

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 negative/zero scores and/or fail the class and/or be kicked out of school and/or receive other punishments for those 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 based on the homework, exam, and final project scores. There will be no midterm exam, but there will be a final exam (please check the syllabus for the exact date).

4 Collaboration, Open-Book, and Open-AI¹

Discussions regarding course materials and homework are encouraged, but *you must write your final solutions independently and understand them fully*. While you may consult books, notes, and internet resources (including AI tools), you may *not copy* directly from them.

Because all work must be completed independently, there is no valid reason to share your homework solutions, source code, or AI interaction logs with classmates at any time. To ensure fairness across the class, both lending and borrowing these materials are considered academic dishonesty and will be penalized according to the honesty policy.

Using AI tools to assist with your homework is acceptable, provided you do not directly submit their output as your own. We strongly encourage you to save your AI prompts and interaction logs; having this record allows us to give you the benefit of the doubt if any questions about the originality of your work arise.

5 Homework Sets

Approximately, six homework sets will be given on a bi-weekly basis, and will be due two weeks after they are assigned (unless otherwise announced). Parts of the homework problems 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. The late homework loses 10% of its value per 12 hours (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).

We grant each student four late half-days (nicknamed gold medals) that are free from the lateness penalty. Each medal can be applied to one homework set. You can use all those medals together on one homework set, use them separately on different homework sets or choose to not use them at all. The steps for using the medals will be announced later.

For programming assignments, students are permitted to use any platform, programming language, or software package, including (vibe) coding tools, *unless otherwise noted in the assignment*. However, if your source code is generated using generative AI or automated tools, you are required to *write block-by-block comments in your own words in the source code to demonstrate your understanding of the code's underlying logic*. Similar to our policy above, we strongly encourage you to save your AI prompts and

¹not the company ;-)

interaction logs; having this record allows us to give you the benefit of the doubt if any questions about the originality of your work arise.

The homework set will consists of multiple-choice questions for automatic grading. Nevertheless, students are required to write down their derivation steps and upload them to designated places for TAs' selective grading. Students also need to upload their source code to designated places, which will be announced later. Solutions that come without derivation steps will receive an automatic zero, and so will programming solutions that come without source code.

Acknowledgment

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 and Caltech CS129.