Introduction To CPSC 409

James Tam

Pictures: All courtesy of James Tam

James Tam

Contact Information (James Tam)

• Days/times of availability (the first lectures of the week)
- MT: 2:30 – 3:00 PM via a Zoom link.
  • URL: https://ucalgary.zoom.us/j/93114407392
  • Passcode: hope
- Please identify yourself as a CPSC 409 student.

• And of course you can send email:
- Since I teach more than one course and to make it easier to flag your emails include the course name and number in the subject line of the email 'CPSC 409'
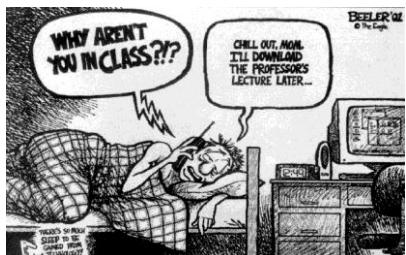
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Course Resources

• Recommended but not required:
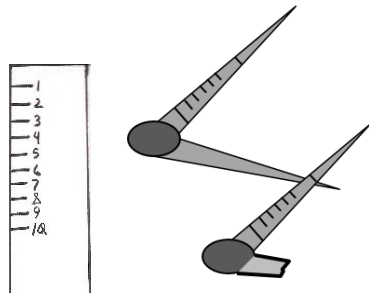- "A History of Computing Technology" by Michael R. Williams. (IEEE)

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How To Use The Course Resources

•They are provided to support and supplement this class.

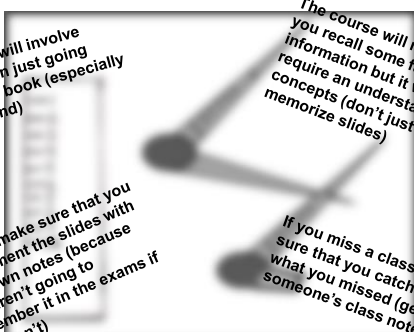•Neither the course notes nor the text book are meant as a substitute for regular class attendance.

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How To Use The Course Resources (2)

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How To Use The Course Resources (2)

Lectures will involve more than just going over the book (especially at the end)

The course will require that you recall some factual information but it will also require an understanding of concepts (don't just memorize slides)

In class make sure that you supplement the slides with your own notes (because you aren't going to remember it in the exams if you don't)

If you miss a class make sure that you catch up on what you missed (get someone's class notes)

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Approach To Lectures & Exams: Dates

- Important event, remembering exact dates can be tricky
  - September 1, 1939

  - September, 1931
  - December, 1941

- What you should be able to do in this class is have an idea of when events occurred (order).
  - World War I < World War II
  - Korean conflict > World War II
  - You should at least know the decade of when events occurred, inventions were created e.g. World War I occurred during the 1910s (it was actually 1914 – 1918) although your focus should be events related to computer history and the people that were a part of that history.
    - FYI: I count years using the commonly used approach (0 – 9) so referring to a decade such as the 80s means (1980 – 1989).

Evaluation For This Course

- Exams held during normal class time
  - Midterm #1: (Worth 33.33% of the term mark)
  - Midterm #2: (Worth 33.33% of the term mark)
- Registrar scheduled exam (it's actually a midterm that occurs at the end rather than a regular final)
  - Midterm examination #3: **TBA** (Worth 33.34% of the term mark)
- Due to the size of the class (almost tripled with no TA funding for marking help) the bulk of the examinations will consist of multiple choice questions which may be supplemented by non-multiple choice questions.
- Examinations will be based on lecture material which will be structured around but not limited to the course notes.
  - You can be tested on what is covered during the scheduled lecture time.
- Illness: you can have **one** exam dropped.
  - The remaining two exams will be weighted equally.
  - Old approach (backup):
    - You need to let me know if you are sick **before** the exam (not afterwards).
    - **A good reason (e.g. illness) and documentation (e.g. a note from a medical doctor) is needed.**
  - **Current approach (still in progress with the faculty of science)**
    - Requests are centralized and will be made via web form (not yet available).
    - A good reason and documentation to backup the reason are still required.

Examinations: Allowed Resources

- Exams are open book.

- Resources that can be used include:
  - the online lecture notes created by the course instructor,
  - any lecture videos provided with the course resources,
  - the recommended course text book (as well as the external resources specifically recommended in the course notes).
  - any notes that you have created yourself ("in class lecture notes").

- You should not be using other resources (online or non-online).
  - One example resource (but not the only one) that you should not use for examinations includes tools such as ChatGPT.

Determining The Term Grade

- Examinations will be awarded a grade point (e.g. 3.0, 3.1, 3.2…) and multiplied by the weight.
  - Your raw exam percentage will be mapped to this grade point.
  - The cut off scales will be provided some time after the exams are graded.
  - One example partial scale (used for illustration purposes and not an official cut off).

Minimum percent	Grade point
…	…
50	1.0 (this is not 25% because a GPA != percent, D is not a 25%)
48	0.9
46	0.8
…	…

- The weighted grade points will then be summed in order to determine the course grade point.
  - E.g. term GPA = $(4.0*0.3333) + (3.0*0.3333) + (3.5*0.3334)$
            $= 1.3332 + 0.9999 + 1.1669$
            $= 3.5$

GPA To Letter Cutoffs

Official UC cutoffs

Official university cut-offs	Letter	Term GPA
4.3 and above	A+	4
4 to less than 4.3	A	4
3.7 to less than 4	A-	3.7
3.3 to less than 3.7	B+	3.3
3 to less than 3.3	B	3.0
2.7 to less than 3	B-	2.7
2.3 to less than 2.7	C+	2.3
2 to less than 2.3	C	2.0
1.7 to less than 2	C-	1.7
1.3 to less than 1.7	D+	1.3
1 to less than 1.3	D	1.0
0 to less than 1	F	0

The Tam cutoffs

Tam cut-offs	Letter
4.15 and above	A+
3.85 to less than 4.15	A
3.5 to less than 3.85	A-
3.15 to less than 3.5	B+
2.85 to less than 3.15	B
2.5 to less than 2.85	B-
2.15 to less than 2.5	C+
1.85 to less than 2.15	C
1.5 to less than 1.85	C-
1.15 to less than 1.5	D+
0.7 to less than 1.15	D
0 to less than 0.7	F

- Because the cutoffs are lower than the official cutoffs your term letter grade won't be adjusted upward regardless of how close your term GPA is to the cutoff for the next letter.
- **A GPA is not a percentage** e.g. a D/1.0 passing grade does not equate to a 25% score in a class (of course)

Your Term Letter Grade

- After being assigned a letter grade for a class regardless of how it was derived then the numeric value for that letter uses the standard university values e.g. for determining your term average and your overall average.
  - The GPA to letter cut off scale is not known the Registrar and won't 'lower' your score in this class e.g. a 'B' grade counts as 3.0 not 2.85 for your overall academic performance.

2.85 to less than 3.15	B		

Grade	Grade Point Value	Description
A+	4.00	Outstanding performance
A	4.00	Excellent performance
A-	3.70	Approaching excellent performance
B+	3.30	Exceeding good performance
B	3.00	Good performance
B-	2.70	Approaching good performance
C+	2.30	Exceeding satisfactory performance
C	2.00	Satisfactory performance
C-	1.70	Approaching satisfactory performance.
D+	1.30	Marginal pass. Insufficient preparation for subsequent courses in the same subject.
		Minimal Pass. Insufficient preparation for subsequent courses in the same subject.
D	1.00	The Faculty of Law utilizes a 'D' grade that does not carry weight in calculating the grade point average. This will be noted in the calendar description as 'Not Included in GPA' where applicable.
		Failure. Did not meet course requirements.
F	0.00	Several faculties utilize an F grade that does not carry weight in calculating the grade point average. This will be noted in the calendar description as 'Not Included in GPA' where applicable.

Approach To Lectures: Factual Information

- All three course instructors have tried to cover as broad a time range as possible.
  - Mike Williams: from times of Ancient Egypt ~1950s
  - Chris Walpole: from times of Ancient Egypt ~1980s (plus the "History of Chris Walpole through the semester).
  - This exposes students to many topics and there's references if additional details are desired.
    - All three of us have focused on breath over depth.
    - Unlike other science courses you will focus on 'knowing' rather than 'deriving'.
- Knowing facts is an important component of the course
  - E.g., Tim Berners Lee was the inventor of the (protocols behind) World Wide Web
- But this course doesn't just consist of memorizing information:
  - Sometimes an understanding of concepts and technology will be taught and evaluated
  - E.g., Explain how the finger reckoning method can be used to multiply any two numbers between 6 and 9.

Videos

- Along with in-class demonstrations videos will be used to illustrate how different technologies work and flesh out the biographies.
- The material in the videos will overlap with concepts in lecture but examinations won't cover information unique to a video.

The Tam "Remote Learning House Rules"

- Some of the common sense rules and social norms that apply for face-to-face to learning also apply to the online version e.g. turn taking.
- Please do ask questions!
- But when you have a question use the "raise your hand" feature in Zoom: `Reactions -> Raise hand`
  - Of course you shouldn't just turn on your microphone and start talking.
  - Avoid using the text chat (unless you don't have working mic.)
    - Text chat messages go to me (use it after you raise your hand but your audio input device isn't working).

The Tam "In Person House Rules"

- I will endeavor to keep the lecture within the prescribed time boundaries

- You won't pack up and end before time is up (that includes those "Fridays we want to start the weekend classes".

The Tam "In Person House Rules"

- No recordings/captures without permission during class please

  - Students with documentation from the SAS are probably okay.
- (Your learning tends to increase with additional levels of engagement).

The Tam "In Person House Rules"

- Quiet whispering is OK…
- But "I can hear it" then you are probably disturbing the students around you.
  - "Take it outside" if you have urgent matters to discuss.

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