Acknowledging Intellectual Debts

(Adapted from Prof. Ethan Bolker and Prof. Carl Offner)

You are taking this course in order to learn as much as you can about the material it covers. No learning occurs in a vacuum. You learn from lectures and reading, by playing with ideas, by talking to other people about what you are trying to learn. That is particularly important in Computer Science. A kind of terminal-room-and-email camaraderie develops that makes learning easier and a lot more fun. But part of the ethical code under which we function at a University requires that we acknowledge the sources of ideas we use in work of our own. When you turn in work that you have discussed with someone, or which contains ideas that you found in a book, you must indicate that fact. I expect you to talk to each other and to read materials other than those assigned. I also expect to see in your work evidence that you have done so. I cheer when I see a reference, say, to another book on Computer Science, or a comment in your code that says that you didn't understand recursion until Ada Lovelace helped you out. Learning to acknowledge intellectual debts is part of learning. It has nothing to do with grades or dishonesty. You should be reading, talking to each other, and telling the world that you have done so.

Some kinds of sharing, however, are unacceptable. You may not use the computer to copy someone's code and submit it as your own any more than you may use a photocopier to steal someone else's words — even if you acknowledge that theft! You may not have your friends do your work for you. Versions of the assignments in this course have been given in previous years. You may not use answers to those assignments. To any of you who may be tempted to cheat: the best reason not to is that it's wrong. Another is that if you cheat you learn considerably less. A third reason is that you will be caught more often than you think. If I find evidence of cheating I will immediately present that evidence to the appropriate University committee. The penalties for infractions (whether you are the giver, receiver, or collaborator) are severe, ranging from failing the course to being thrown out of school.

Specific Expectations for CS451/651

We actively monitor every submission made to us for every project. We compare the submitted files both by hand and using automated systems that check for similarities in code structure. We take no pleasure in enforcing disciplinary actions, but we will continue to do so as necessary. We want to keep the playing field level for the majority of students who work very hard in this course.

You are not allowed to post questions about the course or about any of the projects on any website other than our Piazza page. You may only receive help from people in the ways described below and you must acknowledge any help you get.

	Course Staff	CS451/651 Grads	Classmates	Others
Discuss concepts with	✓	✓	✓	✓
Acknowledge collaboration with	✓	✓	✓	✓
Expose your code/work to	✓	✓	✗	✗
View code/work of	✗	✗	✗	✗
Copy code/work from	✗	✗	✗	✗

If you have any questions whatsoever about what is allowed and what not, simply ask.