CS161 Course Information

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Office hours: Wednesdays, 10:30 - noon
Thursdays, 10:30 - noon

I'm generally in the office on Mondays, Wednesdays, and Thursdays over the summer, and occasionally in the evenings on Tuesdays and Fridays. You're always welcome to call my office to see if I'm around. As long as I'm here, I'm glad to help. You can even try me at home provided it's within the 7 a.m.-to-7-p.m. window.

TA: Liadan O'Callaghan
E-mail: **loc@cs.stanford.edu**
Office hours: TBD

Lectures: MWTh 9:00 - 10:15 a.m. (live on Channel E3)
McCullough 115

Sections: We currently have a discussion section scheduled for Friday mornings at 9 a.m. When sections meet, they'll meet in McCullough 115 (live on Channel E3), which is our normal lecture room. My experience is that discussion sections ultimately attract very few students—typically half the class attends them for the first week or so, but the 50% attendance statistic falls dramatically to less than 10% after a while. I'm more excited to just offer more office hours and to spend more time responding to the needs of the individual students. So consider the Friday-at-nine slot to be reserved in the event that I do decide we need section in any given week, but otherwise expect us to have more office hours than usual. We'll typically schedule the additional ones as floaters; that way we can hold them in the 24 hours that precede a problem set due date.
So the rule of thumb: we don't typically meet on Fridays, but I'll call a discussion section on a particular topic if I see that students aren't

getting something. I'll also fire them up if students surprise me and ask that I hold them more consistently.

Web site: Be sure to check out our keen one-stop-shopping web site at **http://www.stanford.edu/class/cs161/.** Using any Web browser, you can grab copies of handouts (published in Adobe PDF), check out the current syllabus, and get general course information. We also may use the assignment area of our web site to post general-interest question / answers, clarifications, hints, etc. about the current assignment, so be sure to take advantage of this resource. Visit our site and tell us what you think!

Readings: All readings will be drawn from our primary textbook Introduction to Algorithms, but Cormen, Leiserson, and Rivest. This is easily the most popular undergraduate textbook introducing the concepts it teaches. If you were stuck on a desert island and you could only have one book, this'd be the one. Trust me. Neither Judy Blume nor Anne Rice holds a candle to C, L, and R.

A second edition of the textbook was due this month, but I ordered the first version, since I wasn't sure the second version would make it. For our purposes, the two editions are identical, so you can work with either one.

Mailing List: There is a class mailing list that will be used for important or late-breaking announcements. All students enrolled in CS 161 should subscribe to the mailing list. To subscribe to the mailing list, send an e-mail message to **majordomo@lists.stanford.edu** and place the line "subscribe cs161" (no quotes, though) in the **body** of the message (the subject attributed to the message is not important). Once you have successfully subscribed, you will receive a welcome message confirming your subscription. I'm taking care to set up the mailing list this evening, so don't bother trying to subscribe until sometime Thursday or Friday.

Grading: The grading breakdown is very simple:

Problem Sets:	40%
Midterm:	20%
Final Exam:	40%

Exams: The midterm will be a take-home exam that will feel much like a problem set, save the fact that you will need to work on the problem set all by yourself. While Liadan and I will be available to help resolve any ambiguities, we will not be able to discuss any course material during the week that the take-home midterm exam is out. Problem sets will always go out on Thursdays and come in on Wednesdays; the **fourth**

problem set will be the take-home midterm. So July 19th through July 25th is take-home midterm week.

The final exam will be an in-class exam held on August 17th at 3:30 until 6:30 p.m. You are expected to take this exam at the normally scheduled time, or else you'll have to take the class another quarter. I've been more flexible about alternate final exams in the past, but it unnecessarily complicates the grading process and I'm never convinced that it's fair to those taking the exam at the normally scheduled time.

Late policy: The pace of this course makes it difficult for students to catch up once they've fallen behind, so late assignments are very much discouraged. That being said, there are unforeseen emergencies (illness, bike accidents, disk crashes, network troubles, etc.) that cannot always be planned for in advance. Instead of having to ask for special allowances on a individual basis, each of you will have the privilege of granting yourself a few small extensions in the event of a crisis. For simplicity, the only unit used when discussing lateness is the **calendar day**. You will have **four** late days which you may use to extend the due dates of any assignment by some multiple of 24 hours without penalty. Use them wisely, as I rarely grant any further extensions. Any late days used beyond the four free ones will be assessed a penalty of approximately 10% per late day, up to a maximum of two days late. Assignments **will never be accepted** later than 48 hours after the original assignment due date—that is, you can **never consume more than two late days on any single assignment**. In general, it is better to submit a solid solution a little late than to submit a lame solution on time; the 10% penalty doesn't really hurt you that much in the end. Note that you may not take any late days on the take-home midterm. I think you can all understand that.

Incompletes: I will only grant incompletes in the event of an illness or a family emergency that makes it impossible for a student to finish his or her work during the regular academic quarter. In particular, you must complete all assignments through the seventh week of the quarter in order to qualify for an incomplete. Unless your circumstances are particularly extenuating, you must complete any outstanding work within 30 days of the last day of class.

Honor Code: You all know the Honor Code and what it means to Stanford. Unfortunately, it is so very difficult for students to draw the line between virtuous discussion and what is even remotely dishonest. Because CS161 is a problem set-intensive course, it is particularly crucial that I draw this line for you. I'm probably breaking some

Honor Code rule myself by spelling this out for you, but because each problem set is like a mini take-home exam, it is imperative that everyone interpret the Honor Code the same way, so you'll have to forgive me.

We here at CS161 Headquarters encourage and even expect you to **discuss** (note the verb choice) homework problems with each other. I'm not big on giving you problems that can be solved in three minutes—you don't need to spend three thousand bucks on a class that requires you read only three pages of some textbook and utilize only three, perhaps four, nanograms of gray matter to solve some problem. However, it is **imperative** that your written submission to a particular problem reflect your **understanding** of the problem and its solution, not your ability to collaborate with others and exchange good notes. To foster this intent, the best lines to draw are the following:

- you **may and should** discuss problem set questions and solution **strategies** with each other.
- you **may not** write up solutions with other students, copy or even paraphrase that jointly reached solution, and call it your own.[i]
- you **absolutely must** cite your coworker(s) for any given problem.

[i] Probably the clearest philosophy: Any written work invented during collaboration should be tossed in the trash before you write up your own solution.