

Cpt S 322 Written Assignment - Reflection on Prerequisite Preparation and Progression Through this Course

Submission Instructions:

This is a written assignment. Submit either a Word document or PDF (PDF preferred) to Angel before the due date/time. Apple Pages, Microsoft Word, OpenOffice Writer, and several other common word processing applications are capable of producing PDF files.

Assignment Instructions:

In this assignment you will reflect on two aspects of your computer science education so far. One will be how well you feel the lower level (100 and 200 level) courses prepared you for this class as well as other 300-level courses. The other will be specific to this course and will involve a reflection on how creating a series of projects that built on top of each other worked out overall.

You must submit a double-spaced paper that uses 12-pt. font and 1 inch margins. Use an easily readable font such as Courier, Arial, Times New Roman, or Helvetica. The paper must include at least 1 page per section, implying a minimum of two pages, but no more than 2 pages per section and thus not more than 4 pages total. You are not required to use any particular template or style (such as APA or IEEE) but your writing content will be critiqued from a professional standpoint and you will be graded for grammar and spelling. This is a reflection of your personal experiences, so it is not expected that you will need to cite any sources. If you feel the need to however, you may. Think of this as a document that you might want to show to employers to indicate how you've grown as a software engineer/computer scientist.

Part 1: Undergraduate Course Preparation

For the first part, indicate how well the 100 and 200 level computer science courses, or their equivalents from other universities if you are a transfer student, prepared you for this course. You may choose to reflect on some of these particular questions:

- Was this the first class where you worked on a series of projects that built on top of each other, or did you have similar experiences in prerequisite courses?
- Were core topics such as data structures, algorithms, and time complexity covered sufficiently in your prerequisite courses? Be honest here and try to reflect on both how

the topics were covered in the prerequisite courses as well as how well you absorbed them, since those two can be quite different.

- Was focusing on C/C++ in these courses good, bad or neutral with respect to the migration to C#? If things were bad, would you have rather used C++ in this course or C# in the prerequisite courses to make things easier?
- Did you get used to finding information online and becoming an independent learner in the prerequisite courses? How well were you prepared for the large of amount of independent learning required in the 300-level courses?

Part 2: Progression Through this Course

For the second part, talk some about how your coding skill worked for or against you, depending on how things progressed with the spreadsheet application assignments. That is, did you hack things together in earlier assignments only to find that this made later assignments very difficult? Or did you take the time to do things carefully and build a solid foundation that made later assignments easy? Specific questions/points you may want to address here include:

- A spreadsheet application has some utility and practicality to it, but it is trivial next to many modern software applications. If industry work involved writing applications similar to the spreadsheet in terms of complexity, would you feel comfortable working on them?
- Would you feel comfortable working on applications significantly more complex than the spreadsheet application in C#, such as an image editor, a media player, a web browser or other such applications?
- Analyze whether this course has gone well or poorly for you overall and try to reflect on what you did that lead to success or failure for particular assignments.

Grading Details:

- The TAs will allow a few spelling and grammar errors without penalty, but as soon as an excessive number are encountered, you will start to lose points.
- The TAs will mark off points if you are not in the 2 - 4 page range with the requirements for fonts and spacing.
- You can do the two parts separately or intertwine them together, whatever you think will work better for your writing style. Just make sure you are clearly addressing each part and writing the necessary amount for each part as well. The TAs will mark down if any part is excessively short or isn't addressing the topic well.

- This should be a document that you would show to a potential employer. The TAs will mark off significantly if your writing style is not professional and in some cases, if the TA feels that this is not a document that would be appropriate to use in a professional business context, the TA may award no points at all for the submission.
- Other instructors in our program, such as Adam Carter and Andy O'Fallon, have indicated some level of interest in this type of feedback, so keep them in mind as part of your target audience as well.