



**Course:** COMP 322 / ELEC 323  
**Term:** Spring 2025  
**Lecture Room:** TBD  
**Lectures:** MWF, 1:00-1:50pm  
**Lab:** Mon 3:00-3:50pm (TBD)

---

## **COURSE TITLE**

FUNDAMENTALS OF PARALLEL PROGRAMMING (COMP 322 / ELEC 323)

## **INSTRUCTOR CONTACT INFORMATION**

**Instructor:** Mackale Joyner, Duncan Hall 2063, [mjoyner@rice.edu](mailto:mjoyner@rice.edu)

**Office Hours:** See <https://wiki.rice.edu/confluence/display/PARPROG/322OfficeHours>

## **COURSE OBJECTIVES AND LEARNING OUTCOMES**

The primary goal of COMP 322 is to introduce you to the fundamentals of parallel programming and parallel algorithms, by following a pedagogic approach that exposes you to the intellectual challenges in parallel software without enmeshing you in the jargon and lower-level details of today's parallel systems. A strong grasp of the course fundamentals will enable you to quickly pick up any specific parallel programming system that you may encounter in the future, and also prepare you for studying advanced topics related to parallelism and concurrency in courses such as COMP 422. The desired learning outcomes fall into three major areas

- 1) Functional Parallel Programming Fundamentals: functions as first-class objects, benefits and tradeoffs of no mutation, lazy evaluation, function composition, scheduling streams of computations on collections of data, higher order functions, map/filter/fold functions, Map/Reduce programming model, futures and promises, message-passing programming model, Actor programming model, event-based programming model, dataflow programming model
- 2) Fundamentals of Parallelism: creation and coordination of parallelism (async, finish), abstract performance metrics (work, critical paths), Amdahl's Law, weak vs. strong scaling, data races and determinism, data race avoidance (immutability, futures, accumulators, dataflow), deadlock avoidance, abstract vs. real performance (granularity, scalability), collective & point-to-point synchronization (phasers, barriers), parallel algorithms, systolic algorithms.
- 3) Fundamentals of Concurrency: critical sections, atomicity, isolation, high level data races, nondeterminism, linearizability, liveness/progress guarantees, actors, request-response parallelism, Java Concurrency, locks, condition variables, semaphores, memory consistency models.

To achieve these learning outcomes, each class period will include time for both instructor lectures and in-class worksheets based on assigned reading and videos. The lab exercises will be used to help students gain hands-on programming experience with the concepts introduced in the lectures.

## **REQUIRED TEXTS AND MATERIALS**

There are no required textbooks for the class. Instead, lecture handouts and video links will be provided for each course module. Students are expected to read the assigned lecture handout sections, and watch the assigned videos, before coming to the lecture. We will provide links to optional reference material in the lecture handouts and slides.

## **EXAMS AND PAPERS**

There will be one mid-term exam, and one final exam.

## **GRADE POLICIES**

Grading will be based on your performance on homework (weighted 40% in all), two exams (weighted 20% each, for a total of 40%), lab exercises (weighted 10% in all) and quizzes (weighted 5% in all), and in-class worksheets (weighted 5% in all).

Final letter grades will be assigned as follows: 97-100: A+, 93-96: A, 90-92: A-, 87-89: B+, 83-86: B, 80-82: B-, etc... We might curve up. We won't curve down.

There are no make-up assignments and late work (other than those using slip days mentioned below) will not be accepted. All students will be given 3 slip days to use throughout the semester on the individual assignments. When you use a slip day, you will receive up to 24 additional hours to complete the assignment. You may use these slip days in any way you see fit (3 days on one assignment, 1 day each on 3 assignments, etc.). There are no slip days for quizzes. Slip days will be tracked using the README.md file that you will submit with all assignments.

Other than slip days, no extensions will be given unless there are exceptional circumstances (such as severe sickness, not because you have too much other work). Such extensions must be requested and approved by the instructor (via e-mail, phone, or in person) before the due date for the assignment. Last minute requests are likely to be denied. For grade disputes, please send an email to the course instructor within 7 days of receiving your grade. The email subject should include COMP 322 and the assignment. Please provide enough information in the email so that the instructor does not need to perform a checkout of your code.

## **GENERATIVE AI**

In this course, students are allowed to only use generative AI (ex. ChatGPT) to search for helpful Java libraries (ex. Random number generator). Students should not use generative AI to search for code for the programming portion of an assignment or for solutions to the written portion of homework assignments or exams.

## **ABSENCE POLICIES**

If a student misses a lecture, they are expected to review the lecture material on their own, and complete and submit the worksheet for the lecture before the start of the next lecture for partial credit. If a student misses a lab, they are expected to complete and submit the lab by the following Monday at 3pm. The date and time for the midterm exam will be announced at the start of the semester, and the date and time for the final exam will be scheduled by the registrar.

## **RICE HONOR CODE**

In this course, all students will be held to the standards of the Rice Honor Code, a code that you pledged to honor when you matriculated at this institution. If you are unfamiliar with the details of this code and how it is administered, you should consult the Honor System Handbook at <http://honor.rice.edu/honor-system-handbook/>. This handbook outlines the University's expectations for the integrity of your academic work, the procedures for resolving alleged violations of those expectations, and the rights and responsibilities of students and faculty members throughout the process.

The following policies will apply to different work products in the course:

- In-class worksheets: You are free to discuss all aspects of in-class worksheets with your other classmates, the teaching assistants and the professor during the class. You can work in a group and write down the solution that you obtained as a group. If you work on the worksheet outside of class (e.g., due to an absence), then it must be entirely your individual effort, without discussion with any other students. If you use any material from external sources, you must provide proper attribution.
- Lab assignments: You are free to discuss all aspects of lab assignments with your other classmates, the teaching assistants and the professor during the lab. However, all code and reports that you submit are expected to be the result of your individual effort. If you work on the lab outside of class (e.g., due to an absence), then it must be entirely your individual effort, without discussion with any other students. If you use any material from external sources, you must provide proper attribution.

- Homework: All submitted homework are expected to be the result of your individual effort. You are free to discuss course material and approaches to problems with your other classmates, the teaching assistants and the professor, but you should never misrepresent someone else's work as your own. If you use any material from external sources, you must provide proper attribution.
- Quizzes: Each online quiz will be an open-notes individual test. The student may consult their course materials and notes when taking the quizzes, but may not consult any other external sources.
- Exams: Each exam will be an open-book, open-notes, and open-computer individual test, which must be completed within a specified time limit. No external materials may be consulted when taking the exams.

### **DISABILITY SUPPORT SERVICES**

If you have a documented disability or other condition that may affect academic performance you should: 1) make sure this documentation is on file with Disability Support Services (Allen Center, Room 111 / [adarice@rice.edu](mailto:adarice@rice.edu) / x5841) to determine the accommodations you need; and 2) talk with me to discuss your accommodation needs.

### **SYLLABUS CHANGE POLICY & COURSE WEB SITE**

This syllabus is only a guide for the course and is subject to change with advanced notice. The latest syllabus information for the course will always be available at the course web site, <http://comp322.rice.edu>.