

Course Policies

1 THE Principle

Taking any unfair advantages over other class members is not allowed. It is everyone's responsibility to maximize the level of fairness in this class.

2 Honesty

Following the principle, any form of cheating, lying, or plagiarism will not be tolerated. Students can get zero scores and/or fail the class for these kinds of misconducts.

3 Grade

Following the principle, it is the instructor's responsibility to grade the students fairly by their performance during this course. The grade will be generally based on the homework and final project scores, and can be fine-tuned by the student's participation in in-class and after-class discussions. There will be no midterm and no final.

4 Collaboration and Open-Book

Discussions on course materials and homework solutions are encouraged. But *you should write the final solutions alone and understand them fully*. Books, notes, and Internet resources can be consulted, but *not copied from*.

Since everyone needs to write the final solutions *alone*, there is absolutely *no need* to lend your homework solutions and/or source codes to your classmates at any time. In order to maximize the level of fairness in this class, lending and borrowing homework solutions are both regarded as dishonest behaviors and will be punished according to the honesty policy.

5 Homework Sets

Approximately, seven to eight homework sets will be given on a bi-weekly basis, and will be due one week after they are assigned (unless otherwise announced). Each homework set contains four to five problems and about half of them will be programming assignments. It is the students' responsibility to justify their solutions clearly, and the TAs' responsibility to evaluate the solutions fairly.

Following the principle, late homework submissions lead to penalty. Late parts of the homework submission lose 20% of their value per day (or fractions thereof). Following the principle, *no individual extensions will be granted* unless the instructor is absolutely sure that no unfairness is involved in the extensions (e.g. institute-established cases of illness or emergency).

For programming assignments, students can write their code using any platforms/languages, but are not allowed to use any sophisticated packages. For instance, when being asked to implement the neural network algorithm, students cannot use any part of the `nnet` toolbox in MATLAB. It is the students' responsibility to check with the TA on what packages can and cannot be used for their programming assignments *before* writing their programs. Students need to upload their source code to designated places, which will be announced later. Solutions that come without the associated source code lose 90% of their value.

6 Final Project

The final project and its associated policies will be announced on or before 12/18/2008, and its report will be due on 01/15/2009.

7 English

The course is designed to be mostly taught in an English environment. Mandarin will be allowed only during face-to-face conversations (including in-class question discussions, TA sessions and instructor office hours). English will be used for all other purposes, including but not limited to teaching, homework writing, email communications, and forum discussions.

Acknowledgement

The principle is rooted from the Caltech honor code. Many of the policies are directly or indirectly inspired by the course policy of Caltech CS156.