

Grading

- Take-home Midterm – 30%;
- Take-home Final – 30%.
- Problem Sets/Strategy Designs – 40%.

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 not be accepted. You may use the provided LaTeX templates, or any other template/online LaTeX editor. Assignments must be submitted to codePost.
- Some assignments will feature extra credit. Extra credit will not add to the assignment score, but will contribute heavily to “participation.” 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. Some extra credits are very challenging, and can be useful to gauge whether you want to pursue an IW in this area.
- 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. Each of the five homeworks have an associated “Strategy Design” challenge, which is due a few days later.

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 should 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 [course discussion forum], 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.

Exams

Take-home exams have similar format to PSets, but **you may not collaborate or consult outside references**. You may ask clarifying questions, but we will *not* provide hints/tips/guidance. The course staff may appear a bit robotic while answering questions about exams, because we are making a serious effort to stick strictly to a “no hints” policy.

Appeals

Graders sometimes make mistakes. When this happens, you can submit an appeal through codePost. In order to keep course logistics manageable, appeals must be submitted through codePost by the posted deadline — codePost will not accept late appeals. Your appeal must clearly and concisely state a concrete mistake that you believe the grader made. For example:

- “Grader said I didn’t say X, but I did say X.”
- “Grader feedback says only ‘good job!’, but they checked 15/20 on the rubric.”
- “Grader was *extremely* subjectively harsh — multiple points were taken off for a typo.”
- Asking for another set of eyes, or a vague complaint, will generally not succeed. A successful appeal should point to a concrete discrepancy between the rubric and the grader’s evaluation.
- To be extra clear: if an appeal does not clearly highlight a concrete mistake or confusion by the grader, it will typically be returned without being considered.

Ceilings and Floors

- In order to discourage students from stressing about getting every last minor detail perfect, all PSet scores will be capped at $\approx 95\%$ of the maximum total points. For example, if PSet 1 has 100 total points, and you score 97, your score will be 95/95.
- In order to discourage students from stressing about writing something frantic for problems they are truly stuck on, all *problem* scores will be floored at 10 – 15% of the maximum points. For example, if PSet 1 Problem 1 has 20 total points and you write “I don’t know.”, you will get 2/20 for Problem 1. You are encouraged to write “I don’t know”, but you will earn these points if you leave the problem blank, or write something that does not earn more points. If you have *concrete* partial progress, you are encourage to write it for partial credit.

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, out-of-town events, etc. (but you are free to use them for any reason 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, late submissions will incur a substantial penalty**, and I generally intend to stick to this policy verbatim.^a You may not use late days on Strategy Designs (due to the logistics of managing team submissions and running the entire class’s code at once).

^aUnder *truly exceptional circumstances*, you should email me and we will make accommodations.

Participation

Your tentative final grade is computed based only on exams, PSets, and Strategy Designs. However, the course staff understands that sometimes this numerical grade is not perfectly representative of your performance, and your final grade will also consider “participation” to a small extent. 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. To be clear, **I do not suggest “participating” solely for the sake of improving your grade** (if you only care about your grade, there are significantly more time-efficient ways to get a higher grade). That being said, I do think you will get more out of the course if you choose to “participate”. 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 [course discussion forum] in a manner which benefits your classmates.
- Participating in office hours in a manner which benefits your classmates.

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 [course discussion forum].

SP 21
Adjustments
due to
Covid-19
Pandemic

- The same assignments will be given as in a typical semester, and they will be graded as in a typical semester. However, how these are turned into final letter grades will be different.
- Everyone will have six late days instead of four (but you can still only use up to two late days on a single assignment).
- There are ballpark cutoffs between letter grades that stay roughly the same each year. This year, these cutoffs will be multiplied by 0.9.^a
- In order to keep the logistics of a large class manageable, I'm hoping that these will be (roughly) the *only* adjustments. You should always reach out if you have truly exceptional circumstances, and we'll try our best to work with you.

^aNote that this allows you to, for example, drop an entire PSet and Strategy Design (and then some) without hurting your final grade, if necessary.