Administrivia

- One purpose of the syllabus is to spell out policies (next slides).

- Most information will be on the Web, on either my home page (office hours) or the course Web site (next slide).

  A request: If you spot something wrong with course material on the Web, please let me know!

Slide 1

Course Web Site

- "Course Web site" is meant to point you to pretty much all information for the course — readings, assignments, etc.

- You can find it via TLearn, or via the link from my home page (findable from the department's Web site, `http://www.cs.trinity.edu` or (probably?) by doing a Web search on my name).

Slide 2

Course FAQ

- "What will my grade be based on?" (See syllabus.)

- "What happens if I can't turn in work on time, or I miss a class?" (See syllabus.)

- "What's your policy on collaboration?" (See syllabus.)

Slide 3

Course FAQ, Continued

- "When is the next homework due?" (See "Lecture topics and assignments" page. Homeworks will be assigned at least a week before their due date.)

- "When are your office hours?" (See my home page.)

  Note that part of my job is to answer your questions outside class, so if you need help, please ask! in person or by e-mail.

Slide 4

- "Do I have to buy the textbook?"

  No, but it's not a bad idea; we can only cover so much in class, and the alternative reading (a short-ish online tutorial) is also somewhat limited. (Does the bookstore have copies? if not they should be on order.)

  Be advised, also, that while there is good information about C to be found in other books and Web sites, *there is also a significant amount of not-so-good information*. So use caution?

Course FAQ, Continued

Slide 5

- "What computer(s) can I use to do homework?"

  Easiest option may be department's Linux machines. You should have physical access via your TigerCard to all the classrooms and labs (not today but soon) any time the building is open. You should also be able to log in remotely to any that are booted into Linux, or to a cluster of Linux-only machines in ITS's server room (names `diasnn`, where `nn` ranges from 01 to 05). To log in from off-campus, we are currently recommending that you use ITS's VDI.

Course FAQ, Continued

Slide 6

- "What's this about video lectures?"

  This semester I'm trying out something new: Rather than presenting material via traditional lectures, I plan to present material via video lectures and use class time for more-interactive activities.

  These lectures will be available via `echo360.org`, an ITS-supported platform for making video content available for courses. (More on next slide.)

  Each video will end with one or more questions; part of your grade will depend on answering them in a timely way.

  To confirm that this is working, I've posted a welcome/test video.

Course FAQ, Continued

Slide 7

- "How do I use this `echo360.org` anyway?"

  If you point a browser at echo360.org, you should be prompted for your ITS login credentials and should then get access to a CSCI-1120 course.

  From there I hope it will be intuitive(?), but ask if not. Help is hiding under the gear icon.

  Also, the platform has a way to ask questions, but for now I prefer that if you have questions you just send me e-mail; you'll likely get a faster reply.

A Little About Me

Slide 8

- Up until recently I hadn't thought about telling students a little about myself on the first day. A colleague mentioned that she does, so — okay!

- Short version of biography: Undergrad degrees from UT Austin, math and Plan II. More than ten years in what we now call IT. Back to school for master's and PhD in computer science. Two years as a postdoc, then at Trinity since Fall 1999.

- I teach a variety of courses, but currently focusing more on courses "close to the machine". My research area (sadly neglected for some years) is parallel computing.

- (What do I do for fun? well . . .)

Slide 9

What Is This Course About?

- Back story: Primary goal of our traditional first course (CSCI 1320) is to introduce students to programming and algorithmic problem-solving. Another goal of the course as taught some years ago, however, was to expose students to certain low-level concepts that contribute to a well-rounded education in computer science. Students coming into the major via other routes often did not get this exposure and struggled in later courses.

- CSCI 1120 was added to the curriculum as a way to address this problem — i.e. to cover the parts of CSCI 1320 that might not be covered by alternative introductory courses. A few years ago we switched to a more-abstract language for CSCI 1320, and at that point this course became required for all students.

Slide 10

Course Topics

- Basic C programming, for people who already know how to write programs in some other language.

- (Review of) the Linux/UNIX command-line environment and command-line development tools.

- (Review of) basics of computer arithmetic and data representation.

- More-advanced topics as time permits.

Why Learn C? (For Scala/Java/Python Programmers)

Slide 11

- Scala and Python (and Java, less so) provide a programming environment that's nice in many ways — lots of safety checks, nice features, extensive standard library. But they hide a lot about how hardware actually works.

- C, in contrast, has been called "high-level assembly language" — so it seems primitive in some ways compared to many other languages. What you get (we think!) in return for the annoyances is more understanding of hardware — and if you do low-level work (e.g., operating systems, embedded systems), it may well be in C.

First Things First(?) — Text Editors

Slide 12

- In class I will use vim to write programs. I don't insist that you use it too, but it's a good tool for this job, and if you aren't very good with it, there's no time like the present to get better with it.
  To encourage you, see the first homework.

- (Indeed, I think this class is a good time to get more practice with the command line in general; it's in keeping with the spirit of the course, and you have an instructor who knows it pretty well.)

Slide 13

Minute Essay

- (Most lectures will end with a "minute essay" — as a quick check on your understanding, a way for me to get some information, etc., and also to track attendance. Send me your answer by e-mail (no word-processor attachments please), and *please* put "minute essay" and the course in the Subject line.)

- Tell me about your background: If you took CSCI 1320 at Trinity, who was your instructor? Do you have other programming experience?

- What are your goals for this course? Anything else you want to tell me? (Maybe something interesting you did over the break?)

- Don't forget the reading and homework for next time . . . (I will post video lectures soon!)