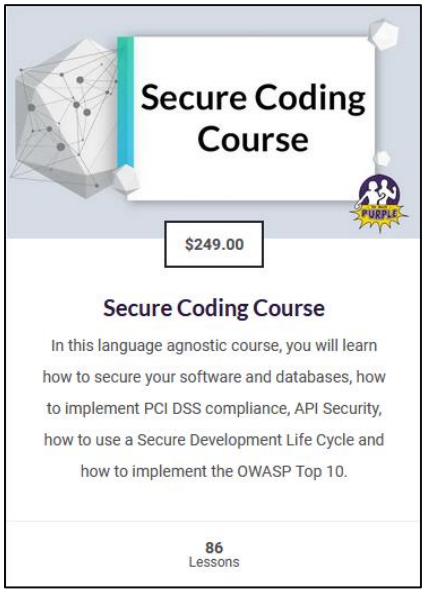

We Hack Purple Academy
Secure Coding Course

https://academy.wehackpurple.com/courses/secure-coding-course

This is one of the latest (July 2021) application security courses in the ever-expanding catalog of Tanya Janca's *We Hack Purple Academy*.

Who is Tanya Janca? Tanya is the foremost expert in application security. With years of experience in software development and cyber security as well as countless conference talks, webcasts, YouTube videos, and blog posts, it's no wonder she literally wrote the book on application security. Tanya is an excellent communicator. She knows how to reach her audience regardless of their level of expertise.

The course description states that students will learn the basics of secure web development and that it doesn't focus on a specific language. That's actually good, because secure coding principles are universal and can be applied to any language. Students can also expect to learn about common vulnerability types and PCI compliance. Since the course is code-agnostic, there are no coding exercises. However, there are plenty of examples that help give the student a general education in secure development.

I've been following Tanya's work in application security for as long as I've been working in the field, from her countless blogs and videos to her very excellent book, *Alice & Bob Learn Application Security* (see my review). In fact, this makes for a good companion course for *Alice & Bob*.

I'm always taking a class or reading a book and hoping to learn something new. So, when Tanya posted that her new *Secure Coding Course* was ready, I jumped on it. Although she aimed the content toward developers and even stated in the intro that the course may not be suitable for anyone not a developer, as a web application penetration tester on a software development team, I felt this would be great training for me. In my job, it's important to understand how web applications work so I can find better ways to break them! Additionally, when I discover a vulnerability, and more importantly, when I am able to exploit that vulnerability, I need to be able to communicate proper remediation/mitigation methods to my developers.

We Hack Purple Academy's *Secure Coding Course* contains 86 lessons with topics including a great discussion on the secure SDLC and the components of an application security program, a fine primer on secure coding basics, an overview of Payment Card Industry (PCI) compliance requirements, and of course The OWASP Top 10. I keep seeing the OWASP Top 10 referred to as some kind of standard or level of compliance. Tanya ensures that it is indeed not. It's essentially a list of what OWASP considers to be the worst application security risks at a particular time. She goes into great detail explaining each

item in the Top 10 and offers suggestions for mitigation while ensuring that students understand that this is not the end; application security goes way beyond this list. Oh boy, does it ever!

I like the focus at the beginning on the need to integrate security into all phases of development. Some developers don't get that; so, the more we can emphasize it, the better.

Of particular value to me were the lessons on secure SDLC, threat modeling, the importance of security testing, code review, and secure coding basics. The other topics are important, but these are the ones I've been able to apply directly to my job. The threat modeling section was especially helpful, as that's one area where I'm lacking. I created a plan based on the items Tanya suggested modeling, and now I use that when testing. My tests are even more focused now.

Some of the topics in this course have been covered in Tanya's various blogs and in her book. However, those subjects and a whole lot more are compiled here in a very logical manner.

Tanya's teaching style is much like her writing style. She doesn't read from slides. She cares deeply about her subject. And when she's training, it's as if she's speaking directly to you and not just to a camera.

The only improvement I would make would be to clean up the subtitles. I like to use closed captioning/subtitles when taking notes. However, some of the transcriptions are way off. I've used transcription software before, and it's never perfect. All subtitles should be edited to make them more useful to both the hard of hearing and those like me who use them to take notes.

In the input validation section, I would like to have seen examples of code with and without proper validation.

The LMS was very easy to use. However, in a few cases, I had to do a hard refresh to get the video to play. That of course has nothing to do with the quality of the class.

We Hack Purple Academy's *Secure Coding Course* is well worth the price of admission. I recommend it for both developers and penetration testers. In fact, if you're not sure (or you need some extra ammo to help get the boss onboard), they offer a free sample with 11 lessons: https://academy.wehackpurple.com/courses/secure-coding-sample.