



ITSC 2439 - Personal Computer Help Desk Support Course Syllabus

Description

Diagnosis and solution of user hardware and software related problems with on-the-job and/or simulated projects.

Credits 4

Lecture Hours 3

Lab Hours 3

Extended Hours 0

Contact Hours 96

State Approval Code 11.0101

Instructor Name Dimitrios Sellountos

Semester/Year Spring 2025

Meeting Time and Location

Online—students are expected to spend at least 3-4 hours per week** reading, reviewing, and participating in assigned activities for successful completion of this course.

Alternate Operations During Campus Closure

In the event of an emergency or announced campus closure due to a natural disaster or pandemic, it may be necessary for Panola College to move to altered operations. During this time, Panola College may opt to continue delivery of instruction through methods that include, but are not limited to: online learning management system (CANVAS), online conferencing, email messaging, and/or an alternate schedule. It is the responsibility of the student to monitor Panola College's website (www.panola.edu) for instructions about continuing courses remotely, CANVAS for each class for course-specific communication, and Panola College email for important general information.

Student Basic Needs

Unexpected circumstances may arise, but Panola College offers various resources to support students. If you need mental health services or are facing challenges with transportation, affording class materials and supplies, or accessing food regularly—issues that may impact your class performance—please visit panola.edu/resources.

Class Attendance

Regular and punctual attendance of classes and laboratories is required of all students. When a student has been ill or absent from class for approved extracurricular activities, he or she should be allowed, as far as possible, to make up for the missed work. If a student has not actively participated by the census date, they will be dropped by the instructor for non-attendance. This policy applies to courses that are in-person, online, hybrid, and hybrid.

Attendance in online courses is determined by submission of an assignment or participation in an activity. According to federal guidelines, simply logging into a distance learning course without participating in an academic assignment does not constitute attendance. Distance learning is defined as when a majority (more than 50%) of instruction occurs when the instructor and students are in separate physical locations. Students must engage in an academic activity prior to the course census date.

When an instructor feels that a student has been absent to such a degree as to invalidate the learning experience, the instructor may recommend to the Vice President of Instruction that the student be withdrawn from the course. Instructors may seek to withdraw students for non-attendance after they have accumulated the following number of absences:

Fall or spring semesters:

3 or more class meeting times per week - 5 absences

2 class meeting times per week - 3 absences

1 class meeting per week - 2 absences

The student is responsible for seeing that he or she has been officially withdrawn from a class. A student who stops attendance in a class without officially withdrawing from that class will be given a failing grade; consequently, the student must follow official withdrawal procedures in the Admissions/Records Office.

Please note: Health Science and Cosmetology courses may require more stringent attendance policies based on their accreditation agencies. Please see the addendum and/or program handbook for further information concerning attendance.

Pregnant/Parenting Policy

Panola College welcomes pregnant and parenting students as a part of the student body. This institution is committed to providing support and adaptations for a successful educational experience for pregnant and parenting students. Students experiencing a need for accommodations related to pregnancy or parenting will find a Pregnancy and Parenting Accommodations Request form in the Student Handbook or may request the form from the course instructor.

Instructional Goals and Purposes

Panola College's instructional goals include 1) creating an academic atmosphere in which students may develop their intellects and skills and 2) providing courses so students may receive a certificate/an associate degree or transfer to a senior institution that offers baccalaureate degrees.

The purpose of this course is to: 1) fulfill academic requirements of an Associate of Applied Science degree or a technical certificate at Panola College, 2) provide learners with a foundation of people skills and technical skills required for user support professionals. This includes troubleshooting and problem solving, successful communication with users, determining a client's specific needs, and training end users.

Learning Outcomes

1. Demonstrate rapport with users in problem-solving situations.
2. Analyze user problems and lead them through solutions.
3. Maintain problem logs.
4. Formulate problem-solving methodologies.

Specific Course Objectives (includes SCANS)

After studying all materials and resources presented in the course, the student should be able to complete all objectives listed below with a minimum competency of 70% on assignments and exams.

1. **Introduction to Computer User Support (1ai,1aii,1aiv,1bi-vi,1ci,1ciii-v,2a-2e)**
 - a. Identify how changes in computer technology over time have affected computer use.
 - b. Classify end users.
 - c. Identify resources computer users need and major categories of end-user software.
 - d. Identify common problems encountered by users.
 - e. Identify job market demand for user support workers.
 - f. List common ways to organize and provide support services.
 - g. Identify typical position descriptions for user support staff.
 - h. Identify knowledge, skills, and abilities required for an entry-level support position.
 - i. Identify career paths for user support workers.
2. **Customer Service Skills for User Support Agents (1ai,1aii,1aiv,1bi-vi,1ci,1ciii-v,2a-2e)**
 - a. Name important communication and interpersonal skills and customer service relationships for support agents.

- b. Specify reasons support agents must listen and read carefully.
- c. Demonstrate how agents build and communicate understanding.
- d. Identify important aspects of effective speaking and nonverbal communication.
- e. List how support agents develop a personal communication style.
- f. Identify strategies support agents use for telephone communications.
- g. Identify how support agents develop an incident management strategy.
- h. Identify how developing an understanding of different personality types and work styles can help an agent.
 - i. Formulate strategies support agents use to handle difficult clients.
 - j. Identify guidelines for client-friendly communications on user support Web sites.
 - k. Identify how to build excellent customer service.
3. **Skills for Troubleshooting Computer Problems (1ai,1aai,1aiv,1bi-vi,1ci,1ciii-v,2a-2e)**
 - a. Identify the troubleshooting process and the thinking skills required for successful troubleshooting.
 - b. Identify communication skills for troubleshooting.
 - c. Identify information resources to help solve computer problems.
 - d. Identify diagnostic and repair tools used to troubleshoot computer problems.
 - e. Formulate strategies for troubleshooting.
 - f. Identify how to develop your own approach to problem solving.
4. **Common Support Problems (1ai,1aai,1aiv,1bi-vi,1ci,1ciii-v,2a-2e)**
 - a. Indicate categories of common end-user computer problems.
 - b. Identify problem-solving processes that can be applied to typical support problems.
5. **Help Desk Operation (1ai,1aai,1aiv,1bi-vi,1ci,1ciii-v,2a-2e)**
 - a. Identify Help desk operational procedures.
 - b. Analyze a multilevel support model.
 - c. Describe the incident management process.
 - d. Describe best practices in help desk operation.
 - e. Describe the physical layout of help desk work areas.
 - f. List types of job stress in help desk work.
 - g. Identify hardware and software tools used by support agents, managers, and end users
 - h. Describe help desk industry trends.
6. **Product Evaluation Strategies and Support Standards (1ai,1aai,1aiv,1bi-vi,1ci,1ciii-v,2a-2e)**
 - a. Describe how product and support standards emerged.
 - b. Identify common tools and methods for evaluating and selecting computer products
 - c. Identify information resources and decision-making tools for evaluating and selecting computer products.
 - d. Describe typical product support standards.
 - e. How organizations develop and implement support standards.
7. **End-User Needs Assessment Projects (1ai,1aai,1aiv,1bi-vi,1ci,1ciii-v,2a-2e)**
 - a. List basic strategies for performing end-user needs analysis and assessment.
 - b. Describe steps analysts undertake to analyze and assess a user's needs.
 - c. Identify common tools that help support specialists to conduct a user needs assessment project.
 - d. Name tasks in managing a user needs assessment project.
 - e. Identify project management software tools.

Other Topics the may be included in the learning experience:

- Writing for End Users
- User Support Management
- Installing and Managing End-User Computers
- Training Computer Users
- A User Support Utility Tool Kit

Course Content

Students in all sections of this course will be required to do the following:

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1. Complete reading activities.
2. Complete terms and concepts quizzes.
3. Complete discussion activities.
4. Complete hands-on projects as assigned.
5. Complete case projects as assigned.
6. Complete a MINIMUM of two proctored exams.
7. Complete a Final exam.

Methods of Instruction/Course Format/Delivery

Learners in the traditional class, hybrid class, and online class will have access to this course via the current Learning Management System. Learners in the traditional class and hybrid class will meet regularly for discussion on the new material. Learners in the online class will only be required to meet with the instructor or the proctor in a verified testing center for exams. Details will be posted in the Learning Management System.

All assignments will be completed and submitted via the current Learning Management System or as indicated by the instructor.

Learners in both the traditional and Internet classes should use the messaging (email) component of the current Learning Management System to communicate with the instructor and others in the learning community. If you are unable to contact the instructor using this method, you may use the instructor's Panola College email address. Panola College instructors attempt to respond to all email within 24 hours when on campus or during virtual office hours. Always include a subject line and your name in your email.

Major Assignments/Assessments

The following items are assigned and assessed during the semester and used to calculate the student's final grade.

Course Grade

The grading scale for this course is as follows:

Major Exams	60%
Other Activities	40%

90 and above	A
80 – 89	B
70 – 79	C
60 – 69	D
Under 60	F

Addendum

The grading scale for this course is as follows:

Quizzes	20%
Case Projects (Portfolio)	20%
Major Exam 1	20%
Major Exam 2	20%
Final exam	20%

Other

- Courses conducted via video conferencing may be recorded and shared for instructional purposes by the instructor.
- For current texts and materials, use the following link to access bookstore listings: <https://www.panolacollegestore.com>.
- For testing services, use the following link: <https://www.panola.edu/student-services/student-support/academic-testing-center>.

- If any student in this class has special classroom or testing needs because of a physical learning or emotional condition, please contact the ADA Student Coordinator in Support Services located in the Charles C. Matthews Student Center or go to <https://www.panola.edu/student-services/student-support/disability-support-services> for more information.
- Withdrawing from a course is the student's responsibility. Students who do not attend class and who do not withdraw will receive the grade earned for the course.
- Student Handbook: <https://www.panola.edu/> (located on at the bottom under student)

SCANS Criteria

1. Foundation skills are defined in three areas: basic skills, thinking skills, and personal qualities.
 - a. Basic Skills: A worker must read, write, perform arithmetic and mathematical operations, listen, and speak effectively. These skills include:
 - i. Reading: locate, understand, and interpret written information in prose and in documents such as manuals, graphs, and schedules.
 - ii. Writing: communicate thoughts, ideas, information, and messages in writing, and create documents such as letters, directions, manuals, reports, graphs, and flow charts.
 - iii. Arithmetic and Mathematical Operations: perform basic computations and approach practical problems by choosing appropriately from a variety of mathematical techniques.
 - iv. Listening: receive, attend to, interpret, and respond to verbal messages and other cues.
 - v. Speaking: Organize ideas and communicate orally.
 - b. Thinking Skills: A worker must think creatively, make decisions, solve problems, visualize, know how to learn, and reason effectively. These skills include:
 - i. Creative Thinking: generate new ideas.
 - ii. Decision Making: specify goals and constraints, generate alternatives, consider risks, and evaluate and choose the best alternative.
 - iii. Problem Solving: recognize problems and devise and implement plan of action.
 - iv. Visualize ("Seeing Things in the Mind's Eye"): organize and process symbols, pictures, graphs, objects, and other information.
 - v. Knowing How to Learn: use efficient learning techniques to acquire and apply new knowledge and skills.
 - vi. Reasoning: discover a rule or principle underlying the relationship between two or more objects and apply it when solving a problem.
 - c. Personal Qualities: A worker must display responsibility, self-esteem, sociability, self management, integrity, and honesty.
 - i. Responsibility: exert a high level of effort and persevere toward goal attainment.
 - ii. Self-Esteem: believe in one's own self-worth and maintain a positive view of oneself.
 - iii. Sociability: demonstrate understanding, friendliness, adaptability, empathy, and politeness in group settings.
 - iv. Self-Management: assess oneself accurately, set personal goals, monitor progress, and exhibit self-control.
 - v. Integrity and Honesty: choose ethical courses of action.
2. Workplace competencies are defined in five areas: resources, interpersonal skills, information, systems, and technology.
 - a. Resources: A worker must identify, organize, plan, and allocate resources effectively.
 - i. Time: select goal-relevant activities, rank them, allocate time, and prepare and follow schedules.
 - ii. Money: Use or prepare budgets, make forecasts, keep records, and make adjustments to meet objectives.
 - iii. Material and Facilities: Acquire, store, allocate, and use materials or space efficiently. Examples: construct a decision timeline chart; use computer software to plan a project; prepare a budget; conduct a cost/benefits analysis; design an RFP process; write a job description; develop a staffing plan.
 - b. Interpersonal Skills: A worker must work with others effectively.
 - i. Participate as a Member of a Team: contribute to group effort.
 - ii. Teach Others New Skills.
 - iii. Serve Clients/Customers: work to satisfy customer's expectations.

- iv. Exercise Leadership: communicate ideas to justify position, persuade and convince others, responsibly challenge existing procedures and policies.
- v. Negotiate: work toward agreements involving exchange of resources, resolve divergent interests.
- vi. Work with Diversity: work well with men and women from diverse backgrounds. Examples: collaborate with a group member to solve a problem; work through a group conflict situation, train a colleague; deal with a dissatisfied customer in person; select and use appropriate leadership styles; use effective delegation techniques; conduct an individual or team negotiation; demonstrate an understanding of how people from different cultural backgrounds might behave in various situations.
- c. Information: A worker must be able to acquire and use information.
 - i. Acquire and Evaluate Information.
 - ii. Organize and Maintain Information.
 - iii. Interpret and Communicate Information.
 - iv. Use Computers to Process Information. Examples: research and collect data from various sources; develop a form to collect data; develop an inventory record-keeping system; produce a report using graphics; make an oral presentation using various media; use on-line computer databases to research a report; use a computer spreadsheet to develop a budget.
- d. Systems: A worker must understand complex interrelationships.
 - i. Understand Systems: know how social, organizational, and technological systems work and operate effectively with them.
 - ii. Monitor and Correct Performance: distinguish trends, predict impacts on system operations, diagnose deviations in systems' performance and correct malfunctions.
 - iii. Improve or Design Systems: suggest modifications to existing systems and develop new or alternative systems to improve performance. Examples: draw and interpret an organizational chart; develop a monitoring process; choose a situation needing improvement, break it down, examine it, propose an improvement, and implement it.
- e. Technology: A worker must be able to work with a variety of technologies.
 - i. Select Technology: choose procedures, tools or equipment including computers and related technologies.
 - ii. Apply Technologies to Task: understand overall intent and proper procedures for setup and operation of equipment.
 - iii. Maintain and Troubleshoot Equipment: Prevent, identify, or solve problems with equipment, including computers and other technologies. Examples: read equipment descriptions and technical specifications to select equipment to meet needs; set up and assemble appropriate equipment from instructions; read and follow directions for troubleshooting and repairing equipment.