

TIPS Incentive Syllabus Statement

According to the student handbook, if you do exactly what is asked, and perfectly perform on every assignment, then that is deserving of a 'C.' A grade of 'A' is thus a "reward" grade that requires students to go above and beyond any base requirements and/or perform exceptionally.

In this course, you will be asked – and even required – to go above and beyond the material and assigned work. During the quarter, anything (and that means ANYTHING) that you do above and beyond what is *directly* assigned can count as "Incentive" credit. "Incentive" points are a required 10% portion of your grade. There are many, many ways of earning Incentive points (some examples provided below). The more creative you are with the "Incentive Artifact" (what you turn in or demonstrate for Incentive points), and the more work you put into it, the more points you can earn. You can earn a small number of Incentive points by providing "good" and correct answers on Piazza; you can even earn credit by giving answers in class to the questions I pose during lectures, etc. **I will also provide MANY potential incentive ideas and assignments, ranging large to small throughout the quarter.**

By the end of the quarter, you will need to have earned 100 points of Incentive credit to receive full credit for this 10% portion of your grade. **Note, however, that there is no cap on the number of points you can receive!** Therefore, after your initial 100 points of Incentive credit, any further points received will act as a "bonus," carrying the same 10% weight towards your overall grade. If you were to receive, for example, 200 incentive points by the end of the quarter, 100 points would act as the required credit, and the 100 extra points would bring your overall letter grade up by one letter (or your overall percentage grade up by 10%)! To put it another way, every 10 Incentive points you earn (above the initial 100) increases your overall percentage grade by 1%.

I have left "room" in the course/curriculum in order for you to have time to pursue Incentive credit. When there is a "lull" between assignments in the course, this is completely on purpose and a **great** indication it is time for you to pursue Incentive credit. Whatever you do, do NOT put this off until the last couple weeks of the course. It is expected that you pursue this throughout the quarter.

Note: Students MUST have a C or better ($\geq 70\%$) in the course in order for any of the points above 100 to count as bonus credit. No bonus credit (points **above** 100) will count if you have a D or F in the course. However, it is still required to earn the 100 base Incentive points in any case. This is required so that students demonstrate a base understanding of the required material.

The Incentive points are graded differently than the rest of your required assignments. Whenever you do something/anything that is (potentially) deserving of Incentive points or have an Incentive artifact to turn in, you must bring it to my attention either in person or via a detailed email along with the required Incentive form. For any and every "non-trivial" Incentive artifact,

you must submit the Incentive form. In the form, you will be asked on which (sub)set of criteria your Incentive artifact should be graded (e.g., its correctness, or its creativity, etc.; see below for more information).

The primary goal here is that I want YOU to go out and learn and do things related to the course and demonstrate to me, in some (creative) way, what you learned and/or did.

Create your own goals, tools, programs or assignments. Seek out the topics that interest you most and dig in. Discover ways to improve the current state of the art and maybe even ways to contribute to those improvements. Find potential ways to use what you learned to benefit others. **Anything** that relates to the course (even somewhat tangentially) that is not a required assignment may count. Make sure and run your ideas by me first, especially if you are not sure your ideas relate to the course strongly enough! The points you earn are from demonstrating what you did/learned in the process. Points will be awarded on an individual basis and are (somewhat) negotiable. Incentive points are typically based on the (sub)set of:

- **creativity** used and/or needed to create/perform/demonstrate the artifact
- **depth of understanding** the student demonstrated
- **quality** of the created/performed/demonstrated artifact
- amount of, and difficulty of **prerequisite knowledge, research and/or competence needed** in order to create/perform/demonstrate the artifact
- overall amount of **time** student dedicated to the above, start to finish
- **difficulty** level of creating/performing/demonstrating the artifact
- etc.

To demonstrate what you did or learned, i.e., submitting Incentive artifacts, there are many ways to do it. Points awarded in any case depend on the student's chosen grading criteria when the form is filled out, which enumerates the above criteria. Incentive artifact ideas include:

- write a report about your research discoveries
- write a program demonstrating what you read, learned/discovered
- have a conversation with me
- choose from any of several ideas provided by me throughout the quarter
- add to any assignment in any number of creative ways
- use the knowledge you currently have to demonstrate how you could have (better) applied this knowledge to (better) do something from your past when you lacked this knowledge (e.g., in an earlier assignment in the class or any other class; in some other problem you faced in the past outside of school; etc.)
- give a presentation to the class or some other group
- help other students with this knowledge in some way (be careful with academic integrity issues)
- imagine some new and creative way to present an artifact to the instructor
- implement a combination of the above
- etc.

The combination of the two lists above means you can focus on demonstrating your chosen artifact in the ways that work best for you and prove the competence(s) in which you feel strongest. If you write a report and you would like it graded in part based on how well-written the report is and its strong grammar usage and mechanics, great! If you write a report but want the grammar usage and mechanics to be ignored and wish it graded on other criteria above, that is great, too! The artifact you submit will be graded based on the selections of criteria you choose in the form that you submit with your artifact. I do reserve the right to provide constructive criticism regarding any of the above criteria in/with your artifact, whether selected or not, in order to promote professional growth. But when awarding Incentive points, I will focus on the criteria selected in the form.