CPSC 351 — Participation Marks

Participation marks in CPSC 351 are intended to encourage students to participate in activities that will enhance their learning, improve soft skills that will be helpful in their careers, help other students to learn, or (sometimes) improve the course. These marks will make up 5% of each student's grade in this course.

No participation marks will be awarded during the first two weeks of classes, because students might still be joining the course then. However instructors and teaching assistants will be describing the processes used, so that students are prepared when participation marks are rewarded.

These marks are being used differently, this term, than they have been used in the past — a few things are being tried for the first time.

Stuff That Should Be Easy To Do

3% of each student's mark will be based on marks earned through the following two (equally weighted) activities:

1. *Answering Tophat Questions during Lectures.* During the lecture, Tophat will be used the instructor to ask the class questions. Each student can earn participation marks by using Tophat to answer them.

   Correctness of your answers will ***not*** be counted when participation marks are given but, of course, you should try to answer questions correctly — because the instructor will be using students' answers to these questions to make sure that concepts are understood, or give additional information when it seems that this is necessary.

2. *Attendance in Tutorials.* Tophat will be used to take attendance in tutorials. Sometimes this will happen at the beginning of the tutorials, but this might also happen near the end. Nothing more will be needed, to earn the participation marks for this, than to use Tophat to show that you present at the tutorial.

Things That Might Make You Stretch a Bit More

2% of each student's mark will be based on activities #3–#6:

3. *Participation (No: Not Just "Showing Up") in Tutorials.* At various points during the term (at least once each month and more often, if possible — but probably not in every tutorial), activities (that the teaching assistant can easily observe and report to the instructor) will be conducted in tutorials, and used to award marks.

   These activities will include students answering questions that have been prepared by the instructor and that are presented by the teaching assistants during the tutorial. Either the teaching assistants will collect students' written answers and will deliver them to the instructor for assessment, or written answers will be submitted using Tophat.

   It time and circumstances allow then students might also earn these marks by presenting their solutions for tutorial exercise problems, for comment, to the teaching assistant and other students in the tutorial. Note that ***a solution to a problem does not have to be complete, or correct, in order for it to be helpful to present and discuss it:*** Sometimes "looking for the problem", in something, helps learning more than reviewing a solution that is both complete and correct!

4. *Giving Feedback to Other Students using ITP Metrics.* Students will be working in groups, to complete assignments — and students will be given a way to provide ***polite*** and ***constructive*** feedback to other members of their groups, that the instructor can see. There will probably be an opportunity to do this five times — each time, shortly after part of an assignment has been submitted. While the instructor will know the identify of students giving feedback, other students will not.

   Deadlines for giving this kind of feedback will be announced in the first few weeks of the term.

5. *Helping to Improve the Course.* At three times during the term (after the first few weeks, near the middle of the term, and near the end of classes) students will have the chance to complete surveys to give feedback to the instructor about the course.

   Of course, you may ask questions or give feedback at other times too, and this will generally be appreciated! However, I do not know of a straightforward, fair, and accurate way to keep track of something like this, so only responses for the above surveys will be used to award gold stars to this activity.

6. *Stuff I Haven't Thought of Yet, or That You Surprise Me With.* As students, you might do things that are unexpected, and show your learning or help to improve the course in unanticipated ways. This final item will be used to give credit for this.

Notes About These Activities

- Some students might find these to be a bit more challenging: Activity #3 (below) might include your **presenting your work** in front of a small group of students, along with a teaching assistant, and receiving feedback about it. Activities #3, #4 and #5 all involve **reflection** — thinking about something about the course, describing it, and suggesting positive change.

  These are intended to help you to develop and improve **"soft skills" — involving communication, presentation, and teamwork — that are often important for the work of a professional computer scientist.**

- For activities #3–#5, you can expect to earn participation marks by making sincere *attempts* at things — no matter how "successful" you are. It will be possible to earn enough "gold stars" to receive full participation marks using activities #1–#5.

  On the other end, activity #6 is much more open-ended and student driven — and gold stars will only be awarded for this final activity when you excel. As noted above these will all be "bonus" gold stars, because full participation marks can be earned without your receiving any gold stars for this final activity at all.

- The number of points that you have received, so far, for activities #1 and #2 can be checked by checking "Grades" in Tophat.

  Activities #3–#6 each have grade items in D2L. These will be used to record the number of "gold stars" that you have earned for each of these activities throughout the term.