How To Succeed in CSE Courses

Dr. Chris Bourke

Come to Class!

- Come to class
  - Attend help sessions
  - Can't expect to know the material if you don't regularly attend
    - Student during a Lab on Linked Lists: "What's a linked list?"
    - Student on a homework involving recurrences: "How are we supposed to know Big-O of recurrence relations?"; "You apply the Master Theorem."; "What's that?"
  - Quotes from RateMyProfessor.com:
    - "I recommend to NEVER skip a lecture, or be forever lost and behind."
    - "You'll learn a lot if you pay attention!"
- And pay attention:
  - Not nappy time
  - Not time to play, facebook, be a twit, etc.

How To Approach Assignments

- Don't wait until the last minute, start early
  - Save late passes until you really need them
  - On time homework averages 10% better than late homework
  - Working late means you're under more pressure, lower quality work
  - Less opportunity to seek help, fix errors, correct design, etc.
  - Lateness compounds: late on homework n, less time for homework ($n+1$)

Utilize Resources

- Student comment: "I wish this course had a text book"
  - No required text; none cover all the material!
  - Plenty of free text and online resources provided through Blackboard, use them!
- Help Sessions
- Student Resource Center
- Office Hours
- 156 Student comment 2 days before HW4 was due: "Can I have access to the SVN?" (implication: he'd ignored every piece of code done in class for 2 months)

Utilize Resources

- Use webgrader: (demo)
- …But use it *right*:
  - Not a debugging tool
  - Not a testing tool
  - Blackbox, *final* test

How to Approach Labs/Recitations

- Read lab materials (handout and resources) before coming to lab
  - Don't waste 20-30 minutes to read and understand the objective; that's time you could be getting help toward the objective
- If you think you need more time, start prior to lab
- Actual student question: "How do I start"? (had not even downloaded the handout, much less read it)

Academic Integrity

- Follow syllabus rules on collaboration
- Follow individual assignment's instructions on collaboration
- Collaboration *at a high level* is **fine**, copying is not
- Thin but clear line
- MOSS: *You will be caught*.

Future Success

- These are keys to succeeding not just in my courses, but in your academic and future careers
- Higher level courses:
  - Less forgiving
  - More demanding
- Crucial to establish good habits *now*
- This is your discipline:
  - Show some pride in your work
  - Show interest in investigating the advanced exercises
  - Show interest in learning new things beyond what is presented

Advice From CSE Students

CSCE 155E Evaluation Feedback

Instructor Advice

- Many semesters I've given advice on how to succeed in this course
- Some have taken it, some have ignored
- Maybe its better to listen to actual students of this course instead
- Fall 2012 CSCE 155E Students were asked:

  If you could give students who take this course next semester or next year any piece(s) of advice, what would it be?

Student Advice (155H, Fall 2012)

- Go get help from your TAs!
- to make sure and do the labs evenly between each language
- Allow plenty of time for the homework because debugging can be a pain if you have a non-trivial or logical.
- Start the homework early
- try to do the lab in both c and java--it will help you out in the long run.
- pay attention in class i suppose.
- Use the TAs and the resource center
- Study hard.
- Don't procrastinate and don't give up. Seek help if you are struggling.

155H Student Advice Continued

- Practice outside of class and do exercises that aren't required. Solve problems on your own as much as possible because it will help you remember what you learn, and because the TAs have a lot of students to help.
- Try to solve as many of the problems as possible in the labs before asking a TA, and stay ahead on the homework that Bourke assigns to avoid difficulties on the due date.
- talk to him
- Do the labs and ask for help when you need it. It really helps you through, and there's plenty of opportunity for it.
- Start the homework early, plan on going to the Student Resource Center or office hours to get help, because there **WILL** random nit-picky problems that can be solved easily with the help of a TA... or you can spend hours trying to fix it on your own.
- go to the resource center often

Student Advice (CSCE 155E, Fall 2012)

- As long as you work hard, you can always find help when your code doesn't work as expected.
- It takes a lot of time to get things done right but if you invest time from the beginning the end will be much easier.
- Don't bunk classes! I missed a few classes and it was really hard to catch up. Takes notes and practice programming regularly.
- Study and don't procrastinate on homework
- NEVER miss a lecture. I'm glad I never did.
- If you have any remote interest in computer programming/ operations you will love this course! Just pay attention in class, and put in some effort, and you cannot go wrong. A good understanding of mathematics and command line will also help tremendously. But most importantly, enjoy it as much as I did!
- **Partner up with some body** and find time to talk with TA.

Continued

- Be careful, it seems easy at first but picks up real quick. Try never to miss a presentation because you will seem very far behind.
- Do homework early
- Make sure you don't procrastinate on your homework that way you have time to ask help if you need it.
- **Chin up, face to the plow, and lace up yer stompin boots.**
- Do not put off the homework.
- It's nice and can take it. But take it seriously since the beginning of the class. Once u miss the pattern it might be very hard to get it later on.
- Work on homework everyday

Continued

- Pay attention and do your homework a little early. If you find out you need help it is almost impossible to get within 3 days of an assignment being due. The resource center will be packed.
- Remember to do the work.
- Do not procrastinate on homework assignments.
- Stay caught up in the class
- Don't delay the labs, they're a pain to do later
- Use the resources such as TA's as much as possible
- Google is your friend. Don't procrastinate HW and don't be afraid to ask questions.
- Practice coding

Continued

- Finish all homework on time. As well as labs. Attend homework help sessions
- Work hard, this class is possible, even for non-computer science majors!
- Bring a laptop to take notes and work the examples in class.
- Do it man, you won't regret it, dude.
- Take advantage of office hours and homework help sessions.
- Consider your homework additional lab assignments to be done in the resource center and plan accordingly.
- Make sure you go to the labs and take in the information.
- Don't procrastinate on the homework.
- If you're a absolute beginner in computer programming, it's difficult in the beginning, but the more you practice the easier it gets.
- Don't wait until the last minute to do the homework, it takes a while.