



Syllabus - Spring 2025

Overview

What is CS 124 Honors?

CS 124 Honors (CS199-124, CRN: 54574) is the honors section of CS124 that aims to provide students a more in-depth CS @ Illinois experience. The course is designed to engage students with the community and help them find interests through a hands-on approach. To that end, we will focus on two goals during the semester: developing practical programming skills and providing in-depth mentorship.

Practical Programming Skills

CS 124 Honors offers a fast-paced project-based environment where students can develop their technical skills quickly with the support of peers and mentors.

Don't worry if you have no programming experience!

Many students at UIUC, CS majors included, come in with little to no knowledge about programming. In this course, we will help you gain experience writing code to help you develop an intuition of what it means to solve problems programmatically.

Mentorship

Creating a project from scratch is a daunting task. In CS 124 Honors, our project managers will work closely with their teams through weekly meetings to guide them through both their projects and their undergraduate experience here at Illinois.

Feel free to reach out to other staff members too! Contact information can be found on the course website or through Discord.

Prerequisites

No prior programming experience is necessary. This course is only available for current CS 124 students and is open to both non-James Scholar and James Scholar students.

Registration Information

****Everyone will be required to fill out a google form to indicate that they will be participating in the class.*** *(<https://forms.gle/tFRYFLb98j1wbFo68>)*

We are CS199 section 124 on self service (CRN: 54574).

For James Scholars filling out an HCLA, do not register for CS199 section 124 on Self Service. Instead, fill out an Honors Credit Learning Agreement (HCLA) attached to the non-honors CS 124 course to get honors credit.

Non-James Scholar students should register for the course on Self Service.

Please ensure that you fill out the HCLA (if you are a James Scholar) or register for CS 199 section 124 (if you are not a James Scholar). Otherwise, you will not be set up for +H grading and you will be unable to receive honors credit for CS 124.

Class Structure

Project

The class project is the centerpiece of the course. Through the project, students will be able to build their technical confidence and gain experience with real-world practices.

At the beginning of the semester, each student will be placed in a team based on technical interests to brainstorm and develop. Each team will have a Project Manager (PM) from the course staff to help them complete their projects.

Project groups will meet with their PM at least once a week. During these meetings, the PM will set the expectations for the upcoming week. **Weekly meetings with project groups are required and active participation will play a substantial role in your final grade.** For more information, see the overall grading section.

Course Videos

Videos containing course content will be uploaded to [our YouTube page](#). Aside from the required videos that are linked in each PL homework and announced over Discord, the rest of them are optional.

Be aware that our YouTube is shared with the CS 128 honors section, and any videos for 128 honors are not required or recommended.

Homework

There will be Registration, Github, and Project Idea homework assignments during the first two weeks while we are getting project groups set up. For the Project Idea homework, you will be required to submit at least two well-formed project ideas you would potentially like to work on. Afterwards, all there is left to do is work on your project!

Event Attendance

As part of the course goal to introduce and acclimate students to the university, both the computer science department and university life, it is mandatory that all students attend **at least two 124 Honors events** of their choice during the semester. These events may be any of the social, technical, or informational sessions we hold throughout the semester. You will be asked to share proof of attendance with your project manager.

Excuse Policy

If students cannot complete a mandatory course obligation, they should notify their project manager with a reason why. If a student does not feel comfortable doing so, they should

instead notify Dhanish Natarajan (ghanish2@illinois.edu) or Somya Srivastava (somyas3@illinois.edu).

We only accept excuses with evidence as provided by the [Student Code](#). However, there will be two unexcused absences allowed over the course of the semester built into the grading.

Communication

We will be using [Discord](#) for project and course-related communication. Here is a [tutorial](#) for how to use our Discord.

Once project groups are formed, students can contact their PM if they need assistance.

Students are also encouraged to reach out to other PMs if they have questions about specific topics or want additional language support. A list of Project Manager technical interests and spoken languages (other than English) will be listed on the staff page of the website <https://honors.cs124.org/staff>.

Office Hours

If students need additional help completing homework in the first couple of weeks, they should attend office hours hosted in the Office Hours channel on the [Discord](#)

Again, students are **highly** encouraged to reach out to any Project Manager whenever they need assistance.

Overall Evaluation

IMPORTANT: Keep in mind that if you make a good faith effort and communicate consistently, you will meet all of the requirements to receive honors credit.

OVERALL RUBRIC

Weekly Evaluation	See Weekly Rubric below to see how each week is evaluated	60%
Midterm Presentation	Did you attend project presentations? Did you treat groups with respect while they presented? (These should be free points!)	13%
Final Presentation	Same as above.	17%
Mandatory Event Attendance	Did you attend at least two 124 Honors events this semester? Did you share attendance proof with your PM?	4%
Registration Homework	If you are a James Scholar , did you fill out the HCLA form? If you are NOT a James Scholar, did you register on self-service?	2%
Git Homework	Did you watch the github video? Did you complete the git homework?	2%
Mandatory Surveys	Did you fill out the required surveys announced on the Discord?	2%

Weekly Evaluation detailed below.

EVALUATION PER WEEK

- **Attendance (30%) ***
 - Present- Attended weekly meetings with project groups
 - Excused- Excused absence (see excuse policy above for what qualifies)
 - Absent- Unexcused absence
 - Lowest 2 attendance grades will be dropped
- **Individual Communication (20%)**
 - Complete- Contributed to team decision making, responded to messages from project manager and other group members within a reasonable time, and articulated any concerns
 - Incomplete- did not contribute to team decision making and/or respond to messages from project manager and other group members within a reasonable time
- **Individual Task Completion (50%)**
 - Satisfactory- Completed or made a good effort to complete assigned tasks, made some reasonable progress, and sought help when needed (100%)
 - Unsatisfactory- Did not complete assigned tasks or make any progress, and did not reach out for assistance

* While attendance is a central component to succeeding in this course, we understand that mistakes happen. Thus we will allow up to **two unexcused absences** to be counted the same as excused absences.

For those who are enrolled in CS 199-124, honors credit will be determined on an S/U basis. An S (satisfactory) means you will receive honors credit for CS 124, a U (unsatisfactory) means that you will not. S/U does not contribute towards your GPA, but will appear on your transcript.

For James Scholars who fill out an HCLA, honors credit will be determined in a similar way. However, there will be no record of S/U.

The cutoff for honors credit will never be higher than 70%, but we may lower it at the end of the semester if the current cutoff is too high. This means that if you score below 70% based on the rubric above, you will likely not receive an honors credit and may end with a U on your transcript.

Expected Time Commitment

The following is a breakdown of the estimated expected workload in this class (not a guarantee!). It is absolutely possible to do the homework in a shorter duration if you follow along in lecture.

1. Lesson Videos and Homework* → 1 - 2 hours
2. Project Meetings → 30 minutes - 1 hour
3. Out of Meeting Project Work** → 1 - 2 hours

That brings the total workload to 2.5 - 3.5 hours/week.

* Lesson Videos and Homework are only required for the first three weeks and will be the main obligation during those weeks.

** Will vary week to week.

Drop Information

If you want to drop the class, please email ghanish2@illinois.edu and somyas3@illinois.edu. Please also alert your Project Manager and project group if you would like to drop after groups are formed. There will be a course drop form that you will need to fill out.

IMPORTANT! If you wish to drop after the semester drop deadline and are registered for the CS199-124 Section but do not meet the requirements for honors credit, then you will receive a U on your transcript. While this will not factor into your GPA, there will still be an Unsatisfactory on your academic history, so **PLEASE go to self-service to web drop the course before the deadline (March 14)**. For James Scholars who have filled out the HCLA the S/U (satisfactory/unsatisfactory) grading will not apply.

Academic Integrity

We follow the same policy as most CS courses. High-level discussion is accepted (and encouraged), but all code must be the work of individual students.

"Rule of Thumb: If at any point you submit an assignment that does not reflect your understanding of the material, then you have probably cheated." (CS 241)

For your project, cite all external code that you use.