

Grading

- Take-home Midterm I – 15%;
- Take-home Midterm II – 20%;
- Take-home Final – 30%.
- Problem sets – 35%.

Participation

Your tentative final grade is computed based only on the four categories above. However, the course staff understands that sometimes this numerical grade is not representative of your performance, and “participation” is an opportunity to address this. In particular, there is no such thing as “negative participation” which can hurt your grade — participation can only help (by giving you a small bump to your final grade). There is no formula for participation bumps. Below is a non-exhaustive list of what is considered participation:

- Solving extra credit problems.
- Performing “above and beyond” on the open-ended Strategy Design Assignments.
- Participating in lecture in a manner which benefits your classmates (i.e. by answering questions, or asking insightful questions).
- Participating in precept in a manner which benefits your classmates.
- Participating on Piazza in a manner which benefits your classmates.
- Participating in office hours in a manner which benefits your classmates.
- Providing useful feedback on MTA.

For contrast, here are some non-examples of participation:

- Attending lecture (please attend lecture anyway!).
- Attending precept (please attend precept insofar as you find it valuable).
- Attending office hours (please attend office hours insofar as you find them valuable).
- Being kind to the course staff (please be kind to the course staff anyway!).
- Optimizing statistics displayed to instructors on Piazza.
- Providing unhelpful feedback on MTA (please opt out of MTA if you do not intend to provide helpful feedback!).

Mechanical
TA

We will use Mechanical TA for submission and grading of assignments. This is a peer-evaluation software developed by researchers at the University of British Columbia. **Your grade on every assignment will be determined solely by the course staff, without looking at peer evaluation. How your peers evaluate your assignment has no impact on your grade.**

- **Purpose:** Evaluating your peers’ assignments has pedagogical value, especially to the *grader* (you will write better solutions if you have experience evaluating them), but also to the *grantee*.
- **Purpose:** With such a big class, staff grading may take several weeks. You will get quicker feedback from your peers while the assignment is still fresh in your mind.
- **Purpose:** Tools from this class are necessary to design good peer-evaluation mechanisms (e.g. how to incentivize peers to evaluate thoroughly and accurately), so there is also pedagogical value specific to this class.
- Peer grading the warmup PSet and PSet 1 will be mandatory. After that, it will be opt-in.
- If you are opted-in (plus for warmup PSet and PSet 1), two days after assignments are due, you will be randomly assigned 1-2 submissions to grade. These will be due roughly a week later. You should aim to spend roughly as much time per submission as you would like a member of the course staff to spend grading your own submission.
- Your evaluation will **not** factor into the grantee’s grade.

Homework
Logistics

- Homeworks will be due on Mondays at 11:59pm, and assigned at least one week prior to the due date. Homeworks will be due approximately every two weeks.
- Handwritten solutions will generally not be accepted. You may use the provided LaTeX templates to type your solutions, or any other template/online LaTeX editor. Assignments must be submitted to Mechanical TA.
- Some assignments will feature extra credit. Extra credit will not add to the assignment score, but will contribute heavily to “participation.” Your extra credits should be written very clearly in order to receive “full marks.” Extra credit submissions which are clear but incomplete will generally get partial marks. Extra credit submissions which are unclear or difficult to evaluate may not always receive partial marks.
- Regrade requests: Regrade requests should be submitted through Mechanical TA within 10 days of the assignment being graded. A regrade request on a problem will cause that entire problem to be regraded.
- You should make best efforts to anonymize your submission (e.g. do not put your name in the document body or title). But there are no repercussions if you forget.
- There will be five homeworks, plus an additional warmup homework.

Collaboration
Policy

- **You should not consult collaborators or references while writing your solutions.**
- Unless otherwise specified, you **may** collaborate with any number of other students in the class, or consult any outside references to *develop* your solutions. You may brainstorm, write on a whiteboard, and even completely solve the problem with others. You may even learn a complete solution during office hours with the course staff. **But you must write up your own solutions without collaboration.**
- There are some exceptions to the policy above: If somehow you wind up with solutions written by me or the course staff (this year or in any previous years), you may not consult this source. Outside of official channels like office hours or Piazza, you should also not get help from someone who is not currently enrolled in the class.
- You should feel free to ask any clarifying questions regarding the collaboration policy.
- You should list all collaborators and external references used in your collaboration statement.
- A portion of each homework assignment may be designated as a *no-collaboration* portion, in which case you **may not** collaborate with other students or consult outside references. You **may** still discuss the problem with course staff. The purpose of these problems are to give you experience solving an entire problem start-to-finish on your own before the exams.

Midterms

There will be two take-home midterms. Each will last one week. The format will be similar to homeworks, except **you may not collaborate or consult outside references at all**. You may visit office hours to ask clarifying questions, but the TAs will in general not provide guidance. The midterms will take place roughly once in early March and once in late April.

Final

There will be a take-home final announced roughly at the beginning of finals period, and due at the end. The format will be the same as the midterms.

Late Policy

No late midterms or finals will be accepted. For PSets, you may use up to 4 late days throughout the semester, and these are intended to cover events such as unexpected illness, an out-of-town event, etc. (although you are free to use them for any reason you like without justification). You may use only up to 2 late days on a single assignment, and only an integer number of late days. Outside of this policy, no late submissions will be accepted.^a

^aIf you have truly extenuating circumstances that fall outside the guidelines of this policy, you should ask your dean to write a quick email on your behalf. Unfortunately with the current class size, we cannot make individual exceptions without outside involvement.