Matthew Thien

12/10/2020

CISC 3140

Course Reflection

The end of the Fall 2020 semester is almost here and I’ve learned a lot of stuff about my character and what I need to improve on. This nearly year long quarantine has helped me learn a lot about what my study habits are. Throughout the semester, there were many topics on how to better myself at being a software engineer and I feel like some of those skills that can transfer over to everyday life. For example, many people compare cooking to computer science and programming because cooking is very algorithmic. There are a lot of steps when it comes to cooking and if one part is done wrong or is taking too long, the result would most likely be different from what you expected or wanted.

One of the tools that I learned in the beginning that will most definitely help me in the real world is preparing beforehand. If you can prepare beforehand, then that makes what you’re preparing to do much simpler because you know what you have and what you’ll need. One very important thing that everyone can prepare is job interviews. In lab 4, I stated that the most forgotten part of a job interview but probably one of the most important parts is researching about the company. I also stated that if you don’t prepare for this interview by researching, it would seem like you don’t resonate with the company or you didn’t care enough to study the company. Because of all this, there is a very low chance that you’d get the position. Learning how to prepare has been really helpful for me because it makes a lot of things easier. When I would do presentations in the past, I would almost never prepare and that would lead to a lot of anxiety and stress. But, since learning various methods on how to prepare, I’ve started doing stuff that benefits me by writing scripts and rehearsing beforehand.

Another extremely beneficial skill that the course has taught me is how to work as a team and communicate as a team. I learned that when you are hired for a job, you would usually not be working on the project alone. You will need to learn how to communicate with your teammates or groupmates because if you don’t, there will be a lot of discord between you guys. Also, if you know how to communicate between teammates, there is a high chance that you would be seen as leading the group and get more respect. Our professor assigned us in to groups and told us to pretend like we’re working on a big project and I feel that was fairly helpful because it showed us how a normal work environment would feel like. There is usually one person who would be leading and that person would most likely be the person who’s best at communicating with the team. All in all, learning how to communicate and collaborate with team members will be an extremely beneficial skill for the present and many years down the line.

In the beginning, there was a lab where we wrote down how we would prepare for an interview and how well we thought we’d do if we were to apply to some of these places. I chose Uber as a very lucrative destination for me because I really like what they do and stand for and I really would like for a chance to work there. Even though I like the thought of working there a lot, I wrote down that I am very far from being qualified to work there because it is an extremely big company. There are a few steps that I can take to be more qualified to work there. I wrote down that one of the steps I should take is practicing more interview questions and coding questions. This is because I don’t really have much experience doing coding interview questions since I’ve never been as far as getting an interview to a tech company. At the time, there was a website called LeetCode which had hundreds of interview-esque coding problems and many said that doing a bunch of those problems everyday would be a great way to help prepare. So, one of my goals were to do at least a few a day starting from then but I never started it. I regret that I haven’t started it yet and I know that I will have to sooner or later because the world isn’t going to wait for me. The biggest deviation was the fact that the COVID-19 lockdown has put me in an environment I am not accustomed to when I am doing work. I know that the environment I am in when doing work is really important to me so, everything has been made a little more difficult. Everything will get better soon and I hope that I can get everything back together as soon as possible.