

COMPSCI 121 Communications Policy

Your UMass email address is your point of contact in all online tools we use (Moodle, zyBooks, and Gradescope) and as the primary means to contact you individually outside of class. Group announcement will be posted to Moodle (which you can configure to send you via email, if you so desire). Use the Moodle private forum or piazza for all course communication with professors and TAs. Sorry, we do not answer emails sent to us individually.

Post your private messages in the “***Private Student Forum***” in Moodle to enquire about grades, absences, extensions, or to book appointments with professors and TAs. For general questions about the course (especially questions that other students might benefit) you can post in Piazza. You can also answer questions from other students in Piazza.

Course staff typically respond to forum posts within one business day. We generally do not respond to communications late at night. Forums tend to get a high volume of posts when a deadline is approaching. We cannot provide real-time answers, especially in the last few hours before an assignment is due!

Please check the syllabus, the course web site, and policy documents before posting a question. If a question has already been answered in a previous post, we direct you to it. If we find that a private question is relevant to a larger audience, we may make it public to help others in the course. If a question does not follow the guidelines below, we may not answer it.

Guidelines to follow in your use of the Moodle forum/Piazza:

- Write the name of your *section and lab session* when enquiring about lab attendance/grades. This helps your TA to take action.
- Write the chapter and question number of the zyBooks exercise, explain what the problem is, and what you did to solve the problem. This helps the other students and the course staff to help you with your code.
- You should use Piazza to ask questions and get advice on assignments. But you may not use it to post code or step through each problem you encounter in an assignment.
- You may not post assignment solutions in Piazza, either in questions or answers to others.

- If you must post code you are working on, you should do so only in Piazza through private posts to the course staff.
- You should post thoughtful and articulate questions. Do not post code and ask, "What is wrong with my code?" See, for example, <https://stackoverflow.com/help/how-to-ask> or <https://jvns.ca/blog/good-questions/> for constructive advice on asking questions.
- You are encouraged to help other students by answering questions without giving away the answer.
- You are expected to be polite and thoughtful in your posts and answers to others.
- Read the "*Attendance and Grading Policy*" document if you have questions about grading or attendance, before you ask us for extensions