How To: CS181 - Spring 2012

Welcome to CS181. This class is usually one of the first classes you take in theory of computer-science. However, the requirements of this class are somewhat different from what you are used to. In order to help you perform better, here are some short guidelines and suggestions for your success in this class.

Do your Homeworks! It typically takes students between 4 and 10 hours of active thinking to solve each problem set. However, if you start solving the HW on the evening before it is due, it is common you will not be able to solve it all (even if you spend 10 hours...)

Print the HW *as soon as it is published*. Read it. Let your mind start working on it.

Although each student has his/hers own time-management methods, we suggest spending about 2 hours/day starting at least 4 days prior to the due date.

Doing the HW is not only important for your final grade, but (especially in this class) it will also help you perform better on the final/midterm.

Be Formal! This class is of mathematical nature. Many points are taken for answers which are not mathematically solid or not formally proven (even when your answer is in the right direction).

Refresh your mathematical background — make sure you know the material of "discrete math" (M61). [especially, sets: union, intersection, complement, infinite sets, infinite unions, etc.].

Also, it might be useful to read in advance about boolean logic.

Learn from your mistakes! Always get your graded homeworks. Print the official solution, and compare your answers to the official ones. Make sure you understand the official solution. Try to understand why your answer is wrong or incomplete. If you are not sure — the TA's office hours might be very helpful for discussing it.

Attend the discussion sections! Many techniques and question solving methods are presented at the discussion sections (by the TA and also by your fellow classmates). It is very uncommon in this class that students do well just by reading the book... Try to write down the examples and solutions shown in class, as they usually do not appear in the textbook (they might become useful when you study for the final...).

The CS181 staff wish you a nice and enjoyable quarter!