What Textbook Is Needed For IS 101?

None. At least a traditional textbook is not REQUIRED.

Still, students need some way to learn the material that they are expected to know by the end of the semester. If you already knew it all you would have tested out of this class. See below for your choices. Select the one (or combination) that best fits your learning style. You can start with the intention of learning one way, decide it is not working for you, and change your mind. That’s OK as long as you take that first IC3 exam on time (or earlier) to know for sure that the method you select matches your needs. You might decide to use different methods for different parts of the course, depending on your background. That’s OK too.

Remember that you are not judged by how high you score on each IC3 exam, only on whether or not you can pass. If you can pass then you have also met the minimum objectives of IS 101 and you are guaranteed to earn a C grade (or higher).

Before you decide, skim through a description of what will be covered on your first IC3 exam. Unless you have already passed one of these exams we cover them in this order: Computing Fundamentals, Living Online and Key Applications (as noted on the syllabus). Click these links to see details about what each exam could cover. (No exam of only 45 question could cover all of the objectives. Obviously the questions are pulled from a large pool. I have no idea which questions you might get.)

1. If you feel fairly confident with the material to be covered then simply complete the online training (Connect or SIMnet, as directed) to sharpen your vocabulary and remind you of things you haven’t thought about for a while, then take the IC3 exam. I suggest that most students start here. You’ll know fairly quickly if you need more background material or not. Unless you are extremely lucky at guessing, Connect will show you where you need to read a little more.

2. Use the Suggested Readings (see the RoadMap) and take notes on the Study Guides that I provide. Then go back to Connect or SIMnet (as directed) and see if the training questions are easier for you. The Suggested Readings will be of two types. Most people pick the one type they feel most comfortable with:
   a. A series of URLs to some of the better free resources that I’ve found on the Internet that cover the material. Typically there are between 5 and 8 links to short one-page descriptions or free online tutorials. Hopefully reading these will provide answers for the Study Guide that is helping you to focus on the topic covered.
   b. A chapter or portion of a chapter from either of these textbooks (or one of your own choosing). If you prefer to work with books you should be able to get a used copy for $25 or less, or use the free copy found on the CSN library Reserve shelves. I suggest that you at least look at it at the library before you buy it. If you decide to get a book just make sure that it covers the IC3 Standard 4 (GS4) which takes all its examples from
the Windows 7 operating system and Microsoft Office 2013 applications. Also, don’t jump at a $10 book that only covers one of the three exams. It should cover all three exams. Since I’m familiar with these two books I’ll let you know which chapters-pages match off against the material being covered. I don’t recommend one over the other. If you select a different book then you should be able to use the Table of Contents or Index to determine where the material being covered is found.


3. Whichever method you select, be sure to wrap up each topic by taking the Canvas quiz. I’ve tried to include questions that are representative of what you might see on the IC3 exam. If you score 85% or higher on the quiz, you probably have a good grip on the material and you should move on to the next assignment. If you score less than 85% (especially on a quiz retake) then you need to dig a little deeper. No matter what you score, be sure to review your results to know for sure which questions you got right or wrong. You can “Google” any question/answer to find our more. This is also a legitimate way to learn things that you didn’t already know.

The “problem” with any of these resources is that no one source covers it all (web site, textbook chapter, Connect or quiz). But since your exam score does not determine whether you get an A or a B it really doesn’t matter. All of these resources cover 90% to 95% of the exam objectives so, if you use them to shore up your knowledge of computers, you will pass the IC3 exams. And in using these various methods you will be rewarded with points that will boost your final grade above C.

It is important not to “spin your wheels” forever on the same topic. Try to stay up with (or ahead of) the suggested due dates. No one is perfect or knows every fact in the world. If you are feeling nervous, let me see how you are using the Study Guide and I probably can help you put together a better plan to master the material or at least give you more confidence in what you are doing.

In truth, the only way to fail IS 101 is to not take the IC3 exams. Of all the students last semester who pass IS 101, about 25% of them failed at least one of the IC3 exams. But that was the wake-up call that helped them understand how they needed to improve their study habits.