Circumstances may change. If you experience anything 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.

## 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.
- 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](#); finally, confidential support is available through [the Office of the Ombuds](#).
- Grinnell College provides accommodation for students with documented disabilities. Students with disabilities partner with the Office of Disability Resources to make academic accommodation letters available to faculty via the accommodation portal. To help ensure that your access needs are met, I encourage individual students to approach me so we can discuss your distinctive learning needs and accommodations within the context of this course. If you have not already worked with the Office of Disability Resources and believe you may require academic accommodations for this

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course, Disability Resources staff can be reached via email at [access@grinnell.edu](mailto:access@grinnell.edu), or by stopping by their offices on the first floor of Steiner Hall.

### **Academic Support**

If you have any other needs not addressed here, please let me know soon so that we can work together to create the best possible learning environment. In some cases, I will recommend consulting with the Academic Success Center (ASC): <https://www.grinnell.edu/about/leadership/offices-services/academic-success-center>. They are an excellent resource for developing strategies for your learning, and they can connect you with other resources. If I notice that you are encountering difficulty, and I have reached out to you and not received a response, or if you have missed multiple class sessions or are not meeting our class objectives repeatedly, I will submit an academic alert via the ASC's SAL portal. A message notifying you of my concern will get sent to you, along with the Academic Success Center staff and your adviser(s), so that they can reach out to you with additional offers of support.

If I notice that you are encountering difficulty, and I have reached out to you and not received a response, or if you have missed multiple class sessions or are not meeting our class objectives repeatedly, **I will submit an academic alert** via Academic Advising's SAL portal. This notifies you of my concern, along with the Academic Advising team and your advisor(s), so that they can reach out to you with additional offers of support.

### **Religious Observances**

Grinnell College offers alternative options to complete academic work for students who observe religious holy days. Kindly contact me if you want to chat about alternative options to complete academic work due to religious holy days.

### **Title IX and Pregnancy Related Conditions**

Grinnell College is committed to compliance with Title IX and to supporting the academic success of pregnant and parenting students and students with pregnancy related conditions. If you are a pregnant student, have pregnancy related conditions, or are a parenting student (child under one-year needs documented medical care) who wishes to request reasonable related supportive measures from the College under Title IX, please email the Title IX Coordinator at [titleix@grinnell.edu](mailto:titleix@grinnell.edu). The Title IX Coordinator will work with Disability Resources and your professors to provide reasonable supportive measures in support of your education while pregnant or as a parent under Title IX.

### **ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

I would like to applaud our alumni mentors: thank you so very much for your support!

Also, I would like to appreciate Drs. Cynthia Hansen, Barbara Johnson, Peter-Michael Osera, Samuel Rebelsky (sorted by last name) for the discussions and valuable feedback about the redesign of this course years ago.

I am excited to thank Dr. Barbara Johnson for her generosity and mentorship, and prior iterations of this course as well, all led by Drs. Barbara Johnson, Priscilla Jiménez, Samuel Rebelsky, Anya Vostinar, and Janet Davis. Finally, I would like to thank the CS department, and all the many Grinnell offices involved in making CSC324/CS326 happen! (I am excited to keep an [acknowledgments page](#).)