

Professional Development for STEM Scholars

SLD 2600

Who am I?

- Dr. Barry Wittman
- Not Dr. Barry Whitman
- Education:
 - PhD and MS in Computer Science, Purdue University
 - BS in Computer Science, Morehouse College
- Hobbies:
 - Reading, writing
 - Enjoying ethnic cuisine
 - DJing
 - Lockpicking
 - Stand-up comedy

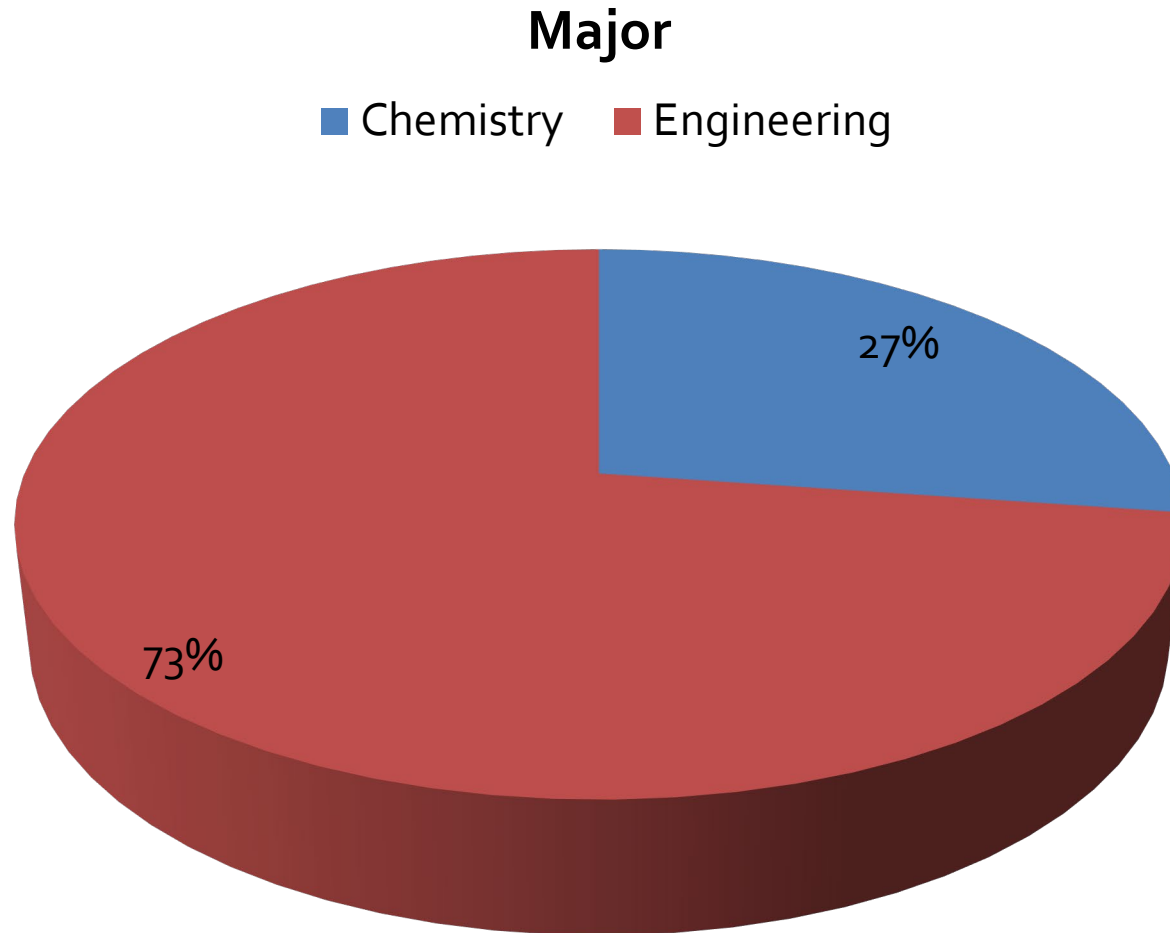
How can you reach me?

- **E-mail:** `wittman1@otterbein.edu`
- **Office:** Art & Communication C123
- **Phone:** (614) 823-2944
- **Office hours:**

M	1:45 – 3:00 p.m.,
W	1:45 – 3:30 p.m.,
F	1:45 – 4:00 p.m.,
R	10:00 – 11:15 a.m.,
TR	2:00 – 4:00 p.m.,

and by appointment
- **Website:**
`http://faculty.otterbein.edu/wittman1/`

Who are you?



Why are we here?

- State your name, and give the salutation you would prefer:
Mr., Ms., or another
- What's the purpose of this class?
- What do you want to get out of it?
- Do you want to be here?

Course Overview

Course focuses

- Interacting with COF scholars, STEM peers, and professors
- Utilizing on-campus resources
- Reflecting on individual opportunities and challenges
- Understanding the discipline-specific skills needed for success in STEM coursework
- Understanding undergraduate research and internship opportunities
- Demonstrating public speaking skills

More information

- For more information, visit the webpage:
`http://faculty.otterbein.edu/wittman1/sld2600`
- The webpage will contain:
 - The most current schedule
 - Notes available for download
 - Reminders about assignments
 - Detailed policies and guidelines

Attendance

Attendance

- 45% of your grade is attendance
 - Just show up and participate
- This class has a lot of discussion, so you have to be here to be involved
- Getting to know your fellow students is one of the best ways to succeed in college

Written Reflections

Written reflections

- 45% of your grade will be eight written assignments
- After a class meeting, you'll usually have about a week to turn in a written assignment
- These are intended to be:
 - Easy
 - Short (usually between 250 and 500 words, sometimes less)
 - Graded for completion

Final Exam

Exams

- The final exam will be worth 10% of your grade
 - **Final:** 2:45 – 4:45 p.m.
12/04/2026
- You have to come to the final exam
- But you won't have to study for it

Course Schedule

Tentative schedule

Week	Starting	Topics	Assignments
1	08/17/26		
2	08/24/26		
3	08/31/26	Why College?	
4	09/07/26		Assignment 1
5	09/14/26	Strength Finder	
6	09/21/26		Assignment 2
7	09/28/26	Generative AI	
8	10/05/26		Assignment 3
9	10/12/26		
10	10/19/26	Cohorts and Mentors	
11	10/26/26		Assignment 4
12	11/02/26	What If Things Go Wrong?	
13	11/09/26	Graduate School?	Assignment 5
14	11/16/26	Python	Assignment 6
15	11/23/26	Presentations	Assignment 7
16	11/30/26		Assignment 8

Policies

Grading breakdown



- Attendance



- Written reflections



- Final exam

Grading scale

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

Academic dishonesty

- There is no reason to cheat in this course
- The only work you have to do is to write short reflections
 - Spelling and grammar won't be graded
- Refer to the syllabus for the school's policy
- Ask me if you have questions or concerns
- **Don't use AI tools like ChatGPT for reflections**
 - I want to hear from you, not the machine!

AI statement

- Artificial Intelligence (AI) is any computer system designed to perform a cognitive or behavioral task historically believed to be one only humans can perform. Generative AI is a term used for recent AI systems that generate significant quantities of content such as text, images, audio, or video from a short input prompt, usually text.
- Although generative AI tools are impressive, they must not be used to for any written material that a student is expected to turn in for this class. Students **may not** use AI when writing your personal reflections, since the goal of those reflections is to express your views, not the AI's views.

Disability Services

- The University has a continuing commitment to providing access and reasonable accommodations for students with disabilities, including mental health diagnoses and chronic or temporary medical conditions. Students who may need accommodations or would like referrals to explore a potential diagnosis are urged to contact Disability Services (DS) as soon as possible. DS will facilitate accommodations and assist the instructor in minimizing barriers to provide an accessible educational experience. Please contact DS at DisabilityServices@otterbein.edu. More info can also be found [here](#). Your instructor is happy to discuss accommodations privately with you as well.

Why Are You in College?

Why are you in college?

- **Education**

- Acquiring knowledge
- Gaining skills
- Learning new ways to think about the world

- **Certification**

- Grades
- Degree
- Accepted evidence that you got the education

Another view

- Critics of college as a way to get a job sometimes divide it into two ways of thinking:
- **Transformative model**
 - The purpose of college is to transform your mind (and heart?) entirely
- **Transactional model**
 - The purpose of college is to prepare you for a job
- Some professors at Otterbein will disagree, but I think both aspects are important

College is precious

- These (hopefully four) years are a time when you are learning a lot
- You are forming important relationships
- Don't be confined by the requirements of a major
- What interests you?
- Seek it out!

Assignment 1

- Write 250-500 words about:
 - Why you are in college
 - Why you chose the major you did
 - When will you evaluate if you picked the right major?
 - How will you know if you did?

Upcoming

Next time...

- Strength finder: a system for identifying your personal strengths

Reminders

- Our next class meeting is September 14
- **Assignment 1 is due next Wednesday**