

## Homework #1 – Grading Policy

Due Friday, Aug 30 at 5:00pm

10 points

Submit PDF in Gradescope

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Because this is a large class and because I strive to treat everyone as fairly and consistently as possible, we need to have clear, consistent, and objective rules for handling grading. The professor and the TAs cannot possibly handle each of your cases individually in a way that is fair to all; we must have a single policy that applies to all students. I want to make sure that everyone understands this policy and its implications, so that there is no confusion later. Please read all parts of this assignment very carefully.

Instructions: Please check every box below and then sign at the bottom. You may either (a) print the document, complete it, and scan it, or (b) check and sign it digitally (e.g., using a PDF editor). Then submit the document in Gradescope.

☐ **We (the professor and TAs) want every student to succeed and get a good grade!** If all of you master the course material and excel, you will all get a grade of A and we will be thrilled! Grades are not curved, and there is no distribution of grades that we are trying to fit. How other students perform has no impact on your grade, so don't worry about your classmates and what they're doing.

☐ **I will not fail any student who puts in significant effort.** If you work hard throughout the entire semester (including turning in all assignments), you will not fail, regardless of your numerical scores.

☐ **Every student will be graded as equally and fairly as possible.** Please do not ask for special treatment (e.g., special extra credit, different grading criteria, different deadlines, etc.).

☐ **You will be graded based strictly on what you submit and when you submit it.** You will NOT be graded based on what you meant to submit, the other version of the file that you should've submitted, etc. An assignment that is just one minute late is still late. We will not examine timestamps on your files to determine whether you had indeed done the work on time despite not submitting it on time. Gradescope lets you submit the same file before and after the regular deadline – we will only grade the most recently submitted file, even if this results in a lower score.

If you resubmit a new version of the assignment after the deadline, that is the submission that will be graded and it will have the corresponding late penalty.

*If you haven't uploaded anything to Gradescope, for whatever reason, you will get a zero; PLEASE check your uploads!*

If you are having technical trouble with Gradescope and you are close to the deadline, you may email your assignment to your recitation UTAs before the deadline.

☐ **If you submit either the written part or the code part of an assignment late, the late penalty applies to the whole assignment.** We will look at the submission time of the last thing submitted and use that as the submission time for the entire assignment.

☐ **There are no extensions on homeworks except for dean's excuses.** I will give enough time on every assignment such that you can overcome other issues, such as being busy with other classes, interviews, etc. I know you're busy with other classes and activities, and I intentionally give you far more time for assignments than is necessary, so you can manage your time. **If something truly extraordinary happens that is not covered by a dean's excuse, please contact the professor.**

☐ **The five major homeworks (Homeworks 3-7) will have automatic extensions that cover any short-term issue that would otherwise be covered by the Short-Term Incapacitation Form (STINF).** Each of these homeworks will be due on Day X and will have an automatic 48-hour extension to Day X+2. This extension covers all short-term issues that would have been covered by a STINF. **The deadline is Day X, and you must aim for Day X. If you aim for Day X+2 and you get sick at the end, there will be no extension (without a dean's excuse).**

☐ **We will honor a STINF or a dean's excuse for absence from a midterm.** There will be a make-up midterm that is similar to the original but guaranteed not to be easier than the original, to be fair to the students who take the original. (Duke policy does not permit filing a STINF for absence from the final exam. You must contact your dean in that situation.)

☐ **Assignments are graded strictly based on rubrics and grading test cases.** There are too many students for the TAs to go through every submission and try to figure out how close it is to working. Even if that were possible, it would be impossible to do this fairly; TAs would spend different amounts of time, effort, and skill. For example, if your code is missing a single semicolon

and doesn't compile, it will get a very low score regardless of what might have happened if that semicolon hadn't been missing. We will provide you with some tests to help you get started, but these tests will not be as exhaustive as the tests we use for grading. You will need to test your own work beyond using the given tests.

☐ **If you believe your grade on a homework or midterm exam is incorrect, you have 5 days to raise your complaint (although it can take longer to resolve).** The first step if you are unsatisfied is to submit a regrade request via Gradescope. If you are still unsatisfied, then contact a graduate TA. If you are still unhappy after that, contact the professor. For homeworks and exams, the 5 days begins from when grades are released. Once the 5-day window begins, say on Day X, it ends at 11:59pm on Day X+5. No complaints raised after that time will be considered, regardless of merit. Note that the time to raise an issue with the final exam is necessarily shorter.

☐ **Some students will be just below (or just above) a grade cutoff.** With this many students, there is no way to draw lines between grades (say between A and A- or between B and B+) such that nobody is just barely below a line. I cannot round up your score without rounding up everyone else ... and once I've rounded up everyone else there will then be other students who are now very, very close to a higher grade. *Please note, though, that grades in this course tend to be high; typically, almost half of the class earns an A or A-.*

☐ **A dead or lost or stolen computer is not a valid excuse, nor is a lost or corrupted file.** You will be using git, which backs up versions of your code and data (assuming you are using it properly and pushing to it regularly), but please be extremely careful to keep your repository private! If your repository is public, even accidentally, that is considered academic misconduct and will be handled accordingly (see below).

☐ **Cases of suspected academic misconduct will be handled according to the rules of the Office of Student Conduct (OSC).** The professor and TAs monitor submissions for suspected academic misconduct, using software that detects structural and semantic similarities between submissions (including from prior semesters), and the professor will present evidence of misconduct to OSC. Historically, ECE/CS 250 has had numerous cases of academic misconduct each semester, and penalties have included a faculty/student resolution (with a score of zero on the entire assignment), a hearing in front of OSC, and suspension from Duke. (Note: if you are talented enough to evade the software for detecting cheating, you are more than talented enough to do the assignment on your own.)

☐ **The outcome of academic misconduct will be worse than doing poor work.** If you do a poor job on an assignment, you will still get some partial credit. If you are caught in academic misconduct, you will get a score (typically zero on the entire assignment) that is worse than submitting poor work, and you will be reported to OSC, which can have further consequences.

☐ **If you help someone else commit academic misconduct (e.g., by helping them with their homework), you have committed academic misconduct.** Every semester, students are caught giving their code to other students, and this is an example of academic misconduct that will be handled just like for students who do not do their own work.

☐ **When using GitLab, you must ensure that your project is private (details in recitation #1).** Not doing so, *even accidentally*, is considered a violation of the Duke Community Standard.

☐ **You may not submit code from the internet, even if you cite it.** You must do your own work. Yes, you can look up how to use a C library call (e.g., `fscanf`) or a MIPS instruction, but you may not take multiple lines of code.

☐ **You may not use ChatGPT or any other generative AI to do any part of your homework for you.** We want you to learn the class material, and you will not learn it if you simply ask something (or someone) else to do it for you.

☐ **You may not attempt to ask or hire class TAs for tutoring or for any help that is beyond what is provided to all students.** Doing so is a conflict of interest. TAs are instructed to report any such inquiries.

By signing below, you acknowledge that you understand the grading policy for this class:

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(signed name)

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(date)