

Topic Overview: Cascading Style Sheets (CSS)

Computer Science 3172

19 January 2006 (1a)

1 Purpose

- Successful students should understand CSS as a programming language with a semantic structure unlike languages they've used before (e.g. OOP, procedural, and event-driven), but similar to functional and pattern-based/logic-based languages;
- Students should understand the power of CSS for expression;
- Stress separation of form from content, and implication for accessibility.

2 Topics

- Syntax
 - rules and selectors
 - selector syntax
- Semantics
 - the cascade,
 - specificity,
 - concept of media,
 - forms in HTML and practical applications
 - concept of 'CSS hacks'
 - * have effect of presenting different CSS rules to different browsers
 - * done by exploiting browser bugs

3 Related Readings

- CSS 2.0 and 2.1 Standards
- Examples and lectures in class (and on website)
- Eric Meyer's article about quirk's mode (at the website)
- Tantek's blog post about CSS Hacks
- CSS and UI section of the website resources section

4 Major Concepts

- cascade
- inheritance
- selection
- specificity
- progressive enhancement
- degradation (graceful & catastrophic)
- external & internal stylesheets
- box model (padding, margin, width)