CS Focused Town Hall (Fall 2021)

<u>Speakers</u>

<u>MCS Faculty</u>
Jessica Burgner-Kahrs - Associate Chair (CSC)
Daniel Zingaro - Computer Science Faculty Advisor
Michael Liut - CS Student Community Advisor
Bogdan Simion - CS TA Coordinator
Lisa Zhang - CS POSt Committee

<u>MCS Staff</u>
Jessica Bailey - MCS Assistant Manager
Yvette Ye - CSC Academic Advisor
Laura Ferlito - MAT/STA Academic Advisor

<u>UTM Staff</u>
Felicity Morgan - Director, Career Centre
Madison Peters - Manager, Academic Culture and English (ACE)
Kate Romanow - Academic Advisor, Registrar

What will Winter 2022 look like?

- **All Winter courses will be expected to return to in-person delivery.**
- Some courses may stay online due to scheduling issues but the definite majority of courses will be in-person.
- **Full-year courses will stay online.**
- Changes are expected to be reflected in your schedule in a few more weeks.
- Any concerns or complaints can be directed to the Dean.

Resources

Academic Support

Robert Gillespie Academic Skills Centre (RGASC)

Need tips and tricks on how to do better in tests, online learning, or create an environment at home to study, RGSAC provides:

- Face-to-face appointments
- Study skills and supports

Centre for Student Engagement

Need advice on resume building or presenting and creating an online portfolio, they have experts to help with.

- Course Support
- Skills and Writing Support
- Professional Skills
- Etc.

CSSC's CS Course Specific Resources

A work in progress but it's built by CSC students to benefit all CSC students.

<mark>Mental Health</mark>

Navi

UTM Peer-to-Peer (P2P) Mentoring

UTM My Student Support Programs (MySSP)
- Download the App (App Store | Google Play)
- Call

UTM Mental Health Resources

MCS Student Organizations

MCS Student Community
https://discord.gg/zt9H4CPdqV (Discord server with verified UofT students for MCS students)

Developer Student Clubs
Website | Instagram: @dscutm

CSSC
Website | Instagram: @utm.cssc

MCSS
Website | Instagram: @utmmcss

UTM Robotics
Website | Instagram: @utm_robotics

UTMSAM
Website | Instagram: @utmsam

White Van
Website | Discord: discord.gg/e4fCRDtuAa

WiSC
Website | Instagram: @wiscutm

Upcoming Events
Networking Series - Technology
Connect with alumni to get advice on career planning, job search, and workplace success.
Attenders include:
- Software Engineer 3 at eBay
- Manager - Cybersecurity Threat Management at EY
- Talent Acquisition - Global Product and Software Engineer at Facebook

Announcements
- **Classes in Winter 2022:**
  - All classes will be in-person. You should definitely plan on being here in case you are not.
  - Most courses, if not all, will be in person.
  - There might be one section of a course that might be online -- but that's really scheduling issues. It won't be an option given to you, and you should assume it'll be online.
  - Year-long courses will stay online as course delivery cannot change once it is set for a course.
  - All exams will be in person.
  - **When will it be reflected on the timetable?** All the departments are currently meeting the office of the registrar, and the office of the dean. It'll take a few more weeks - but I can encourage you to send an email to the dean's office to just see how they are doing.
- **Stats for CS**
  - This coming year (Winter 2023) - stats for CS -- STA246 (Professor Arnold Rosenbloom's course) being offered for upper year students.
- **Computer Science POSt**
  - **Process:** in first year, you take courses, and we release requirements - particularly for the CS programs.
    - **Round 1 (May):** You will know what those *requirements* are by the **end of May.** Courses finish in April - and by the end of May you will know what requirements you need for POSt.
      - We *might* tell you **maximum grade requirements** before May. So we might say you need a max X% in this course, and if you get X, then you meet the requirement.
      - This **doesn't** mean that we set the boundary at X -- **it could be lower than that!** But if you meet the maximum criteria, you are definitely in.
      - In **March or April**, you'll have an idea of what the maximum is.
    - **Round 2 (August):**
      - **Purpose:** if you missed the requirements, you can take summer courses, make up for it, and reapply (or apply) in August.

- No guarantee that the requirements will be the same as Round 1. They have typically been the same in the past, but no guarantees. Each one is separate.
  - ■ *Don't qualify?*
    - If I don't get accepted, can I keep on reapplying?
      - ○ You can try getting into the program until you graduate.
      - ○ But you *should* have a **graduation plan.** There are a lot of opportunities for people interested in CS and math. Don't hold yourself back.
  - ■ You cannot credit/no credit a course required for your degree.
  - ■ <mark>*Transfer Credits:*</mark>
    - Starting next year (2023), transfer credits will not be counted in the 4.0 required credit. This year (2022), as long as at least 3.5 UTM credit and 0.5 or more transfer credits, you will be fine.
- ○ **Types of programs:**
  - ■ *Specialist/Major:*
    - None of these programs is better or worse than any other.
    - Every year, the requirements for the CS major and specialist end up the same, so we try not to make a distinction between these programs. So it really just comes down to: what do you want from the degree?
    - Maybe you're interested in CS and CCIT, Geography (Dan chose psychology).
    - But there's no hierarchy between these programs.
  - ■ *Why Information Security Specialist and CS Specialist?*
    - They are different -- require different courses.
    - If your career goal is security, or cybersecurity - then the information security specialist is maybe what you should choose.
    - Otherwise, a CS specialist might be more appropriate.
    - Don't worry about what your employers are going to think because *specialist* is a UofT-specific term. They probably have no idea what specialists do anyway.
    - Employers will just want to know: what do you know? What projects have you completed? What have you done outside your program?
  - ■ *Career Counsellor:*
    - Neutral in the whole process, they want to help you find what's right for you. Have experience with many previous graduates.
    - So regardless of what you're studying, give us a call or drop by our office. You can make an appointment to sit down one on one with someone and really get some good tailored assistance to help you chart your path along the way we can go to the next slide, please, are helpful resources.
    - We have program plans for specialists and majors.

- Can recommend programs with similar courses.
- Professor Lisa Zhang studied pure math and applied math as an undergraduate, but is now in Computer Science - so your undergraduate major won't necessarily mean that you can't continue CS.

Alternative Options: Computer Science

Type 3 Program	Alternative options:
Computer Science - Specialist	• Applied Statistics - Major/Minor • Bioinformatics - Specialist • Communication, Culture Information & Technology - Major • Computer Science - Minor • Digital Enterprise Management - Specialist • Forensic Science - Minor • Geographical Information Systems - Major/Minor • Linguistic Studies - Major/Minor • Mathematics - Major/Minor • Economics - Major • Physics - Major/Minor • Technology, Coding & Society - Major

<u>MCS Opportunities</u>
<u>Teaching Assistantships (TA)</u>
Deadlines:
- Fall 2021 Applications are closed.
- **Winter 2022 Applications generally open late-October or early-November and close late-November or early-December.**
- Applications are done through the TA Application Portal (UTAP)

What are the benefits of becoming a TA?
- Get further in your education while making money
- A way to learn the material better - teaching deepens your understanding of the material

What makes a good TA?
- Knowledgeable and skills in the course material
- Performs well in classes
- Good communication skills: spoken and written
- Respectful - assists other students in a constructive manner
- Engage in the computer science community: discussion boards
- Interest in helping other students

Can anyone be a TA?
Requirements:

- Must have completed the course or have other relevant experience
- Background in the field they are teaching
- Priority for UofT students (external applications are accepted on rare occasions)

TAs are not expected to be perfect and will learn and grow along the way.

Research Opportunity Programs (ROP)

What is ROP?

- Earn either half (0.5) or full (1.0) course credit
- 2nd through 4th-year (upper-year students are usually taken)
- Become involved in hands-on, cutting-edge research with more individual attention
- Find a project/supervisor: ROPAPP

FAQ:

- **Will there be interviews?** Depends on the professor but in most cases, you can expect an interview.
- **What do you look for in an applicant?** It depends on the project, but they may look at:
  - Previous courses taken
  - Performance in school
  - Projects
  - Programming languages
  - Skills
  - Your motivation to be involved in the project

Independent Studies (Reading Course)

What is an Independent Study Course?

- Earn a half (0.5) of a 200- or 400- level course credit
- Learning is mostly independently up to the student
- In CS, often you work in a team or small group (not always)
- Find a project/supervisor: Faculty
  - Note: any MCS faculty member can lead an independent study so contact anyone you would like to work with.

Professional Experience Year (PEY)

- PEY is not going anywhere! There will be some sort of PEY internship/co-op program next year and for the foreseeable future (the name may change). All students will have the ability to go on a work internship term during their degree.
- PEY is a full time work term over a 12-16 month period of time that you can take after your second year of studies, typically students take it after third year.

Q: Can I do PEY if I'm a CS minor?
- Yes

Q: Will I be at a disadvantage if I do PEY as a CS minor?
- No, lots of CS minors get PEYs! It's all about strengthening your portfolio by doing side projects, hackathons, etc. Check out the CSSC site for resources on internships :p

Q: Can I take it if I'm a 4th year?
- Yes, you can. The requirement is that you must come back for one sem/one year of full time studies

Q: Can you split up your PEY?
- No

Q: Can I use external internships to satisfy the PEY credit?
- You would need to get approval from the PEY office, and it would have to be 12-16 months long.

Improving your memory
Built off of the RGASC's Study Skills Resources

1. **Chunk** the information
2. Create **mnemonics**
    a. Acronyms and visual stories are great
3. Engage in **self-referent encoding**
    a. How does this connect to me?
    b. How do I relate to this?
4. **Practice** and **overlearn**
    a. Solve problems without help
    b. Summarize key points in your own words
    c. Engage in study groups
5. Use **distributed practice**
    a. Spreading out your practice helps you retain information better