COS126 Precept Information For Students and Advisors: What you need to know when selecting a precept.

This sheet is intended for students (and their advisors) interested in taking COS126 to understand the different components of the course during registration for the upcoming term.

Who should take this course?
- Anyone who is interested in the field, regardless of their background. More than half of Princeton students, representing every concentration on campus, have taken the course in recent years. Many students with no background in programming or computer science enjoy this course (and some of them subsequently become majors).
- Some students with substantial background in computer science (e.g., took AP CS in high school) take a placement exam to pass over this course and go directly into COS217 or COS226. Please see https://placement.cs.princeton.edu/ and contact the COS Placement Officer, Dr. Morretti.

Organization:
- This course has several components:
  - Video lectures - self paced.
  - Two precepts / week, either 50 minutes or 80 minutes (student choice).
  - One 80-minute in person class meeting (listed as C01) used for
    - Exams - required
    - Guidelines for assignments, practice exams, exam review, etc.
    - Note - the class meeting will occur *after* video lectures and precepts for the week.

Which precept to choose?
- Students enrolling in COS126 are welcome to take *any* precept that is convenient for their schedule, *regardless* of their background.
- All precepts cover the same material.
- That said, this course covers a lot of ground in one semester, and some precepts are designed to cover the material at a more relaxed pace while others move more briskly.
- We suggest you ask first students to self-describe how comfortable they feel with the COS126 material (e.g., less comfortable, somewhat comfortable, more comfortable). Anecdotally, self-identified comfort levels do not always correlate with previous experience or background.
- Here are the three "flavors" of precepts we'll be offering:
- 1. Less comfortable: 80-min extended time precepts (P10-P14)
  - These precepts cover the same material as the 50-min precepts but at a more relaxed pace.
- 2. Somewhat comfortable: 50-min Mon-Wed precepts (P01-P09)
  - These precepts give students a bit more time in the week before exams and assignment due dates.
- 3. More comfortable: 50-min Tue-Thu precepts (P08-08)
  - These precepts are more likely to be composed of "more comfortable" students.
- Students who aren't sure whether extended-time precepts are right for them should consider registering for a Mon-Wed 11:00am or 1:30pm precept -- these time slots offer both regular and extended-time options (P01, P03, P10, P11) with some flexibility to switch between the two in the first few weeks.

What to expect in a typical week:
- Students are expected to watch the assigned video lecture before attending the associated precept
- Programming assignments (for the most part on a weekly basis) due on a Sunday evening
- A typical weekly cadence:
  - Watch video lecture 1, then attend precept 1 (Mon or Tue)
  - Watch video lecture 2, then attend precept 2 (Tue or Wed)
  - Attend class meeting on Thu (as needed)
  - Submit programming assignment on Sun
- This course offers abundant resources to help students along the way, including staff office hours, lab TAs, McGraw, etc.

Please email Kobi Kaplan kskaplan@princeton.edu if you have any questions.