

Teaching Reflections - CIS 475 Introduction to Cryptography

This is a new course that was offered for the first time in the department by me in Spring 2018. This course is a critical course in computer security field and will be one of the required courses for computer security track that is approved and university senate level.

This course was well received by students who particularly appreciated the novel homeworks that I introduced. The homeworks were encrypted ciphers – students had to first decipher the homework question before they could address it. This course challenged the students but they seemed to enjoy the challenge and were largely up to it.

In Spring 2021, I innovated by bringing in personalized assignments and exams in this course, so that the online offering of the course did not sacrifice student integrity issues that were of concern to me. The course is highly mathematical with a significant focus on number theory and students commented that they felt that the material was difficult and wanted more homeworks related to this section. This is a criticism that I'm currently addressing during my current offering by giving more in class examples and homeworks. Some students and Prof. Ladd, who audited the entire course, also commented that the pace of the course was fast and this criticism I'm addressing by reviewing the content that I'm covering and taking time to regularly revise the material in each successive class.