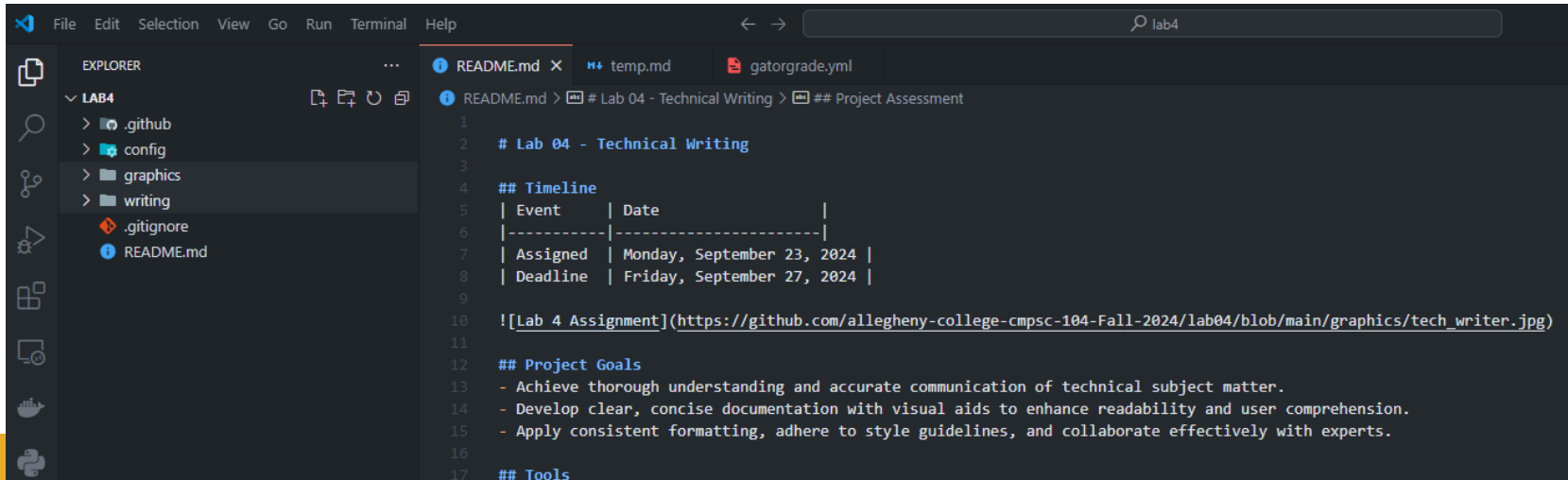**CMPSC 104 – Document Engineering**
Prof. Hang Zhao

Overview

What is Markdown?

Markdown is a lightweight markup language designed for simplicity, allowing users to format plain text with easy-to-read syntax, such as using # for headings and ** for bold text (e.g., **bold**).

Overview

Why Use Markdown?

- Versatile: Use it for anything from websites to presentations. (websites, documents, notes, books, presentations, email messages, and technical documentation.)
- Portable: Works across all apps and devices. Easy to switch between Markdown apps without losing data.
- Universal: Compatible with any operating system.
- Future-Proof: Your files remain readable forever, even if the app you use stops working.
- Widely Accepted: Supported on major platforms like Reddit and GitHub.

Getting Started with Markdown

To start using Markdown, try it online without downloading anything. For example, use Dillinger (https://dillinger.io/), a free online Markdown editor where you can type on the left side and see a preview on the right.
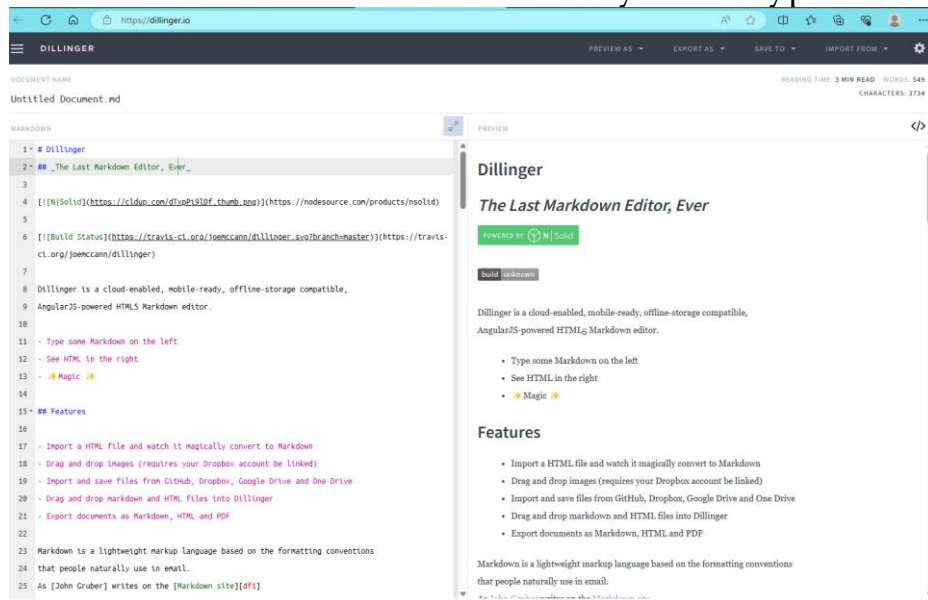
How Does it Work?

- Markdown text is saved in files with an .md or .markdown extension.
- A Markdown application processes the file, converting the Markdown-formatted text into HTML, suitable for web browsers or print-ready documents.
- Markdown applications use something called a Markdown processor (also commonly referred to as a "parser" or an "implementation") to take the Markdown-formatted text and output it to HTML format or convert it to another file format, like PDF.

What's Markdown Good For?

- Markdown is ideal for note-taking, creating web content, and producing print-ready documents.
- The Markdown syntax is simple to pick up, allowing for widespread use across various applications.
- Used for everything from web content and email messages to grocery lists.

Websites

Markdown is especially useful for creating website content.

- Blot.im (https://blot.im/) allows you to easily convert Markdown files to a website by dragging them into a Dropbox folder.
- Jekyll (https://jekyllrb.com) is a powerful static site generator that integrates with GitHub Pages for free hosting.
- Ghost (https://ghost.org/) offers a free, open-source blogging platform with Markdown support.

Documents

Here are some Markdown document authoring applications I recommend:

- **Mac:** MacDown, iA Writer, or Marked 2
- **iOS / Android:** iA Writer
- **Windows:** ghostwriter or Markdown Monster
- **Linux:** ReText or ghostwriter
- **Web:** Dillinger or StackEdit

Reference and Resources

- Markdown guide (https://www.markdownguide.org/getting-started/)
- John Gruber's Markdown documentation. The original guide written by the creator of Markdown.
- Markdown Tutorial. An open source website that allows you to try Markdown in your web browser.
- Awesome Markdown. A list of Markdown tools and learning resources.
- Typesetting Markdown. A multi-part series that describes an ecosystem for typesetting Markdown documents using pandoc and ConTeXt.