

EECS 16A Guidelines for how to run a successful study group

What makes for effective study groups? First and foremost it is open communication and dedication from the group members. Here are some further guidelines on how we think you can run your group successfully.

- Study groups are a great way to meet new people and make friends! Everyone comes to the class with different experiences and backgrounds and preparation. Keep an open mind and be inclusive. Make people comfortable in asking questions.
- Asking and answering questions is a great way to develop a better understanding of the material.
- Respect each other in your study group and try to create a safe space in your study group. Ask people how they would like to be referred to. Keep things said in the group within the group as much as possible.
- Make the best effort to have a positive outcome for the group you are in.
- It might be helpful to assign group roles for the discussion and problem work time. Rotate these roles each week so everyone has a chance to do different things (e.g. alphabetically).
 - a. Facilitator: This individual is responsible for the flow of the group discussion and for making sure everyone has an opportunity to contribute and that everyone's ideas are being heard respectfully. Make sure that everyone is included.
 - b. Timekeeper: This individual is responsible for keeping time to make sure the group has a chance to try all the problems. Pose these questions to the group at the end: What can we review/study later that we didn't finish? What is confusing? What did we learn?
 - c. Librarian: Keep lecture notes open. Refer everyone to related content if your group gets stuck. The librarian can also read out the problems for everyone aloud.
 - d. Scribe: This individual is documenting the group's discussion (such as Jamboard (<https://chrome.google.com/webstore/detail/jamboard/ihaclceahhliihnhclmijghadnhhnoc?hl=en-US>) or Awwboard (<https://awwapp.com/>)). Both of these are also available as tablet apps. Everyone should submit their handwritten solutions to the HW, but the scribe can help document shared ideas. **Sometimes it might be valuable to have multiple scribes in a group.**
- You may have two scribes or two facilitators in a group if you have more than four students.
- A quick way to think of a good team is FIRST: a Friendly, Inclusive, Respectful, Structured Team.

First meeting - Week of Homework 2

1. Introduce yourselves and get to know each other. Maybe you can discuss the answers to questions like: What is your favorite pass-time activity or hobby? Do you have a dish you

enjoy cooking? Do you have a dream destination for a holiday? What are you looking forward to learning in 16A?

2. Pick 2-3 times in the week where your group will meet to discuss the homework. Make sure you add these to your calendar. We suggest meeting in 2+ hour blocks of time.
 - We suggest having one meeting on Sunday/Monday soon after the HW is released, and another one on Wednesday/Thursday since the homework is due on Friday.
 - Try to attend HW Party and Office hours as a group.
3. At the end of the meeting, have a conversation to see if you would like to attend discussion sections together --- if so pick a discussion time that works for everyone.
4. It might be helpful to create a group chat on Messenger, Slack, or other platforms.

Subsequent meetings

1. Identify the meeting roles --- make sure you rotate roles each week.
2. Every person should suggest a few parts/subparts of the homework they would like to focus on for the meeting. The facilitator for the week should write these down.
3. Quickly decide an order to discuss these problems. (Typically start with earlier problems first.) But make sure you are able to get to all the subparts that were brought up --- no question is too easy or too hard to discuss. The facilitator should make sure that you are not spending too much time on any one problem.
4. As a group make sure everyone's questions are answered.
5. If you have time left, check to see if anyone has conceptual points they would like to discuss.
6. It is okay to have a group meeting where everyone is just quietly working together and if someone has a question/gets stuck they pose it to the group. You don't have to be talking and interacting the whole time during your meeting.

Working in groups can sometimes inadvertently lead to people not feeling included or welcome. Take a minute to look through some of the micro-aggressions that might make someone in your group feel uncomfortable and how to interrupt them.

https://academicaffairs.ucsc.edu/events/documents/Microaggressions_InterruptHO_2014_11_182v5.pdf

https://web.archive.org/web/20200401000452/https://academicaffairs.ucsc.edu/events/documents/Microaggressions_InterruptHO_2014_11_182v5.pdf