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CSC431 Intro to Software Engineering

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Course Reflection

I have enjoyed taking CSC431 with Professor Nguyen because I have learned a lot about software engineering, and also the soft skills needed for work and life in general. The Dynaflip classroom model allowed me to learn the material from the textbook and slides before coming to class, and connect it to the lecture in an expanded way. I enjoyed how Professor Nguyen would go over the software engineering topics in an engaging way and ask us questions to try and tailor his lecture directly to our lives and our future, because it made the material feel more relevant than the typical theories that most computer science courses teach. Another way Professor Nguyen did this was by bringing in a guest speaker who worked in the profession. Professor Ryan Kuhl was invited to come into class to speak to us about his experience in software engineering and answered a lot of our questions. This experience provided me with better insight into how some smaller companies operate which was very helpful because I do not expect myself to work in a huge company, especially right after graduating.

However, I believe that some students may not have taken this class seriously. This is a class where the more you put into it, the more you get out of it. Going to every lecture and going over the slides before class helped me understand what Professor Nguyen was talking about during the lecture, even if it wasn't directly from the textbook. I wish more students understood that this class was more than just the theory of software engineering that they were expecting, and the lectures were very important to life.

Professor Nguyen emphasized the importance of communication from day one. He explained this from not only a student to professor standpoint, but also an employee to employee and employee to boss. I believe this is a crucial skill that many classrooms no longer teach. I wanted to mention that I would say many students my age also struggle with communication. I have witnessed this first hand in one of my clubs where I also encourage members to talk and communicate. I am still finding ways to help members

improve their communication skills but I still haven't found a great solution. I agree with Professor Nguyen that communication is very important, I would even say that it is the most important skill in life.

One way that communication was practiced throughout the semester was through our group projects. I enjoyed working with my group of Gargi and Gabe. Throughout the semester we were able to gather a better understanding of each other's communication and work styles. For example, I found that I tend to list out what needs to get done and then ask what everyone else is thinking or planning on doing. By the end of the semester I learned to also include what my thoughts were and then ask what everyone else's thoughts on the assignment were. By providing my own input it allowed my words to be better interpreted to lead the group rather than bug the group. I found that one group member liked to make the presentations and the other liked to be told what their portion of work was. I did not mind working this way because whenever one of us reached out to the others, we were always effectively communicating in a timely manner and completing the work each of us agreed on.

Furthermore, I learned that I need to improve my communication to be lighter because there were times my texts were interpreted aggressively and a group member became overwhelmed which was not my intention. I may know that I was asking questions and trying to gather their thoughts on a topic, but it was not received this way. Luckily, this group member let me know right away that this bothered him/her and I was able to immediately apologize over text and then in person again and correct my communication style going forward. This has helped me recognize that when working with a group I should keep my ambition in check with the rest of my group and ensure when texting that I am communicating in a way that feels encouraging and easy to engage with, not overwhelming.

Overall, I feel the project went well and no group member felt cheated. Each of us always volunteered for portions of the documents and Gargi enjoyed making the presentations in Canva. I even started a presentation and she was able to take it and improve the overall style and content of it which I greatly appreciated. Gargi was always great at communicating with me and Gabe would provide his input every now and then. In conclusion I am very happy with the outcome of our project and with my experience taking this class with Professor Nguyen.