Did you get a “this is a test of the class mailing list” e-mail message? and/or a message about the syllabus? If not, let me know and I’ll add you to the mailing list.

Homework 1 will be on the Web soon (I’ll let you know when and a due date by e-mail).

One purpose of the syllabus is to spell out policies, especially about:

- Course requirements and grading.
- Late work.
- Academic integrity.

Most other information will be on the Web, either on my home page (office hours) or the “course Web page”.

Part of my job is to answer your questions outside class. E-mail usually works well if office hours don’t.
A Few Words About Computer Use in Class

- (I say this to all my classes. For this class it seems less necessary, but . . . )
- Checking your e-mail when you first get here is okay.
- Taking notes online is okay. Trying out things we're talking about in lecture is okay.
- Surfing the Web or playing games during lecture is not okay — fun, but distracts you and maybe your neighbors.
- Remember that I can lock all screens, project what's on one student's screen, etc. — and I will if need be. But I'd rather start by assuming you're all responsible people who will do the right thing!

What I Hope You Will Get From This Class

- More things in your “bag of tricks” — shell features, shell scripts, makefiles, a text editor, etc., etc., etc.
  (Most of what we talk about will be applicable to all UNIX systems, not just Linux.)
- Practice in reading man pages and otherwise learning more.
- Exposure to a different operating system / user interface paradigm.
Shameless Evangelism/Ranting

- There are those who will say that UNIX is obsolete — history goes back to 1969! But you can fix a lot of bugs in 35 years, and the odds are better that what you learn will still be useful years from now.

- And it's not user-friendly! Sure it is, it's just choosy about its friends. Designed by programmers for programmers — "expert-friendly" as opposed to "novice-friendly."

- And everyone knows GUIs are better! For some things and some people, maybe so. But which is more expressive, pointing and gesturing or speech?

The UNIX Philosophy

- As stated by one of its developers (Doug McIlroy):
  
  "Write programs that do one thing and do it well. Write programs to work together. Write programs to handle text streams, because that is a universal interface."

- There's more, but the emphasis is on (1) providing a set of lightweight tools that can be put together to do interesting things, and (2) providing choices to users (sometimes almost too many!)
One of the most useful things you can learn is how to learn more. Documentation on UNIX systems is not always perfect, and it's not particularly novice-friendly, but usually it's thorough.

Places to look:
- man pages. Organized into “sections” (user commands, sysadmin commands, library functions, etc.). apropos or man -k are useful.
- info pages.
- Elsewhere on the system. locate on Linux may help.
- The Web, via your favorite search engine.
- Usenet, including Google’s archives (click “Groups” from Google’s main page).

Try man man.

Of particular interest is the section SEE ALSO.

Try apropos.

Now you probably want to know about more, or less.
Files — A Primer

- Filenames — what characters are legal?
- Paths — absolute and relative.
- Permissions — how to view/set.
- Hidden files.
- Links.

Minute Essay

- What are your goals for this course? Are there specific topics you're interested in?
- Do you have access to a Linux or UNIX system other than the department's lab machines?