

ESP Syllabus - Fall 2025

Peer Leaders:

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- Sophie Abia Flore Agbekpenou (saa2255@columbia.edu)
- Violet Laing (vel2115@barnard.edu)

Workshop Assistants:

- Taha Lahlou (tl3386@columbia.edu)
- Frances Figueroa (faf2135@columbia.edu)
- Grace Cai (gc2906@barnard.edu)
- Isik Aysel Kiymac (iak2127@barnard.edu)
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- Tamar Rosenfeld (tr2802@columbia.edu)
- Savannah Lyles (shl2183@columbia.edu)
- Sophia Brown (sb5067@barnard.edu)

PhD Coordinators:

Gabriel Chuang, Samuel Deng, Hadleigh Schwartz (esp-coordinators@lists.cs.columbia.edu)

To reach your ESP section members, teaching staff, and the PhD coordinators, email esp-sectionX@lists.cs.columbia.edu (replace 'X' with your section number).

ESP Times and Locations:

- **Section 1:** 8:40 - 9:55 AM, 253 Engineering Terrace (Ella Mihailoff, Tamar Rosenfeld)
- **Section 3:** 11:40 - 12:55 PM, 253 Engineering Terrace (Sophie Agbekpenou, Frances Figueroa)
- **Section 4:** 1:10 PM-2:25 PM, 253 Engineering Terrace (Sophie Agbekpenou, Grace Cai)
- **Section 6:** 4:10 - 5:25 PM, 253 Engineering Terrace (Violet Laing, Taha Lahlou)
- **Section 7:** 9:30 AM - 10:45 AM, 602 Northwest Corner (Amrita Pal, Isik Aysel Kiymac)
- **Section 8:** 11:00 AM - 12:15 PM, 602 Northwest Corner (Amrita Pal, Sophia Brown)
- **Section 9:** 12:30 PM - 1:45 PM, 602 Northwest Corner (Violet Laing, Jessica Zheng)
- **Section 10:** 2:00-3:15 PM, 602 Northwest Corner (Ella Mihailoff, Savannah Lyles)

ESP Dates:

- (9/26): Week 1 - Logic Puzzles and Algorithms: Algorithmic Thinking
- (10/3): Week 2 - Natural Language Processing
- (10/10): Week 3 - Usability and Human-Computer Interaction
- (10/17): Week 4 - Cryptography
- (10/24): Week 5 - Graph Algorithms and Social Network Analysis
- (10/31): Week 6 - Machine Learning
- (11/7): Week 7 - Computer Vision
- (11/14): Week 8 - Computer Science & Society

- (11/21): ESP Research Symposium

Registration: ESP registration occurs close to the end of and sometimes after the add/drop period.

Columbia College / GS:

- You can add the course from Virgil, which may require the permission of your advisor after the late-add deadline.

Barnard:

1. Up to a week after the registration deadline, students may add using the [Add Form in Slate](https://slate.barnard.edu/register/add_change) (https://slate.barnard.edu/register/add_change), selecting "add a class that requires permission" as the category of class they are adding. The instructor is Chris Murphy and instructor permission is granted ahead of time.
2. Beyond a week after the registration deadline, students will need to petition CPAS for a late-add. The student will need to explain in the petition why they are adding the class late (For the reasons necessary for the late-add, structural reasons such as the class not being available on time are acceptable, as is being confused about registration procedure as a first-year Barnard student adding an unusual type of Columbia class).

No-credit option: We allow students to take ESP without registering (this policy is intended for students who pay per credit or have too many credits to add ESP.) Note that if you take the course no-credit, the same participation expectations apply. This option is unofficial in the sense that you won't receive a grade and ESP will not appear on your transcript, but official in the sense that you'll be a full part of the ESP community.

Coursework Expectations: ESP assigns no work outside of class, with the following exceptions:

- 1-2 feedback surveys. We really appreciate your attention to these, as they make the course better for future ESPers.
- A make-up assignment, due only if you miss 2 ESP sessions. (See attendance policy.)

In lieu of coursework, we expect you to show up, be present and push yourself to participate! The course is only as strong as you make it.

Discussion Guidelines: Be civil. Criticize ideas, not people. Respect differences of opinion. Challenge yourself to participate (or, if you're a very confident discussant, to facilitate the discussion in a way that benefits everyone.) Feel free to bring up complicated, current, or controversial topics, but be mindful of the ways they might affect others.

Office Hours: Our peer leaders set aside the 15 minutes after each ESP section for your questions: regarding the ESP topic, the CS major, research, courses at Columbia, etc. If you'd like to set up a longer meeting, all of the course staff (including the PhD coordinators!) are happy to chat.

Attendance Policy: At each week's ESP session, the workshop assistant will pass around the attendance form. After class, leaders and PhD coordinators will review the forms and log attendance. It's your responsibility to make sure you're counted. If you attend a session but forget

to log your attendance, email your peer leader so that they can confirm you were there. Penalties for missing class are as follows:

First missed class: No penalty

Second missed class: Make-up assignment: research or summary of a relevant topic

Third missed class: Failure in the course

Per the above policy, you have two unexcused absences during the semester, which is nine sessions total. If you believe that you'll need to miss some Friday or two during the semester, please plan accordingly!

In extenuating circumstances such as illness or emergency, an absence can count as an *excused absence*. We will only count an absence as *excused* if you present documentation (e.g. from a doctor) verifying the reason for your absence. If you believe this is the case, please inform your peer leader of the absence and email your documentation to esp-coordinators@lists.cs.columbia.edu.

Lateness: We expect students to show up on time and be present for the entire ESP session. If you have a close conflict (e.g., a class that ends shortly before ESP), speak with your peer leader. Missing more than 10 minutes of ESP may be counted as an absence.

Device Policy: Keep phones and laptops stowed during class unless otherwise specified. (If you need an exception, talk to your peer leader.)

COVID Exposure Policy: Refer first to Columbia's current guidelines; ESP will defer to those if something changes. If you've been exposed to COVID, test positive for COVID, or have another COVID-related hardship, please put your health first! Email esp-coordinators@lists.cs.columbia.edu and we will waive your attendance requirement for the week. If any session member tests positive for COVID after attending ESP, or if a staff member tests positive ahead of ESP, the next ESP session may be moved or canceled.