OMSCS 6310 – Software Architecture & Design
Assignment #3 [100 points]: Course Management System – Peer Design Reviews (v1)
Summer Term 2017 – Prof. Mark Moss
Due Date: Monday, June 12, 2017, 11:59 pm (AOE)

Submission:

- This assignment must be completed as an individual, not as part of a group.
- You must notify us via a private post on Piazza BEFORE the Due Date if you are encountering difficulty submitting your project. You will not be penalized for situations where the Peer Feedback System is encountering significant technical problems. However, you must alert us before the Due Date – not well after the fact.
- T-Square submission is NOT required for this assignment.

Scenario: You are continuing your work as part of a project team that has been directed to help design and implement a new course management system for a local university. In previous phases of the project, you were asked to generate fundamental design documents that capture (at a minimum) some of the main entities, and relationships between them, of the problem space – students, courses, instructors, academic records, etc. In this phase, you will review some of the designs prepared by your classmates, and provide feedback to them.

Disclaimer: *This scenario has been developed solely for this course. Any similarities or differences between this scenario and any of the programs at Georgia Tech programs are purely coincidental.*

Deliverables: This assignment requires you to submit the feedback to your fellow classmates via the Peer Feedback system. You can access the Peer Feedback System at:
https://peerfeedback.gatech.edu/

You will be assigned to review the design documents from three of your fellow classmates. You will then be asked to provide them feedback on the strengths, weaknesses and/or unique aspects of their designs. Part of the beauty of this assignment is that, in reviewing their designs, you also have the opportunity to learn by observing different approaches to the same common problem.

Key factors that will affect your score:

- You will be asked to provide feedback to three students via the Peer Feedback System.
- Approximately 33 points [100 points total] will be granted for providing feedback to each student.
- You must answer two questions for each reviewee, regarding: (1) the quality of the overall design; and, (2) the use of UML within the design.
- You will also have an open text area for each reviewee to provide at least three distinctive observations about their design. Each observation can be expressed in two – three sentences, and should represent a strength or weakness of the design; or, possibly a unique and novel approach that differs from the way that you might have represented that particular aspect.
- The feedback that you provide to your peers will, in turn, be evaluated by our graders. Given the summary nature of the feedback, our fundamental criteria will be to ensure that:

1. You have provided three distinct observations, and not just the same observation worded in multiple ways;
2. Your feedback is written in a reasonably clear and understandable way; and,
3. You haven't said anything grossly incorrect from a design or UML standpoint – for example, "…classes and operations are completely interchangeable…".

- To ensure that your feedback is as clear and readable as possible, please organize it this format:

  `Observation #1: <sentences and/or bullets are acceptable>`
  `Pros:`
  `Cons:`
  `Observation #2: <sentences and/or bullets are acceptable>`
  `Pros:`
  `Cons:`
  …

- It is important to recognize aspects of a design that represent potential weaknesses or errors. Sharing this information with your peers is key for learning, but the way you express your response is also important. Be as clear and concise as possible, but also be professional – avoid personal attacks and/or condescension in your response.
- It is also important to recognize that there are often many different ways to approach a design, each having very valid strengths. Give credit when one of your peers might have found a more clear, concise, consistent or otherwise novel or unique way to represent some of the design requirements. Keep in mind that "different and wrong are different": resist the temptation to immediately downgrade or disparage an approach that differs from your design, especially based solely on your initial instincts during the review.
- Otherwise, the graders are not going to go to extreme lengths to agree or disagree with the feedback that you've provided. If you would like to correspond further with your peers about the feedback received or provided afterwards, feel free to do so. Please remember to respect the Honor Code as we proceed into future assignments; and, remember to be as professional as possible. Software architects and designers often work on teams, and the ability to communicate while being both direct and respectful is incredibly useful.

Closing Comments & Suggestions: We (the OMSCS 6310 Team) will likely conduct an Office Hours where you will be permitted to ask us questions further questions about the feedback. We are often asked to provide an "official solution" for the design phase once the due date has passed, but we are generally reluctant for various reasons. This assignment offers, in some sense, the next best (or possibly better) option; and, allows you to develop your ability to review other's designs, while also receiving alternate feedback on your own.

Quick Reminder on Collaborating with Others: Please use Piazza for your questions and/or comments, and post publicly whenever it is appropriate. If your questions or comments contain information that specifically provides an answer for some part of the assignment, then please make your post private first, and we (the OMSCS 6310 Team) will review it and decide if it is suitable to be shared with the larger class. Best of luck on to you this assignment, and please contact us if you have questions or concerns.