Steve Cooper
CS 106A
Handout #1
April 1, 2013

CS 106A — General Information

Based on a handout by Eric Roberts

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Office hours: Tuesday 3:30 P.M.–4:30 P.M., Wednesday 10:30 A.M.–12:00 P.M., and Friday 2:30 P.M.–3:30 P.M.

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Office hours: Tuesday 1:15P.M.–3:15P.M. and Thursday 1:15 P.M.–3:15P.M.

Class web page

The web page for CS 106A is located at **http://www.stanford.edu/class/cs106a/**

You can also reach that webpage via the simpler URL: **http://cs106a.stanford.edu/**

You should regularly check the class web site for announcements and other information, including the most up-to-the-date information on assignments and errata. The class web page will also have links to other class materials including electronic copies of all class materials and assignment files.

Discussion sections

In addition to lecture, you must also sign up for a weekly 50-minute section. In order to take CS 106A, you must sign up for a section between 5:00P.M. Thursday, April 4th and 5:00P.M. Sunday, April 7th. The signup form will be available on the web at the URL **http://cs198.stanford.edu/section/**. After a matching process, your section assignments will be e-mailed out to you by Tuesday, April 9th. Sections begin the second week of classes (i.e., next week). Note that you should sign up for sections at the URL indicted previously (not on Axess).

Section preparation

Each Monday, we will make available the week's section problems. One exercise will be starred. You are required to attempt this problem prior to the start of your section. You are required to turn an attempt to solve that problem to your section leader in section. It will be graded for completeness, not correctness, and will become part of your section grade. You are encouraged to attempt the problem on paper, rather than on the computer. The reason for this is that it will be providing you practice for the exams, which are to be completed on paper.

Section leaders and course helpers

CS106A provides extensive assistance for students. Section Leaders and Course Helpers are available from Sunday through Thursday evenings each week in Tresidder LaIR to

help with assignments. Check the web site **http://cs198.stanford.edu/** and click on the "Helper Schedule" link for the latest schedule of LaIR Helper Hours.

Units

If you are an undergraduate, you are required to take CS 106A for 5 units of credit. If you are a graduate student, you may enroll in CS 106A for 3 units if it is necessary for you to reduce your units for administrative reasons. Taking the course for reduced units does not imply any change in the course requirements.

Texts

There are two required texts for this class, both of which are available from the Stanford Bookstore. The first is a course reader entitled *Karel the Robot Learns Java*—a 35-page tutorial that introduces the major concepts in programming in the context of an extremely simple robot world. The second is the textbook *The Art and Science of Java* by Eric Roberts.

Handouts

I am attempting to go "paperless" this quarter. While I will have lots of supplementary material available, my intention is to provide it electronically on the course web site. If you would like a printed copy, e-mail Lynn or me, and we'll do our best to provide you with printed copies. Printed copies will then be made available for you to pick up at my office. The handouts are available in PDF® format on the CS 106 web site.

Email

Having an email account is a requirement for this course. E-mail accounts are available to all students at Stanford through LaIR. You need to check your Stanford e-mail account regularly, as that is the primary means by which we'll be contacting you this quarter.

Programming assignments

As you can see from the syllabus, there will be seven assignments (Assignment 1 – Assignment 7). The assignments will become slightly more difficult and require more time as the quarter progresses. Thus, the later assignments will be weighed slightly more than the earlier ones. Except for Assignment #7 (which is due at the very end of the quarter), each assignment is graded during an interactive, one-on-one session with your section leader, who rates it according to the following scale:

++ An absolutely fantastic submission of the sort that will only come along a few times during the quarter. To ensure that this score is given only rarely, any grade of ++ must be approved by the instructor and TA. Since your section leader would almost certainly want to show off any assignment worthy of a ++, this review process should not be too cumbersome.

\+ A submission that is "perfect" or exceeds our standard expectation for the assignment. To receive this grade, a program often reflects additional work beyond the requirements or gets the job done in a particularly elegant way.

✓+ A submission that satisfies all the requirements for the assignment, showing solid funtionality as well as good style. It reflects a job well done.

✓ A submission that meets the requirements for the assignment, possibly with a few small problems.

✓– A submission that has problems serious enough to fall short of the requirements for the assignment.

– A submission that has extremely serious problems, but nonetheless shows some effort and understanding.

–– A submission that shows little effort and does not represent passing work.

From past experience, we expect most grades to be ✓+ and ✓. Dividing the grades into categories means that your section leader can spend more time talking about what you need to learn from the assignment and not have to worry about justifying each point. The overall goal is to maximize the learning experience in doing the assignments, and we have found the "bucket" grading system to work much better for programming assignments than assigning numeric grades from a pedagogical perspective over many quarters of experience.

For each assignment, you must make an appointment with your section leader for an interactive-grading session. Your section leader will explain in section how to schedule these sessions and go over the grading process in more detail.

Late policy

Each of the assignments is due at ***the start of class*** on the dates specified in the syllabus. Most assignments require both electronic and printed submissions. Program code must be submitted electronically as described in a separate handout. All assignments are due at 1:15 P.M. sharp on the dates indicated on the assignment handout. Anything that comes in after 1:15 P.M. will be considered late.

Because each of you will probably come upon some time during the quarter where so much work piles up that you need a little extra time, every student begins the quarter with two free "late days." "Late days" are class days, not actual days (i.e. from Monday to Wednesday is one late day). After the late days are exhausted, programs that come in late (up to a maximum of three class days) will be assessed a late penalty of one grade "bucket" per day (e.g., a ✓+ turns into a ✓, and so forth). Assignments received later than three class days following the due date will not be graded. The interactive-grading session with your section leader must be scheduled within two weeks of the due date. **Note that late days may not be used on the last assignment (#7) and no assignments will be accepted after the last day of classes (June 5th).**

You should think of these free "late days" as extensions you have been granted ahead of time, and use them when you might have otherwise tried to ask for an extension. As a result, getting an extension beyond the two free "late days" will generally not be granted. In *very special* circumstances (primarily extended medical problems or other emergencies), extensions may be granted beyond the late days. All extension requests must be directed to the head TA, Lynn Cuthriell, no later than 24 hours before the program is due. Only Lynn will be able to approve extensions. In particular, do not ask your section leader.

Examinations

The midterm examination will be a two-hour test administered **outside of class from 7:00-9:00 pm on Tuesday, May 7th**. If you have a conflict with this time, and absolutely cannot make the regularly scheduled midterm, you must send a request by electronic mail to Lynn (`lcuth@stanford.edu`) by 5:00pm on Monday, April 29th to arrange an alternate exam time.

The final examination is scheduled for **Wednesday, June 12th from 8:30am-11:30am**. For a variety of reasons (including university policy), **there will be no alternate time for the final exam**. Please make sure that you can attend the final exam at the specified time before enrolling in the class.

All examinations are open-book (class course reader and textbook only), and you may use any notes, handouts, or materials from the class, but you cannot use electronic devices of any type (i.e. portable computers, PDAs, etc).

Grading

Final grades for the course will be determined using the following weights:

45%	Programming assignments (weighted toward the later assignments)
30%	Final examination
15%	Midterm examination
10%	Section participation

Computer facilities

As in any programming course, the assignments in CS 106A require extensive hands-on use of a computer. The preferred platform for doing the work is the Eclipse development environment which runs under both Mac OS X and Microsoft Windows (XP, Vista, or Windows 7). Instructions on obtaining and using the Eclipse environment—which is an open-source software project and therefore free to download—will be distributed in a separate class handout.