1 Introduction

We use an online academic forum called Piazza to communicate with each other on all things related to CS17. Piazza is a super useful resource to help you navigate the logistics and material of the course. If you are a registered student in CS17, you can sign up for Piazza via either an email invitation or the link on the announcements page of the course website. Posts related to homeworks or projects fall under a specific assignment thread, while posts related to labs, lectures, announcements, logistics, and the final exam will be located under separate threads.

2 What can I use Piazza for?

Ask & Answer Questions

One of the most important uses of Piazza is asking and answering questions. If you are reading through an assignment or working on a problem and you have a question, please check Piazza first to see if someone else had the same question and the answer has already been posted. Piazza is a great first place to get help before going to TA hours. Please use this forum to ask away; there are no bad questions.

Examples

- Clarifying Questions “Do we need to turn in practice questions?”
- Debugging Questions “I’m receiving a warning when I implement a certain solution. I’ve tried making my cases exhaustive. How can I further address this?”
• **Syntax & Style Questions**  “Is it good style to write a procedure this way?”

• **Logistics Questions**  “Where is the new room for Workshop?”

**Announcements**

We will regularly post announcements on Piazza related to schedule changes, room locations, graded quizzes, follow-ups to lectures, CS17 and other CS department-related activities.

**Projects**

• At the start of each project, we will create a running list of FAQs to help clarify and answer common questions. Please refer back to this megathread as you work through the project to find helpful tips or to see if your question has already been answered.

• There will also be a running **Search for Teammates** megathread to find a partner for the projects. You can add a new post and indicate your availability to work on the projects.

3 How do I use Piazza?

**How to View Questions**

Posts are sorted by threads, with topics listed along the top ribbon of the platform. Primary discussions are sorted by week in the left pane. Follow-up discussions are shown directly below original questions & answers. Please reference this [guide](#) on how to filter your feed.

**How to Post a Question**

1. Select “New Post” in the top left corner.

2. Select whether you’d like to ask a question or post a note.

3. Select the audience. If your question is general and would be helpful for other students, please make it visible to the entire class. If your question is specific (especially if it will contain information directly related to your code or program design), you must make it private to instructors only.

4. Select the appropriate topic folder(s).

5. Enter a one-line header summary. Try to make this a very concise description of your question.

6. Enter more details about your question as needed using the text editor. Please do not hesitate to include more description about what you know so far about a concept or which debugging strategies you have tried already.

7. Select how you want to be shown as a user. You can choose to be **anonymous** to your classmates and still post your question publicly.
How to Post Code

**Important Reminder.** You should never post code related to a CS17 assignment publicly. If you need to reference code in your question, please make your post private, so only the course staff can see it.

When writing a post, you can add blocks of code using the code button in the text editor. Please use discretion when adding code to your question to make it legible for the TA. Please do not simply copy and paste your entire file into the post. Rather, you can break up your post between text descriptions of your thoughts and questions and code blocks of relevant code that you are referencing. For example, if you would like to clarify your design approach to a particular part of a problem or need help debugging one section of your program, please only include that block in your post.

You can find a brief guide to code blocking [here](#) on Piazza’s website. Some other useful Piazza features for CS17 include the LaTeX equation editor and the email notifications.

4 Piazza Etiquette

We ask that you abide by proper “etiquette” as it pertains to hours, which we articulate below:

- Please be respectful of those who ask questions and those who answer, whether it is your peers or the teaching staff.

- Please be patient when waiting to receive a response from a member of the teaching staff. We will work to check Piazza as often as we can. We aim to respond accurately and appropriately to your question in a timely manner, but please be advised that our response will not be instant. If your question has not been resolved within 24 hours, please email the HTA list.

- **Quiet Hours.** Please remember that your TAs are undergraduate students as well. During the hours of midnight to 9am, students should not expect TAs to answer questions.

- Please direct personal concerns or requests about the course (i.e. extensions, grade weights) to Professor Hughes via email. Please refer to the course missive for more information on course policies.

5 Collaboration Policy

As stated in the course collaboration policy, we believe that discussing problems with your classmates is a valuable learning experience for all parties involved. We also want to create a supportive community where students can learn from one another.

**Asking Questions**

Please post all code and design-related questions **privately**. If you post something privately and a TA thinks it would benefit the rest of the students in the course, the TA can change it to be public without disclosing your identity in the question.
Answering Questions

While TA staff will work to answer all questions on Piazza, please feel welcome to respond to your peers’ questions or discussion threads. However, just as in TA hours, please do not do the following:

- Share answers or solutions directly
- Post code in response to a question publicly
- Provide descriptions of how to implement a solution or design a program

If you think your post may contain sensitive information, please make your post private to the course staff.

6 Data Privacy Policy

Please note that Piazza’s platform is based on collecting identifiable data from students and sharing this data with companies for recruiting purposes. Under the company’s current privacy policy, students are automatically enrolled in this feature and must opt out of data sharing if they do not wish to have their data shared with Piazza’s customers.

Instructions to Opt Out of Data Sharing

To check if your profile is published to the Piazza Network, visit your profile settings in Piazza by clicking the gear icon at the top right of the Piazza page near your username. Then click on “Account/Email Settings” from the dropdown menu.

If you want to opt-out of the Piazza Network, select “Not in the Network.”
Please let us know if you find any mistakes, inconsistencies, or confusing language in this or any other CS 17 document by filling out the anonymous feedback form: [http://cs.brown.edu/courses/csci0170/feedback](http://cs.brown.edu/courses/csci0170/feedback).