



CIS\*3750

# LAB 1: WORKING AS A TEAM

*Establishing the Foundation for a Successful Project*

Sunday, September 14, 2025



# AGENDA

- Understand **why** a structured approach to teamwork is critical
- Learn the **7 Tips for Effective Teamwork**
- Develop your **Team Contract**
- Build your **Team Rubric** for peer evaluation

# WHY ARE WE DOING THIS?

- It's tempting to jump straight into solving the problem, but it's more effective to first outline **how** you're going to work together
  - **Career Relevance:** You will almost certainly have to work on a team in your future career.
  - **Better Results:** Diverse teams produce better results by mitigating bias and preventing "tunnel vision".
  - **Setting Expectations:** This process establishes roles, responsibilities, and expectations from the very beginning.

# 7 TIPS FOR EFFECTIVE TEAMWORK

- Here are seven key principles to guide your collaboration
  1. **Set Goals:** Figure out where you're going.
  2. **Establish Rules:** Identify how you'll work together and hold each other accountable.
  3. **Communicate:** Keep each other updated regularly, not just during scheduled meetings.
  4. **Define Roles:** Assign specific tasks and deadlines to each member.
  5. **Clarify:** After agreeing on something, have everyone restate it to ensure you're all on the same page
  6. **Keep Minutes:** Document what you've done and what you'll do next.
  7. **Stick to the Plan:** Don't change course without a unanimous team decision.

# THE “GOLDILOCKS” GOAL

- When setting your main goal, aim for “just right”:
  - **Too Specific** (✗): “We are going to build a luxury electric sports car that will operate efficiently at 150km/hr using 90% recycled material...”. This makes too many assumptions upfront.
  - **Too Vague** (✗): “We are going to build cars”. This lacks clarity and focus.
  - **Just Right** (✓): “We are going to determine which factors contribute to the efficient operation of motorized vehicles”. This is focused but allows for exploration. A good goal helps every team member verify their work is on track.

# DEVELOPING YOUR TEAM CONTRACT

- A team contract sets the ground rules for how your team will operate. It should be created by the **entire team**.
- Your first task is to draft this contract.
- Suggestions:
  - Step 1 (Individual): Before you discuss as a group, every member should personally answer the five questions on page 2 of the lab 1 manual.
  - Step 2 (Group): Discuss your individual answers and use them to create a single, unified team contract using the template provided.



# THE 5 KEY CONTRACT QUESTIONS

- Be prepared to discuss your answers to the following:
  1. **Communication:** How will you communicate? Face-to-face, Slack, etc.? Who sets up the tools?
  2. **Benchmarks & Success:** How will you measure success and accomplish deliverables? What are the deadlines for individual contributions?
  3. **Managing Challenges:** What happens if a team member gets sick or isn't contributing their share?
  4. **Managing Disagreements:** How will you make decisions? Democratic vote? Is there a veto?
  5. **Revising the Contract:** How will you make changes to the contract if it isn't working?

# BUILDING YOUR TEAM RUBRIC

- As part of your contract, you will create a rubric to evaluate yourself and your teammates throughout the course
  - **Think Like a CEO:** Imagine you have limited budget for raises. What are the minimum expectations an employee must meet to get one?
  - **Purpose:** The rubric clearly defines what your team values and what is expected of each member.



# HOW TO BUILD YOUR RUBRIC

- You can follow these steps as a team:
  1. **Identify Criteria (Rows):** Decide what you value. These are the things you will evaluate. Examples include:
    - Attendance and participation in meetings
    - Quality and timelines of work
    - Constructively participating in discussions
    - Helping others when they need it
  2. **Set Evaluation Levels (Columns):** Create 3-5 performance labels. For example: "Unsatisfactory", "Average", "Exceptional"
  3. **Write Descriptions:** For each criterion, describe what each level of performance looks like. Be specific!
  4. **Assign Weighting & Scoring:** Decide if some criteria are more important than others and assign a weight (e.g., "Contribution to discussion is 10%"). Assign a grade range or point system to each level.
  5. **Define Exceptions:** Note any conditions that would automatically result in a failing grade (i.e., plagiarism)

# FINALIZING YOUR DOCUMENTS

- The crucial for accountability
  - **Signatures:** Once your contract and rubric are complete, **every member must sign both documents.**
  - **Part of the contract:** The rubric officially becomes part of your team contract.
  - **Changes:** If you need to change your rubric later, you **must get approval from the instructor.**



# SUMMARY OF LAB TASKS

- By the next lab, your team should have:
  - Discussed the 5 key questions for your team contract
  - Completed a draft of your **Team Contract**
  - Completed a draft of your **Team Rubric**
  - Ensured **all team members have signed** both documents

# QUESTIONS?

Let's get to work! Your TA is here to help facilitate discussion and answer any questions

