

CS1TS2 Examination Hints

Examination Subjects

The exam questions will cover the lecture material and the course book. Note however, that not everything in the course book will be in the exam, some chapters are covered next year. The lecture slides tell you which chapters of the course book are relevant. In addition, the course book has an emphasis on CASE tools, which is not reflected in the lectures, or the exam questions.

Trick Questions

There aren't any. All questions are perfectly straightforward; however there are often words or phrases that might be misunderstood or have more than one meaning. For this reason it is vital **to read the question!** Do not just scan the question for key words, read it. Stop, then read it again. Make sure you really understand what the question is asking you.

On a related matter: one night a man sees his friend on hands knees in the middle of the road, beneath a street lamp. "What are you doing?" the man asks. "Looking for my car keys" his friend replies. "Where did you lose them?" asks the man. "In the car park" says his friend, "but the light is better here".

Bad joke, but many students apply the same logic to exam questions - "This question is about testing strategies. I don't know anything about those so I'll write about requirements analysis instead." Don't bother, you are just wasting your time writing it and the marker's time in having to read it and give you no marks!

The Right Answer

Sometimes there isn't one; or at least there isn't a *wrong* answer. Often a question will begin by asking you to list or describe a set of features, for example, describing briefly two software development models. It is usually clear cut whether you done this correctly. The question may then go on to ask you compare or contrast these two methodologies, or to describe whether they might be applicable in certain circumstances. In this case there is no clear "right" answer, the examiner is looking for a sensible discussion of the issues. Use your common sense and do not be afraid to state your own opinion. The examiner wants to see you applying your knowledge, not simply repeating facts.

But I didn't attend the lectures!

This is a great shame and should be a salutary lesson for your second year, should you manage to pass your first one. Lecture slides are not the entire content of the course. They are prompts to the lecturer to remind them what to talk about, and prompts to students during revision to remember what was said. If you really haven't been to any of the lectures then you must read the parts of the course book referred to in the lecture slides, as well as looking at the slides themselves.

Read the Rubric

The Rubric is all the waffle and small print on the front of the examination paper. Read it! Do as it says! In particular:

- Start each question on a new page
- Put only the question number in the right margin, **DO NOT** write anything in the left margin
- Put your answer numbers on the front of the booklet
- Write legibly

Failure to follow the above rules makes it harder for the marker to follow your answers and write on your marks. A scruffily written paper, filling every part of the page with continuous script will

not endear you to the examiner; especially should they need to seek out an extra mark to scrape that pass for you...

Don't Panic

If you have attended the bulk of the lectures, have done your revision and can apply some common sense you should not have a problem with this exam. What's more, you may even have learned something useful for your future career!

All the best,

Karl