

Course Syllabus

Course Title

Database Design and Prototyping

Semester

Spring 2026

Course Number

IS455 A-Section

Instructor

Kevin Trainor

Teaching Assistant

Jinmo Kim

Regular Class Sessions

Regular class sessions will be held on Thursdays from 5:00 PM till 7:00 PM using Zoom. I look forward to joining you there. Please use a headset.

Optional Lab Sessions

I hold optional lab sessions two times per week. Please join us to ask a question, to discuss solutions to previous assignments, to get help with the current assignment, to discuss the final project, or just to say hello. I will work with students on a first come, first served basis.

The first optional lab session of the week takes place immediately following our regular class session. Since class sessions typically end earlier than their scheduled two-hours, I devote the remainder of the time available to helping students. Often, I can stay beyond the two-hour period if many students need help.

On Sunday mornings from 11:00 AM till 12:00 PM, I will be holding an optional online lab session using Zoom. I look forward to you joining us. Please use a headset.

Office Hours

I do not hold conventional open office hours. Students needing help with assignments are encouraged to join in the optional lab sessions (see above). Students who need to discuss confidential matters can arrange for an individual meeting with me on Zoom. If you need to arrange an individual meeting, please send me an *Individual Meeting Request* via the HelpDesk for this course (see *Contacting Instructor or TA* below).

Contacting Instructor or TA

Please do not send requests or other messages to us using Canvas or our regular email addresses. We will not be responding to messages sent to us on those platforms.

Instead, please contact us by creating a ticket using the [Trainor HelpDesk](#). The HelpDesk system allows you to open a ticket and correspond back-and-forth with us by sending and receiving emails to/from the Trainor HelpDesk system.

For an introduction to the HelpDesk system, please see [About Trainor HelpDesk](#).

For assistance in creating a ticket related to this course (IS455 A-Section), please see [IS455 A-Section - Compose Email](#).

If you are having trouble using the HelpDesk system, please see [Help Me](#).

Course Description

LIS practitioners need to use, design, and prototype robust information systems for libraries, museums, archives, galleries, and research data repositories. Today, most of these systems are implemented using relational databases. This is a first course in the use, design, and prototyping of relational database systems that places emphasis on data of interest to students who are intending to work in libraries, museums, archives, galleries, and research data repositories. Students in this course each conduct a Final Project in which they design, implement, and prototype a new relational database for an application that interests them.

Catalog Description

The course provides students with both theoretical and practical training in good database design. By the end of the course students will create a conceptual data model using entity-relationship diagrams, understand the importance of referential integrity and how to enforce data integrity constraints when creating a database. Students will be proficient in writing basic queries in the structured query language (SQL) and have a general understanding of relational database theory including normalization.

Course Topics

- An introduction to relational databases
- Exploring typical modes of accessing relational databases
- How to use MySQL Workbench and other development tools
- How to retrieve data from a single table
- How to retrieve data from two or more tables
- How to insert, update, and delete data
- Conceptual Data Modeling
- Logical Database Design Using Normalization
- Physical Database Design and Implementation
- How to create views
- How to code summary queries
- How to code subqueries
- How to work with data types
- How to use functions
- Using MySQL Workbench to back up and restore a database

Learning Outcomes

After completing this course, you should be able to:

- Identify the advantages of relational databases over conventional files and spreadsheets.
- Describe the typical modes of accessing a relational database including accessing the database using a Web application, accessing the database using a Web

application prototype, accessing the database using the graphical features of a database editor, and accessing the database using SQL statements.

- Design and implement a new relational database for an application that interests you using skills learned in this course including conceptual data modeling, logical database design, and physical database design/implementation.
- Create a proof-of-concept prototype for your database application using a database editor and SQL statements.
- Use SQL statements to do the following:
 - Extract data from a single table.
 - Extract data from two or more tables.
 - Create summary queries.
 - Create Subqueries.
 - Insert, update, and delete rows from tables.
 - Use functions.
 - Create a database schema.
 - Create views.
- Backup and restore a database using MySQL Workbench

Required Texts

Murach, J. (2019). Murach's MySQL (4th Edition). Fresno, CA: Mike Murach & Associates, Inc. ISBN 978-1-943873-10-4. Digital edition available directly from the publisher at <https://www.murach.com/shop/murach-s-mysql-4th-edition-detail>

Oppel, A. (2010). *Data Modeling: A Beginner's Guide*. McGraw-Hill.

ISBN-10: 0071623981, ISBN-13: 978-0071623988

A free electronic copy of this book is available to Illinois students at:

<https://www.oreilly.com/>

Technology Requirements

You will be completing coding assignments and conducting your final project using your own computer. We recommend that you use a computer that runs Windows (either Windows 10 or Windows 11) or a recent release of MacOS. While the software that we will be using for this course does run on Linux, there will be substantially less technical support available for Linux. If you want to use a Linux computer for your coursework, please contact us first.

You will be installing the following software on your computers for this class:

- MySQL Server Community Edition
- MySQL Workbench

All of the software and services that you will be using are free for your use during this class. I will publish brief instructions and detailed tutorial videos to help you download, install, and begin using the required software on computers running Windows (either Windows 10 or Windows 11) and recent releases of MacOS. Links to these resources will be provided in our Weekly Schedule.

Course Schedule

The schedule for this course will be available via our Weekly Schedule at:

https://courseinfo.ligent.net/2026sp_ilinois/is455_a_section/index.html

The course schedule is always subject to reasonable change to account for changes in circumstances and to correct errors. When I make changes to the schedule, I will announce them via our Canvas Announcements Forum. Postings to this forum should result in you being sent an email copy of the announcement as well.

Course Elements

1. Readings

Required readings will be assigned from the textbooks listed above and from other resources that will be identified in the Weekly Schedule. Generally, readings are chosen to accompany any lecture or tutorial video provided for the week. So, you should expect to complete the readings before playing the videos.

This course has two required textbooks (Murach and Oppel). Most of the required reading assignments are from the Murach text. A few required reading assignments are from the Oppel text.

Please note that when we are covering the material from the Murach book, the readings and the recorded lectures will cover the same material. I have marked both the readings and the lectures as *required*. While many graduate-level courses do not include lectures on the material from the text, some graduate-level learners prefer learning by listening. I invite you to try both the readings and the lectures. Then, **choose the usage pattern that works best for you**.

2. Live Lectures and Lecture Videos

Nearly all of the lectures for this course will be pre-recorded. Some few lectures might be done live during class session.

As mentioned above, when we are covering the material from the Murach book, the readings and the recorded lectures will cover the same material. I have marked both the readings and the lectures as *required*. While many graduate-level courses do not include lectures on the material from the text, some graduate-level learners prefer learning by listening. I invite you to try both the readings and the lectures. Then, **choose the usage pattern that works best for you**.

Before playing my lecture videos, make sure that you have previously played [Tips on Playing My Videos](#) to assure that you get the most from your viewing experience.

3. Tutorial Videos

I have created tutorial videos for the following use cases:

- There are a number of tutorials that explain how to do activities necessary for the course. These include installing software, reading grading rubrics, submitting assignments, and related activities.

- Many tutorials are coordinated with the exercises in your coding assignments. They represent a demonstration of the skill you will be expected to use when doing the exercise.

Because tutorial videos do not duplicate material covered by other resources, I recommend that you always play these recordings. Before playing my tutorial videos, make sure that you have previously played [*Tips on Playing My Videos*](#) to assure that you get the most from your viewing experience.

4. Coding Assignments

There will be weekly Coding Assignments. As mentioned above, coding assignments will sometimes be paired with tutorial videos. These should allow you to complete your Coding Assignment using the same general approach that has been demonstrated in the video.

A Canvas submission activity will be provided for submitting each assignment. Instructions for each Coding Assignment and a grading rubric will be published in the Weekly Schedule.

Solutions to Coding Assignments will be posted to our Canvas site just before our next online class session. You can expect us to review your solutions and mine at the beginning of our next class.

A major goal for this course is to build your proficiency in self-evaluation of your work. To build this skill, I will expect you to be able to estimate your grade on each Coding Assignment. The solutions to coding assignments posted to our Moodle site and our review of those solutions during the next class will serve as your primary feedback for the Coding Assignment.

As secondary feedback, your Coding Assignment submissions will be graded and commented upon. This feedback will be published to the Moodle assignment submission activity within 2 weeks.

For information regarding the grading of coding assignments, please see *Coding Assignment Submissions That Meet Certain Criteria Are Subject to a Minimum Score Guarantee* under *Grading Policies* below.

5. Final Project

For the Final Project, you will design and implement a new relational database for an application that interests you using skills learned in this course including conceptual data modeling, logical database design, and physical database design/implementation. Further, you will create a proof-of-concept prototype for your database application using a database editor and SQL statements.

The Final Project is an individual assignment, NOT a group assignment. More detailed instructions and a grading rubric for this assignment will be published separately.

6. *Attendance*

The iSchool expects students to attend all classes except in cases of emergency. See *Student Code on Attendance*: <http://studentcode.illinois.edu/article1/part5/1-501/>. Students in on-campus classes who miss a class meeting are expected to attend the online section meeting for that week. Students in online classes who miss a class meeting are expected to play the recording of that class meeting. If you need help locating the recording of an online class session, please contact the iSchool Help Desk.

7. *Participation*

Your participation in the course is an important element of the course. Accordingly, a significant portion of your grade for this course will be determined by your participation. Students will earn participation credit for:

- Introducing yourself by speaking during the first class meeting.
- Making speaking contributions during class.
- Making chat contributions during class.
- Actively participating in a group breakout session during class.
- Speaking for your group during debrief of group breakout session during class.

For information regarding the grading of participation, please see *Your Participation Grade Will Be Based Upon Participation Points Earned Throughout the Semester* under *Grading Policies* below.

Course Grading Policies

1. *iSchool and University Grading Policies Apply*

Many iSchool and University Academic Policies have grading implications. Please see *iSchool and University Academic Policies* below.

2. *Careful Attention to Detail is Required*

One important goal of this course is to train you to become a responsible information professional. The work of information professionals is highly detail oriented. Clients rely on information professionals to deliver a correct work product that conforms to stated requirements and best practices.

When your work is graded, deductions will be made for all deviations from the assignment instructions. Some of these deductions will be made for small deviations that may seem insignificant to you. So, it is a good practice to carefully check your work against all instructions before submitting.

3. *Assignment Resubmissions are Not Permitted After the Assignment Deadline*

While assignments may be resubmitted before the assignment deadline, they may not be resubmitted after the assignment deadline. If you should accidentally make a submission that is somehow defective, you must discover and correct this error before the assignment deadline. Resubmission of assignments after the deadline will not be permitted for any reason.

4. *Deadline Extensions Must be Requested Before the Deadline*

If you believe that you have a valid reason for a deadline extension, please submit a *Deadline Extension Request* using the HelpDesk before the deadline. I have a practice of granting reasonable extension requests. I will only grant extensions beyond the beginning of our next class session in very limited circumstances.

5. *Deductions Will be Made for Late Submissions*

The grading rubrics for coding assignments and for the Final Project include substantial deductions for late submissions. Please see the assignment grading rubrics for more details.

6. *Assignments Submitted Too Late Will Not be Graded*

Coding assignments submitted more than 14 days late will be considered *too late*. Final Projects submitted more than 7 days late will be considered *too late*. Assignments that are submitted *too late* will not be graded. These submissions will earn a grade of zero. If you are in danger of missing the *too late* deadline, and you believe that you have a valid reason for an extension, please submit a *Deadline Extension Request* using the HelpDesk before the deadline.

7. *Grade Adjustments Will Be Limited to Automatic Rounding*

All grades will be awarded on 0 to 100-point scale. Fractional values will be rounded automatically. Fractional portions of grades ending in .0 through .4 will be rounded down. Fractional portions of grades ending in .5 through .9 will be rounded up.

No further adjustments will be made to grades. This policy applies even in situations where increasing a grade by just 1 point would cause a student's final letter grade for the course to cross a threshold (i.e. from B+ to A-). Regardless of the potential consequences, grade adjustments will be limited to automatic rounding.

8. *Re-Grading Requests Made Using the HelpDesk Will be Given Fair Consideration*

It is possible for one of your assignment submissions to be missed during the grading process. This is especially true for assignments that are submitted late. If this happens to you, please submit a Re-Grading Request to the HelpDesk to remind us that your submission still needs grading. Make sure to fully identify the assignment that needs attention.

Each assignment that we grade is accompanied by a grading feedback form. Please read this feedback to understand our grading decisions. If, after reading the grading feedback form, you believe that our grading decisions are somehow unfair, please submit a Re-Grading Request to the HelpDesk. Include details in your request that identify the assignment and your rationale for the re-grading request. We will give these requests fair consideration and inform you of our determination by posting back to the HelpDesk ticket.

9. *Extra Credit Opportunities are Not Available*

I have designed the grading policies for coding assignments such that poor performance on one coding assignment should not spoil your entire semester grade (see Item 11, below). Consequently, I do not offer any opportunities to submit work for extra credit.

10. The Expected Grade for Assignment Submissions That Meet All Expectations is 95

The grading rubrics for all assignments have been designed such that submissions that meet all expectations for the *Regular Exercises* will score 95 points.

Assignments will also include a *Challenge Exercise*. Students who choose to submit the Challenge Exercise may earn from 0 to 5 additional points. Challenge Exercises are designed to be quite difficult and the amount of help available from the instructor for Challenge Exercises will be limited to hints.

11. Coding Assignment Submissions that Meet Certain Criteria are Subject to a Minimum Score Guarantee

The grading rubric for Coding Assignments has been designed to promote two important behaviors:

- Submitting your work in a properly named and formatted file. This helps substantially with grading workflow.
- Submitting your work by the assignment deadline. This assures that you will get the benefit of having tried to solve the problem on your own before seeing the solutions of others.

While separate grading rubric and assignment submission instructions documents will be published, the following is a summary of the coding assignment grading rubric features:

- 10 points will be awarded for submitting a single, properly named and properly formatted file to the proper Canvas assignment submission activity.
- A minimum of 75 points will be awarded for submissions that are submitted on time, and that demonstrate a good faith effort on all Regular Exercises. Late submissions will be awarded 74 points or fewer in this category.

The implication of this grading scheme is that you can expect a score of 85 or higher on all coding assignment submissions that meet both criteria.

12. Your Participation Grade Will Be Based Upon Participation Points Earned Throughout the Semester

The table below lists activities for which you may earn participation points, and the points earned for each instance.

Activity	Points Earned
Introducing yourself by speaking during the first class session	10
Speaking contributions during class	2
Chat contributions during class	1
Actively participating in a group breakout session during class	5
Speaking for your group during debrief of group breakout session during class	2

Your participation grade for the course will be calculated at the end of the semester based upon the total number of participation points earned. Participation grades will be calculated using a curve. The details of this curve-based grading are presented below:

Choice of Grading Scheme

Participation Points Earned	Applicable Grading Scheme
≥ 51	Percentile-Based Scheme
≤ 50	Low-Participation Scheme

Percentile-Based Scheme

Participation Points Percentile	Participation Grade
100	100
75	95
50	90
25	80
0	75

Low-Participation Scheme

Participation Points Earned	Participation Grade
50	50
35	35
25	25
<= 24	0

13. Attendance at Class Sessions May Affect Your Grade

While attendance is not graded directly, it may have a significant impact on your participation grade. All activities that earn participation points occur during class.

Academic Integrity Policies and Practices Specific to This Course

There are iSchool and University policies regarding academic integrity. Please see the *iSchool Academic Integrity Statement* under *iSchool and University Academic Policies* (below).

Designing relational databases and coding SQL statements are the primary activities of this course. Most of the learning value of these activities is the result of doing them on your own. Doing this work independently leads to expected differences between the files submitted by different students. These differences are not only expected, but they are often celebrated, as we explore the boundaries of good design and coding style.

The files that you submit as your own work in this course will be compared to those submitted by other students in your section and by students in other sections. Your submitted work will also be compared to the official class solution as well as solutions generated by AI tools such as ChatGPT. Instances of high correlation between the work that you submit, and the work of others will be investigated as possible instances of plagiarism or cheating. Both plagiarism and cheating are serious academic integrity infractions. See <https://studentcode.illinois.edu/article1/part4/1-402/> .

The submission of highly correlated work represents an academic integrity violation for students who copy the work of others, for students whose work is copied by others, and for students who create and submit a collaborative work when independent work is expected. Code generated by AI tools, such as ChatGPT, will be considered work created by others. Please do your work independently. Never put yourself in a position where your work could be submitted by another student.

Our work in checking your submissions for academic integrity violations will continue throughout the course. File comparison is a time-consuming activity and late submissions create new opportunities to discover highly correlated work. So, investigations can be initiated at any time during the course – even after an assignment has been graded.

The only exceptions to this general prohibition on submission of highly correlated work come are the following:

1. *Starter Files*

As part of coding assignments, we sometimes give you starter files. You are permitted to submit any design or code that we provide to you as starter files without further modification.

2. *Tutorial Examples*

During tutorial videos, we create designs and code with the expectation that you may follow along. Often, these tutorial examples can serve as a great starting point for the design or code that you are expected to submit for the exercise. You are permitted to copy and adapt code from our tutorial examples.

3. *Publicly Available Third-Party Code*

In certain circumstances, your submitted work may include publicly available third-party code. This includes the use of publicly available third-party code, code from books, code from help and tutorial sites on the Web, as well as code generated by AI-based tools. Whenever you include third-party code in your submitted work you must meet the following criteria:

- When asked, you must be able to explain how and why the code works.
- You must include a comment in every submitted code construct (.SQL file) that properly attributes the code to its third-party source.

Basis for Determining Overall Course Grade

The various components of student work will contribute to the overall course grade based upon the following percentages:

• Participation	10%
• Skills Practice assignments	45%
• Final Project	45%
○ Final Project Proposal	(10%)
○ Final Project Deliverables	(35%)

Letter grades will be determined as follows:

- A+: 97 - 100%;
- A : 93 - 96%;
- A- : 90 - 92%;
- B+: 87 - 89%;
- B : 83 - 86%;
- B- : 80 - 82%;
- C+: 77 - 79%;
- C : 73 - 76%;
- C- : 70 - 72%;
- D+: 67 - 69%;
- D : 63 - 66%;
- D- : 60 - 62%;
- F : 0 - 59%;

Please note that when converting overall course number grades to letter grades, simple rounding of number grades will be used. Please see *Grade Adjustments Will Be Limited to Automatic Rounding* under *Grading Policies* above.

ISCHOOL AND UNIVERSITY ACADEMIC POLICIES

Incomplete Grades

An exceptional request for an incomplete grade is most often granted to students encountering a medical emergency or other extraordinary circumstances beyond their control. Students must request an incomplete grade from the instructor. The instructor and student will agree on a due date for completion of coursework. The student must submit an Incomplete Form signed by the student, the instructor, and the student's academic advisor to the front office:

<https://uofi.app.box.com/s/sx7arobhr0gfw12teaetmp1qq32ifdrd>

Please see the Student Code for full details:

<http://studentcode.illinois.edu/article3/part1/3-104/>

iSchool Academic Integrity Statement

The iSchool has the responsibility for maintaining academic integrity so as to protect the quality of education and research in our school and to protect those who depend on our integrity. Consequences of academic integrity infractions may be serious, ranging from a written warning to a failing grade for the course or dismissal from the University. For more information see, the [student code for academic integrity requirements](#).

Statement of Inclusion

As the state's premier public university, the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign's core mission is to serve the interests of the diverse people of the state of Illinois and beyond. The institution thus values inclusion and a pluralistic learning and research environment, one which we respect the varied perspectives and lived experiences of a diverse community and global workforce. We support diversity of worldviews, histories, and cultural knowledge across a range of social groups including race, ethnicity, gender identity, sexual orientation, abilities, economic class, religion, and their intersections. For further information, see [the Academic Senate Resolution on Diversity Values](#).

Disruptive Behavior

Behavior that persistently or grossly interferes with classroom activities is considered disruptive behavior and may be subject to disciplinary action. Such behavior inhibits other students' ability to learn and an instructor's ability to teach. A student responsible for disruptive behavior may be required to leave class pending discussion and resolution of the problem and may be reported to the [Office for Student Conflict Resolution](#) (email: conflictresolution@illinois.edu; phone: (217) 333-3680) for disciplinary action.

Religious Observances

In keeping with our Statement of Inclusion and Illinois law, the University is required to reasonably accommodate its students' religious beliefs, observances, and practices in regard to admissions, class attendance, and the scheduling of examinations and work requirements. Other accommodations may be available. [Request an accommodation for religious observance](#).

Accessibility Statement

To obtain accessibility-related academic adjustments and/or auxiliary aids, students with disabilities must contact the course instructor and the Disability Resources and Educational Services (DRES) as soon as possible. To contact DRES you may visit 1207 S. Oak St., Champaign, call (217) 333-1970 (V/TTY), or e-mail a message to disability@illinois.edu.

Community of Care

As members of the Illinois community, we each have a responsibility to express care and concern for one another. If you come across a classmate whose behavior concerns you, whether in regards to their well-being or yours, we encourage you to refer this behavior to the Student Assistance Center (phone: (217) 333-0050 or [the ODOS website](#)). Based on your report, the staff in the Student Assistance Center reaches out to students to make sure they have the support they need to be healthy and safe.

Further, as a Community of Care, we want to support you in your overall wellness. We know that students sometimes face challenges that can impact academic performance (examples include mental health concerns, food insecurity, homelessness, personal emergencies). Should you find that you are managing such a challenge and that it is interfering with your coursework, you are encouraged to contact the Student Assistance Center (SAC) in the Office of the Dean of Students for support and referrals to campus and/or community resources.

Mental Health Resources

Significant stress, mood changes, excessive worry, substance/alcohol misuse or interferences in eating or sleep can have an impact on academic performance, social development, and emotional wellbeing. The University of Illinois offers a variety of confidential services including individual and group counseling, crisis intervention, psychiatric services, and specialized screenings which are covered through the Student Health Fee. If you or someone you know experiences any of the above mental health concerns, it is strongly encouraged to contact or visit any of the University's resources provided below. Getting help is a smart and courageous thing to do for yourself and for those who care about you.

- Counseling Center (217) 333-3704
- McKinley Health Center (217) 333-2700
- National Suicide Prevention Lifeline (800) 273-8255
- Rosecrance Crisis Line (217) 359-4141 (available 24/7, 365 days a year)

If you are in immediate danger, call 911.

Emergency Response Recommendations

In case of emergency, [emergency response recommendations and campus building floor plans](#) are available. I encourage you to review this website within the first 10 days of class.

Other Resources

Students experiencing economic hardships resulting in food insecurity, housing insecurity, homelessness, or other issues that may affect the quality of their work, are encouraged to reach out to iSchool Assistant Dean for Student Affairs, April Carter at acart22@illinois.edu or call (217) 333-0532.

Sexual Misconduct Reporting Obligation

The University of Illinois is committed to combating sexual misconduct. Faculty and staff members are required to report any instances of sexual misconduct to the University's Title IX Office. In turn, an individual with the Title IX Office will provide information about rights and options, including accommodations, support services, the campus disciplinary process, and law enforcement options.

A list of the designated University employees who, as counselors, confidential advisors, and medical professionals, do not have this reporting responsibility and can maintain confidentiality, can be found here:

<https://wecare.illinois.edu/resources/students/#confidential>.

Other information about resources and reporting is available here:

<https://wecare.illinois.edu>.

The iSchool Academic Support Center

The iSchool Academic Support Center offers academic success workshops; coordinates with faculty and instructors to provide support for specific courses or exams; and curates and shares academic support resources. Appointments are available online and in person in room 4020 (Academic Support Center) in the 614 E. Daniel iSchool building.

For more information including hours of operation, please visit

<https://ischool.illinois.edu/student-life/academic-support-center>.

Contact Hours

This course will require approximately 54 contact hours.

Last Revised

2026-01-12