Alex's Ten Commandments of CS Senior Capstone

#10 **If you must fail, fail in the Fall**- it's a bad idea to fail, plus you don't have much of a reason to, anyways, unless utter catastrophe strikes. But if you must fail, fail in the first quarter.

#9 **Do some work over winter break**- it's a long break, spend a little time here and there working on the project and the remainder having fun. It'll allow you to have more fun in your winter term.

#8 **Finish all programming work as early as you can**- the act of writing programs is subject to frustrating failures and stress. Designing posters and writing documents aren't (or shouldn't be). The more code you write the closer to the deadline, the higher risk you take that you'll have to solve an important software problem on the fly, which never works out that well.

#7 **If you have a pretty free schedule for the year, choose a project that would be really difficult that would introduce you to a lot of new technologies and give you a cool project for your resume**- if you don't have an easy schedule, figure out how to avoid a project like this.

#6 **Be realistic about the responsibilities you outline for yourself, and make sure the sum of your responsibilities and your teammates' responsibilities yield a finished project**- don't take on too much, don't take on too little, set the right amount of work for yourself.

#5 **Have some courage and go find your client in person if s/he isn't responsive to your emails within a reasonable timeframe-** your client commissioned you to do something and you're trying to fulfill your end of the bargain. They get that. If you really need them to do something and it's been a week since they've responded over email, go find them in person, if you can.

#4 **Read books to be a better written and verbal communicator-** reading novels will help you write with some character, help you read and absorb things faster, and the right words will come to you quicker when you're on your feet (e.g. at Expo).

#3 **Take the top five projects you vote on seriously**- I was lucky enough to get a project I did indeed want, but looking back, the majority of the other potential projects I selected would've been either boring or way too much work.

#2 **Contact your client a month before the poster is due with a draft of the poster**- your client is probably busy, and getting their feedback on your poster draft earlier rather than later will save you time.

#1 **Learn LaTex early on**- it's a useful skill, it's more fun to use than MS Word, it makes your written documents visually appealing, and it makes Operating Systems 2 class just the slightest bit easier.