**Department of Computer Science**

**Fall 2026 - CS 499 3 Independent Study**
**Course Syllabus & Policies**

# 1 Course Basics & Instructor Information

## Class Schedule

CS 499 3 Independent Study, CRN: 16996, Fall 2026. There will be weekly meetings to discuss the project, including data gathered, and implementation of the prototype.

## Instructor Information and Office Hours

**Professor:** Jay Bagga, Department of Computer Science, Ball State University, Muncie, IN
Contact Information and Office Hours: Posted on the Canvas site for this class.

# 2 Course Information & Objectives

## Catalog Description

Special advanced studies of computer science topics not taught in other courses. Open only to juniors and seniors.

## Prerequisite

Permission of the chair

## Course Rationale

This class will give an undergraduate student the opportunity to work closely with a professor on a particular topic of interest to them both. This will allow the student to gain experience and credit when no formal class has been organized around this topic.

## Course Objectives, Topics, and Learning Outcomes

Objectives will vary according to the individuals study arrangement.

This independent study investigates the following research question: Does enforcing alt-text, heading hierarchy, and reading order as structural invariants at schema authoring time produce scholarly documents with significantly higher WCAG 2.2 Level AA compliance than equivalent documents authored in Microsoft Word and exported as PDF?

Outcomes include

- A working open-source prototype published on GitHub;
- A co-authored research paper targeting submission to ACM ASSETS, the premier accessibility research venue;
- A department presentation;
- A final written report.

## Course Modality/Structure

Blended. There are face-to-face meetings and topics posted on Canvas.

# 3 Course Materials

- There is no required textbook. All course reference materials are provided by the instructor.
- No software purchase is needed. The course uses open source software.
- The student is expected to have a personal working laptop computer with permissions to install and use course software.

# 4 Course Assignments and Assessments

## Course Assignments

Assignment details will be posted and updated on Canvas. Late submissions are not permitted.

## Course Grading Distribution and Final Grade Percentages

Weekly participation: 40%

Final deliverables: 60%

**A:**$\geq$ 90%**; B:** $\geq$ 80%**; C:**$\geq$ 70%**; D:** $\geq$ 60% .

***Note: +/- grades may be used within these designated percentage ranges.***

## Attendance

Attendance is expected at all meetings.

# 5 University Policies and Statements

## University Statement

We are committed to ensuring that all members of the community are welcome, through valuing the various experiences and worldviews represented at Ball State and among those we serve. We promote a culture of respect and civil discourse. If you need course adaptations or accommodations because of a disability, please contact the instructor of record as soon as possible. Ball State's Disability Services Office coordinates services for students with disabilities; documentation of a disability needs to be on file in that office before any accommodations can be provided. Disability Services can be contacted at 765-285-5293 or dsd@bsu.edu.

## Freedom of Expression

In this course, we are committed to fostering a learning environment that values intellectual diversity, encourages free expression, and promotes open inquiry. As members of the Ball State Community, we treat each person in the Ball State community with civility, courtesy, compassion,and dignity and respect and learn from differences in people, ideas, and opinions. Please review Ball State University's Statement on Freedom of Expression, the resources on Ball State's Freedom of Expression webpage, and Ball State's Beneficence Pledge.

## Title IX

Ball State University is committed to providing a safe and inclusive learning environment for all students. If you or someone you know has experienced sexual harassment—including sexual assault,dating violence, domestic violence, or stalking, please know that you are not alone. The University offers support services and resources. For more information or to report an incident, please visit BSU Title IX website or contact the Title IX Coordinator at 765-285-1545 or at titleix@bsu.edu.

**As your instructor, I am a mandatory reporter under the Title IX policy and required to report any information I receive about possible sexual harassment.** This includes information shared in class discussions, assignments, or private conversations.

**What happens after I report?** The Title IX Coordinator will email the person who experienced sexual harassment (complainant) and invite them to schedule a meeting. If the complainant **chooses** to meet with the Title IX Coordinator

- Title IX Coordinator will offer supportive measures (e.g., counseling, extensions on deadlines, course-related adjustments, changes to work or class schedules, and/or referrals to campus offices), review the policy, and discuss options to move forward.
- If a complaint is filed by the complainant or the University, an investigation will begin following University policy.

## University Grade Appeal Policy

If you believe you received a final course grade that does not reflect your performance due to fairness or a procedural issue, you have the right to file an appeal within 5 school days after final grades are posted by the Office of the Registrar. Review the University Grade Appeal Policy and Process.

## Student Academic Ethics Policy

Honesty, trust, and personal responsibility are fundamental attributes of the university community. Academic dishonesty and other forms of academic misconduct threaten the foundation of an institution dedicated to the pursuit of knowledge and will not be tolerated. To maintain its credibility and reputation, and to equitably assign evaluations of scholastic and creative performance, Ball State University is committed to maintaining a climate that upholds and values the highest standards of academic integrity. Visit the VPAA's academic integrity website (Students tab) for resources on understanding academic integrity, citing sources properly, and avoiding inadvertent academic dishonesty. To learn about BSU's academic integrity expectations and students' rights, please read the University Student Academic Ethics Policy.

Academic integrity violations include giving or receiving an unfair academic advantage (cheating), presenting someone else's ideas or work as your own (plagiarism), and falsifying academic records. Unless otherwise indicated, you must work independently by yourself. Check with me if you are unsure whether something constitutes academic dishonesty. Examples of academic integrity violations include but are not limited to:

- Using resources not authorized by the faculty member (including devices, AI tools, hidden notes, and open books)
- Using commercial study websites to find answers to graded assignments (Chegg, Course Hero, StudyPool, OneClass, etc.).
- Without the instructor's written permission, giving away, buying, or selling graded assignments class notes, exams, study guides, or other course materials to other students or to third-party vendors (Course Hero, Chegg, 24HourAnswers, etc.).
- Working with another person on any assignment other than authorized group projects.
- Sharing or allowing others to access your files, whether done with permission or not.
- Reusing your own work from another semester, course, or section.
- Sharing answers with others during exams (passing notes, texting, whispering, gesturing)
- Discussing exam questions and answers with students who have not taken the exam.
- Soliciting others to complete work for you.

## Generative AI Statement

**Conditional Use (Specific or limited GenAI use permitted)**: GenAI use is permitted only for Research Project Activities as outlined below. At Ball State, we use GenAI to elevate human potential, not replace it. To succeed in an AI-infused world, students must balance technical skills with durable skills, lifelong abilities such as critical thinking, ethical judgment, communication, accountability, and responsible decision-making that define a Ball State graduate. Developing these durable skills requires you as students to think carefully about: when AI

should and should not be used; how to use AI responsibly; how to verify AI-generated information, and; how to remain accountable for final work.

**Research Project Activities**: You may use GenAI tools for some work for your Research Project in this course. Any use outside of this permission constitutes a violation of Ball State University's Student Academic Ethics Policy. You, the student, are always responsible for the content you present or submit, share, or act upon, regardless of whether GenAI tools assisted in the process. For data security reasons, please use BSU-approved GenAI tools (e.g., BSU Gemini, NotebookLM), which support single sign-on (SSO) with BSU ID and password. Commonly used public GenAI tools carry a higher risk of data being shared externally. In contrast, when using BSU-approved GenAI tools, any data you input is protected within the BSU system. Instructors do not have access to BSU IT Center logs of GenAI tool usage, so student data shared through BSU-approved GenAI tools remain private.

# 6 Student Support Services

Students can benefit from free tutoring and coaching at the Learning Center, writing practice and feedback at the Writing Center, mental health assistance at the Counseling Center, and public speaking assistance at the Speaking Center.

# 7 Canvas and Student Privacy

## Canvas Accessibility

Canvas provides a user experience that is easy, simple, and intuitive. Special attention has been paid to making Canvas screen-readable. The Rich Content Editor encourages users to create accessible content pages (i.e. text formatting is accomplished using styles).

## FERPA and Privacy

As a student, your educational records are considered confidential. Under FERPA (Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act), your records are confidential and protected. Under most circumstances, your records will not be released without your written and signed consent. However, some directory information may be released to third parties without your prior consent unless a written request to restrict this is on file. You can learn more about student rights to privacy by visiting Ball State's BSU FERPA website.

# 8 Course Expectations and Policies

## Late Submissions Policy

All assignments are due by the time due specified in the assignments. No late assignments will be accepted. Technical issues, such as loss of internet connection or a malfunctioning personal computer, are not valid excuses for late work unless the problem stems from BSU Canvas servers. Failure to turn in an assignment will result in a loss of all the points allocated for that assignment.

# 9 Course Schedule & Subject to Change

**Course Schedule** To support a learning experience that is responsive to the needs, interests, and pace of our class community, the course schedule may shift over the semester. The most current version of the schedule will always be available on Canvas. I encourage you to check Canvas regularly for updates and contact me if you have any questions.

**Subject to Change Statement:** This syllabus is subject to change in the event of extenuating circumstances.