

CMSI 1900

EXPLORING COMPUTER SCIENCE

<http://dondi.lmu.build/fall2025/cmsi1900>

Fall 2025—Pereira 206 MW 3:40–4:50pm (01)
Seaver 304 MW 6–7:10pm (02); 2 semester hours

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Office Hours TR 2–5pm,
or by appointment (*don't hesitate to ask!*)

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Objectives and Outcomes

This course will provide an overview of Computer Science as a discipline of study, as a department at LMU, and of your peers in the major with whom you will spend your next few years! Apart from this knowledge and exposure, we want you to feel a sense of belonging in this incredible community at LMU as well as a connection to past computer scientists who have paved the way to where we are today. Long after the course concludes, my hope is that you will have gained:

- 1. An overview of modern Computer Science:** Including familiarity with subfields like networking, security, artificial intelligence, game design, web design, etc., and possible career paths in each of them
- 2. Relationships with other students in LMU Computer Science:** Not just getting to know one another, but also having study and work groups in mind for your courses and projects
- 3. General tips for success in Computer Science:** Everything from clarity of the curriculum to how to take notes/study for courses, etc.
- 4. Familiarity with LMU Computer Science faculty:** Including but not limited to faculty research (and how to get involved), sample lectures, and pearls of wisdom to take with you through your career at LMU
- 5. A sense of belonging:** As well as helpful tips for avoiding common pitfalls like impostor syndrome and procrastination—remember, you belong here!

Prerequisites/Prior Background

As an exploratory/introductory course, there are no expectations beyond your interest and earnest engagement. Most importantly, you must bring a growth mindset and an openness to new and unfamiliar ideas.

Materials and Texts

Most of the course content will be delivered live in class, with a range of activities, discussions, etc. Be prepared to take notes, copy/paste links, snap up QR codes, or take screenshots as appropriate. And most of all, be prepared to just be present, with your mind and attention in the moment.

Course Work and Grading

As a zero-semester-hour course, the most critical aspect of this course is *your attendance*. Your engagement with our materials and activities will be unique to every meeting every week. So without *you*, the class is unable to reach its full intended potential. In more specific terms:

- You will get credit (CR) for this course if you attend class enough times
- “Enough times” means *no more than two (2) absences* (excused or otherwise)—absences > 2 will result in a grade of NC (no credit)
- You do *not* need to provide reasons for missing a class. But if your absence is due to a situation where you need help or support, please notify me so we can figure something out for you
- Remote attendance is not an option, not only due to school policy, but also because you'd miss out on bonding opportunities with your classmates
- As part of class engagement, you may be asked for notes, responses, or other forms of participation. Missing these will be considered a fractional absence and will count toward the maximum allowable 2 absences before getting the NC grade

Workload Expectations

In line with the *LMU Credit Hour Policy*, the workload expectation for this zero-credit-hour course is zero hours outside of class attendance and participation. So yes, there will be no homework nor deliverable in this class that demands time outside of class meetings.

Attendance

To make things easy on all of us, we will use an in-person attendance check-in system developed in-house! Thanks to Aidan Srouji '24/'25 and our lab manager Masao Kitamura for their efforts. Please refer to the course website for details and links on how to check in.

The last day to add or drop a class without a grade of W is August 29. The withdrawal deadline is November 14. In either case, as with getting NC, you will need to repeat CMSI 1900 if you intend to continue as a computer science major.

Academic Honesty (in general)

Loyola Marymount University is a community dedicated to academic excellence, student-centered education, and the Jesuit and Marymount traditions. As such, the University expects all members of its community to act with honesty and integrity at all times, especially in their academic work. Academic honesty requires that all members of the LMU community act with integrity, respect their own intellectual and creative work as well as that of others, acknowledge sources consistently and completely, act honestly during exams and on assignments, and report results accurately. As an LMU Lion, by the Lion's Code, you are pledged to join the discourse of the academy with honesty of voice and integrity of scholarship.

Academic dishonesty will be treated as an extremely serious matter, with serious consequences that can range from receiving no credit for assignments/tests to expulsion. It is never permissible to turn in any work that has been copied from another student or copied from any source (including the Internet) without properly acknowledging/citing the source. It is never permissible to work on an assignment, exam, quiz, or any project with another person unless your instructor has indicated so in the written instructions/guidelines. It is your responsibility to make sure that your work meets the standard of academic honesty set forth in the "Academic Honesty Policy" found at:

<https://academics.lmu.edu/honesty>

Academic Honesty (in this particular class)

Due to the nature of this course, the following situations count as academic dishonesty:

- Signing in another student with their OneCard if they are not attending
- Leaving midway through a meeting once you've checked in; for emergency/illness/other legitimate reasons, please send me an email explaining what happened
- Turning in, posting, or submitting another student's work as though it's your own
- Any other action or inaction that can reasonably be argued as a misrepresentation of someone else's work or presence as your own

Course Evaluations

Student feedback provides valuable information for continued improvement. All students are expected to fairly and thoughtfully complete a course evaluation for this course. This semester, course evaluations will be administered online through the Blue™ evaluation system. You will receive an email notification at your Lion email address when the evaluation form is available. You may also access the evaluation form on Brightspace (<https://brightspace.lmu.edu>) dashboard during the evaluation period. Your responses will be anonymous and will not be linked to you in any way.

Special Accommodations

The Disability Support Services (DSS) Office offers resources to enable students with ADD/ADHD; physical, learning, and psychiatric disabilities; and those on the autism spectrum to achieve maximum independence while pursuing their educational goals. Staff specialists interact with all areas of the University to eliminate physical and attitudinal barriers. Students must provide documentation for their disability from an appropriate licensed professional. Services are offered to students who have established disabilities under state and federal laws. DSS personnel also advise students, faculty, and staff regarding disability issues. Students who need reasonable modifications, special assistance, academic accommodations or housing accommodations should direct their request to the DSS Office as soon as possible. All discussions will remain confidential. The DSS Office is located on the 2nd floor of Daum Hall and may be reached by email at dsslmu@lmu.edu or phone at (310) 338-4216. Please visit <http://www.lmu.edu/dss> for additional information.

Topics and Important Dates

Specifics may change as the course progresses. University dates (italicized) are less likely to change.

August	Course introduction/meet your cohort
<i>August 29</i>	<i>Last day to add or drop a class without a grade of W</i>
September	Knowing your peers and the ACM; practical tips and advice about learning, interacting with others, opportunities, and programs
<i>September 1</i>	<i>Labor Day; no class</i>
October	Meet your computer science professors; learn about research areas, core computer science concepts, and the state of the field
November	Looking ahead: career and professional development; academic advising and registration
<i>November 14</i>	<i>Last day to withdraw from classes or apply for Credit/No Credit grading</i>
<i>November 25–28</i>	<i>Thanksgiving break; no class</i>
December	Class wrap-up and culminating activities

You can view my class calendar and office hour schedule in any iCalendar-savvy client. Its subscription link can be found on the course website (it's too long to provide in writing).

Tentative Nature of the Syllabus

If necessary, this syllabus and its contents are subject to revision. Students are responsible for any changes or modifications announced or distributed in class, emailed to students' LMU Lion accounts, or posted on LMU's course management system, Brightspace. If you are absent from a synchronous class session, it is the student's responsibility to check Brightspace and with the professor to see if you missed any important class announcements. Students should not rely on word-of-mouth from classmates.