Session 1-a: Introduction and Course Overview

- Scope and performance objectives
- Prerequisites and required background
- Course materials and procedures

COMP 370 is about software quality and testing

- Some recent writers consider those two terms to be synonymous.
  - In their view a program that works (has no "bugs" or malfunctions) is of satisfactory quality!
  - You'll encounter books, articles, presentations, and other courses that share that assumption.
- That's naive nonsense!
  - Correctness is only one aspect of software quality.
- COMP 370 examines quality in a broad sense:
  - We shall, of course, examine testing strategies.
  - But we shall also pay close attention to issues of software maintainability, understandability, flexibility, etc.

Upon satisfactorily completing COMP 370 you'll be able to design and develop computer software that:

- is operationally reliable
  - Compared with what?
- satisfies well-defined users' requirements
  - What if they're unstated (COMP 320)?
- is easy to understand and modify
  - Why, when, and by whom?

We assume at the start that you

- are fluent in one of the C-family of object-oriented programming languages
  - Which one?  How fluent?
- know how to code, compile, and execute programs on Loyola's lab computers or your own comparable environment.
  - What if we don't?
- have successfully developed non-trivial software in that environment.
The C-family of programming languages
- C++, Java, and C# are very similar in:
  - syntax
  - primitive (built-in) data types
  - flow-control structures
  - object-orientation
- So we should be able to understand examples coded in any of them.
- But our course's preferred language is C#.
  - Our Computer Science department has been using it for introductory courses for two years.
  - The Xamarin platform
  - Help is available for anyone who wants it.

Reading assignments
- The course schedule specifies for each class session reading material, including:
  - chapters of our Weinberg textbook
  - short articles from the web
  - (rarely) other accessible material
- Please read the assigned material before the class session. Then:
  - You can ask questions in class about anything that wasn't clear.
  - I may ask you questions to confirm that you understood the material.

Presentation slides
- You can get a copy of the presentation slides, such as these, to print or store on your own computer.
  - Accessible through the schedule page
  - 4-per-page (to save paper if you print)
  - Available a few days before each class session.
- Then during class:
  - You'll rarely have to take notes on what you see on the screen.
  - You can concentrate on understanding the content.

Assignments
- As stated in the syllabus and shown on the detailed course schedule, we shall do 7 independent assignments.
- You'll always get at least two weeks to do each one:
  - Then if you have trouble you'll get a chance to ask for help before the assignment is due.
    (Of course that won't help if you start working it the night before it's due.)
- If you have special interests, talk to me about substituting something else for one or more assignments.
Grading

- The criteria are clearly set forth on the course website.

- Since the subject matter of COMP 370 emphasizes quality, grading may reflect the quality of your work even more than in some other courses.
  
  **NOTE:** Just getting the right answer to a programming exercise doesn't assure an A.