CS4 Collaboration Policy

Spring 2019

1 Introduction

Welcome! CS4 will be a broad and comprehensive introduction to the fantastic field of computer science. In this class you will gain a strong understanding of the fundamentals of computer science and learn how to apply them to a wide range of data analysis, visualization and simulation problems. To this end, it's imperative that each student independently develop a thorough understanding of the material. And so, we – the CS4 course staff – are working to ensure that the work you're submitting is entirely your own. This document details what is and what is **not** acceptable collaboration for this class.

NOTE: Due to course changes, this collaboration policy is stricter than in semesters before 2019.

2 Discussion of Course Material

You may absolutely discuss **general** CS4 concepts with anyone, including current students and former students. We encourage you to discuss any of the following topics, which fall into this category:

- Going over CS4 lecture slides, our (non-assignment) handouts, Python documentation, etc.

- Discussing mathematical concepts such as linear regression.

- Discussing broad programming concepts like recursion or array indexing

3 Homeworks and Projects

You may discuss high level concepts that may pertain to the homework with other students and you may take notes or diagrams in order to solidify understanding of these concepts. You may **not** discuss homework solutions with other students – this means **you should never possess or consult a copy or portion of another student's work, you should never discuss specific solutions, and you may never help debug another student's work**.

However, if you are really stuck, you may ask a TA or another student to help you develop an appropriate debugging *strategy*. Do not rely on anyone to actually find or fix your bugs. Your ability to independently implement solutions is a strong indication that you understand them.

4   Online Resources

We are very lucky to live in an information age where people can share knowledge so easily, giving us so much knowledge at our fingertips. We want to encourage you to take advantage of the available knowledge pertinent to CS4, but at the same time, our goal is to teach you to solve problems, and you cannot develop this skill if you consistently turn to other sources for their solutions. The CS4 website includes links to all the course slides and assignments, as well as various supplementary documents, some of which we have written and some of which we have not. You are free to access all materials linked to on the course website. You are also free to search the Web to help enhance your understanding of a language construct, a data structure, or an algorithm presented in class. Mathworks' MATLAB Documentation Center is an especially useful resource. However, you are not permitted to search for any information regarding specific CS4 assignments. Do not search for solutions in MATLAB, Python or another language. In the event that you inadvertently stumble upon information relevant to a solution to a specific problem and use this information to derive your solution, you *must* cite your source. Though you may not receive credit for your solution, a citation will protect you from being charged with violating the course collaboration policy. Please be advised: our staff is trained to recognize solutions that are not typical of CS 0040 students. If we encounter one, we can easily do the same search as the student to uncover the source.

5   Piazza Online Forum

In CS4, we use an online academic forum called Piazza, where students can convene virtually to further explore the course materials. We use this forum to provide students with an additional avenue for discussion. However, when using this forum, you must take extra care not to reveal or hint at the solutions to any assignments. **All collaboration policy guidelines apply regardless of the medium, and they therefore apply on Piazza as well**. Though you cannot reveal solutions, what you can do on Piazza is ask or answer clarification questions about course materials, including assignments, so long as they do not pertain to solutions to any assignments. **You may not under any circumstances post public code on Piazza.** When posting questions, if you are unsure your question falls under the accepted policy guidelines, please set post visibility to "Instructors Only" to protect yourself from disciplinary action. The Instructor or a TA will answer your question, and make it public only if it is a question that is helpful for the entire class and does not reveal any component

of the problem solution.

6   Protecting Your Workspace

The below advice pertains to if you are coding on the CS machines, which use the UNIX/Linux filesystem. If another student copies any of your work because you have neglected to set the appropriate file permissions, left your terminal session unlocked, or left loose printouts lying around, you will be held accountable. Therefore, it is important to make sure that the parts of your home directory where you keep your code are not readable by anyone else. You should also be sure to lock your terminal session when you are away from it, and keep careful track of all of your printouts. Under the standard home-directory organization, which you will have set up in section, all of your course-related work is in your `course` directory. You can check permissions of all files and folders within a folder by running `ls -l` in that folder's directory. If you find your course folder to be public, to prevent it from being read by people other than yourself, open a terminal in the CS department and enter the following: `chmod 700  /course`. To lock your screen in Gnome (the default Linux window manager), click on your name in the top right corner of your screen, and then select "Lock Screen" from the menu that pops up. Unlike logging out, locking your screen will save all open programs. If you are leaving for a longer period of time, select "Log Out" to end your session on the machine. Note that this option will not preserve your open programs. If you are coding from your laptop, please ensure that you take the necessary steps to avoid plagiarism, i.e. logging out or locking your session when leaving your laptop temporarily.

7   TA Hours Policy - Section and Open Hours

TA office hours for CS 0040 will be held in a space that we have reserved for sections. We will use signmeup to manage the line at hours. When you arrive at hours, please submit a ticket in the CS4 Hours queue and you will be helped in the order displayed. If you hit a bug, you should have put significant effort into fixing it on your own before seeing a TA. You should be able to show relevant evidence – including design, pseudocode, printlines, or debugger use. Please note that if you cannot show that you have taken the necessary steps to solve a problem on your own, the TA's reserve the right to release your ticket and ask you to return after debugging on you own.

As an informal community guideline, please use your "fair share" of TA hours, especially for debugging questions, to avoid overloading the TAs and to allow other students to ask their own questions. To ensure that we are helping all students, there will be a 15 minute cutoff. This does not mean you are guaranteed to be helped for all 15 minutes, but that after 15 minutes have passed, the TA helping you reserves the right to move onto the next student. That being said, TAs always reserve the right to move onto the next student if

they feel like they've helped you adequately. We want you to get the help you need, but keep in mind that struggling through hard bugs on your own is the fastest route to becoming an expert debugger.

Note that TAs are here to help, but you are not entitled to their time. Please be respectful of your TAs. If you are rude or display inappropriate behavior to a TA during TA hours on multiple occasions (the first time you will be issued a warning), you will be banned from TA hours. If you have a grade complaint, please email the TA who graded your assignment – do not confront them during TA hours. Finally, please direct all course-related inquiries, policy-related questions, and general frustrations to the HTAs.

8 Policy Enforcement

The TA staff are trained to look for policy abuses, and we do make use of software designed to recognize similarities across programs. This software, known as MOSS is run on all assignments and is remarkably good at detecting unanticipated use of shared code (i.e. plagiarism). It is also used to compare all this year's solutions with prior solutions. Because some course projects may be team-oriented, it is all the more important to understand (and remember!) what the boundaries are. Violating the collaboration policy is a violation of the Academic Code and can result in some or all of the punishments detailed by the university. Once again, if you have any questions at all about this collaboration policy, ask for clarification! **Misunderstanding the policy is not an acceptable excuse for not abiding by it.**

9 Collaboration Policy Agreement

You must fill out the agreement in the online form **linked here** by the time you submit the first homework in order for the course staff to begin grading your work.