a humanities major's guide to cs101

by sevana wenn

so, you wanted to challenge yourself and take a class outside of your comfort zone. with zero coding experience under your belt, you signed up for cs101.

and now you've found yourself drowning in labs, assignments, and WOTOs, surrounded by people who have been coding since they could type.

buckle up!

here are 7 tips to get through the semester, from a poli sci major (though i ended up pass/failing the class, so take this with a grain of salt):

1. PythonTutor is a super helpful tool! If you don't know why a piece of code produces a certain output, type it in and you'll get a step-by-step visualization.

2. Sign up for SAGE and Penji tutoring. Duke offers lots of free resources if you need one-on-one help and feel rushed in crowded TA office hours.
3. Find a buddy to sit with in lecture (preferably someone who knows what they're doing).
4. Don't be shy about posting and commenting on Ed Discussion. TAs are usually quick to respond.
5. Actually read the Python error messages.
6. There are a LOT of moving parts in this class!!! The constant flow of WOTOs, assignments, labs, pre-labs, APTs, APT quizzes, sakai quizzes, and exams can get overwhelming. Make sure you write all deadlines down ahead of time.
7. Recognize that a lot of people in the class are coming in with experience that you may not have. It's okay to not "get it" right away.

but remember, hundreds of humanities majors before you have survived cs101! who knows, you might even switch to STEM.