58/70

I think I deserve a 58/70 because I did not have an in-depth understanding of all the topics, especially pushdown automata, and make tiny errors across the board, such as forgetting the $ placeholder symbol for pushdown automata and forgetting how to convert a context-free grammar to pushdown automata. I had three grading tiers: harsh, medium, and easy. My harsh tier meant that anything that wasn't full credit just did not get any partial credit. Medium tier meant that I gave myself half points if I was given partial credit based on the feedback. Easy was giving me almost full credit at a deficit of 0.5 to 1 points off. The harsh judgement returned a 14/70 and the generous grade returned a 61/70. I knew that a 58/70, or my medium tier, would most likely be more accurate, so I chose this grade. Some specific items from the exam that I definitely should have studied more up on was the definition of pushdown automata, as I forgot the definition during question #2 where I totally forgot to mention the $ placeholder symbol, or the time where I missed mentioning the stack, where is an integral part of the pushdown automata in question #4. I would also then mess up a few other times with more specific implementations of pushdown automata, such as reading them and describing the string like in #7, and forgetting how to convert a context free grammar to a pushdown automata for question #8.

My study habits for this course are very abstract. I typically will look over slides, briefly read parts of the textbook, and do some practice problems. They worked for me since I did interact with most, if not all, of the material available on Canvas. It did not work for me since I did not spend much time acknowledging my weaknesses, which led to very passive study time and unintentional focus, which most likely clouded my view. This is most likely why most of the questions I did get partially incorrect, I was marked as 'slightly off' or 'close'.

Moving forward, I do want to study more intentionally, and I believe that the chapter 3 exam will allow me to refine my study habits and really figure out the most productive way to revise course material and easily point out my struggles. Since chapter 3 is mainly about Turing machines, I'm hoping I will be able to establish a basis of red, yellow, and green topics. I would like to be able to categorize every skill in this course as red: meaning I don't understand anything pertaining to that topic, yellow: I sort of understand the concept, but have no clue how to do it, and green: I understand the concept and application, and just want to do some extra practice for

challenging or outlying cases. I also want to do more pre-class previews, which is something I've already begun to do as we began chapter 3 since it gives me a better understanding of what I might struggle with during class.

The learning process in this course is more useful than when I took it online last semester. I enjoy how there are practice problems to do in class and plenty to do online as well and how they are not counted directly into my grade. The in-class assignments are also great since they are graded based on completion and effort. It makes it much easier to do the "try-it' assignments without worrying about whether I got the desired answer. It really helps take the pressure of not immediately understanding a concept, especially since some topics did not 'click' right away for me.

I don't like how most of the material is taught through slides since it doesn't really allow me to process the problem walk-throughs thoroughly. I have noticed that I understand the problems better when I go through them on my own outside of class and have found it more efficient and effective than fully tunneling into lectures since they don't seem very helpful given, they are on slides.

I think as a professor of such a complex course to teach, I believe Professor Budwell is doing ok. I just wish she did more teaching than just off slides and annotating the slides. I wish we did more engaging hands-on practice since I don't really engage with the material until the try-its. I don't find the lectures to be handy. I feel like walk throughs would work better for a more conceptual course, whereas it is easier for students to gauge their understanding by doing the problem first, figuring out where they got stuck, and then having the professor walk through the problem. I think it's very easy for a student to watch a walk through, think they understand the topic, and then go to do the homework or the 'try it' and realize they did not really understand why each step occurred.