Figure 1 CIT178 Course Banner

Welcome to Class!

The number one skill employers on our advisory board want students to have is SQL database skills. This class is designed to give you that skillset.

Hopefully this welcome message will answer some questions you may have regarding how the course is set up and what my expectations are :)

Course Organization

This course is organized by weekly lessons which cover different topics. We begin with general information. Each week, you will build upon what you learned in the previous week. The information you learn will become more detailed as we progress through the course.

Lesson instructions, lecture notes, assignment pages, video links and other instructional resources are available within our Moodle course area.

Throughout the course, you will be working with a variety of databases including one that you will be creating yourself. You will be downloading and installing the software you need in week 1.   In week 2, we will go over how to use SQL Server Management Studio which is the interface you use to interact with SQL Server.

Please pay attention to the *Announcements from your instructor* (located at the top of the Moodle course window) to see if there are any issues or problems that need to be addressed.

When do the "course weeks" begin and end? When are assignments and activities due?

The course assignment schedule is located in the Week 1 lesson block within Moodle (there are instructions below the schedule to print it out).   The schedule outlines what we will cover each week and includes reading assignments, textbook assignments, lab assignments, discussion forums and tests. All course activities and due dates are displayed within the schedule. Make sure you print out the schedule and pay attention to when weekly assignments are due.

Most assignments are due on Monday evenings before midnight. Assignments are due a week after they are assigned in class. It is OK to turn in work early!

I am usually online every day (including weekends) - please email me if you run into problems or have questions :) If you need in-person assistance before the assignment is due, please check the Livestream office hours. There is a link to the livestream office along with the office hours at the top of the course in Moodle. If the hours don't work for you, let me know and we can schedule something else.

Most students who take the course prefer to work from home; however, you can work at NMC's computer labs (please check availability and hours at NMC's website: https://www.nmc.edu/departments/help-desk/computer-labs.html). Software needed for this course is installed on computers in the West Hall Innovation Center and the business pod in the Student Success Center. You need to use a computer with SQL Server, SQL Server Management Studio and the various database files we are using installed.

Any adjustments to due dates will be noted in the instructor announcements within Moodle.

The best strategy for taking this course and doing well involves doing your homework EARLY instead of waiting until the last minute. Waiting until the last minute is not a good strategy for completing work in this course because you are not allowing for any type of technical problem or issue, and you may not be giving yourself enough time to complete everything correctly. If you don't get assignments done, you will NOT do well in this course because your grade is based upon total points - you get points by completing your assignments!

How do I get help?

Student problems typically fall into 3 areas: problems with Moodle, problems with your software, and problems with course content.

1) **Problems with Moodle:** If you have an issue navigating the course or problems using **NMC Moodle**, then contact the **NMC Technology Help Desk**. The number is 231-995-3020. You can get Moodle help by clicking the **Online Orientation** button on the green menu bar at the top of our course.

2) **Problems with installing SQL Server, SSMS or database files:** It can be tricky installing the software correctly AND installing the various database files (they all install a little differently). Please watch the videos that show you how to complete the installations. If you continue to have problems, we can meet in Zoom, you can share your screen and I can walk you through the process.

3) **Problems with course content:** If you have a content-related question, please ask instead of waiting and getting frustrated. There are several ways you can get help in this course. You can:

    a) Visit Livestream office hours
    b) Set up an appointment
    c) Send me an email message
    d) Post your question to the *Student Questions/Answers discussion forum* to see if a fellow classmate may be able to help. (This means that all of you are responsible for checking this discussion forum frequently to see if someone has a question that you may be able to answer.)

New to Moodle?

The content for this course is housed in a content management system called Moodle. For those of you who are not familiar with Moodle, it is an open-source learning management system or e-Learning platform, that serves educators and learners across the globe. It is the most widely used LMS in the world and currently has over 68 million users worldwide. For those of you who don't know what open-source is, it basically means that the software is free for users. The open-source license also lets you make modifications to the software and freely distribute it.

We will be using Moodle in this course, so **if you are not familiar with Moodle, PLEASE go through the Online Orientation**. The Moodle Orientation is critical for online students because you need to be comfortable with navigating and using the tools within the system. You do not want the technology to get in the way of learning the content! To get into the orientation, click the Online Learning Orientation link at the top of the window (it is the last command on the green bar above the course content).

Class communication

For online students, communication is done using email, discussion forums and the *Announcements from your instructor* forum located at the top of the course.

Individual communications about grades or other more personal matters should be done in person, in Zoom, through email or by phone. **Use your NMC email account** to ensure I receive your messages and for me to respond with any communication regarding scoring; I cannot respond to messages generated through non-NMC email providers in regard to course progress or grades.

Closing Summary

I think you will enjoy this course and learn a lot of information.

I view my role as an instructor/mentor/coach/cheerleader.   I want you to be successful in learning SQL and in passing this course.

I am available in person during any posted office hours or by appointment, and I am available online via email. Student questions/problems are my priority, and I will respond to you within 24 hours (quite often earlier than 24 hours, depending upon the time of day that you email me).

 If you email me with a problem, PLEASE write **Student Problem** in the subject line. When I see a subject that indicates a student has a problem, I will look at that email first.

 If there will be a delay in my response, I will let you know what the problem is or why there is a delay. If I am gone for any reason that will impact my availability, an announcement will be posted and sent to you.

Please remember, I want you to be successful in this course and I will do everything within my power to help you succeed!

I look forward to working with all of you!

Lisa