CSCI 1420: Machine Learning
ENGN 2520: Pattern Recognition and Machine Learning

Grading and Collaboration Policies, Brown University, Fall 2015

Please read all parts of this document, and take care to follow all course policies!

Sign Up: You need a CS computer account!

You will need a Brown CS department computer account to submit your answers and access homework solutions. If this is your first CS course, the Sunlab consultants (CIT 143) can help you create an account. To submit your answers from outside the CIT building, you will need to remotely login via ssh or VPN. Be sure you learn how to do this well before the submission deadline!

Collaborate: Working on homeworks & exams

You may work on homework problems in groups, and discuss your work with each other. However, each student must program and write up their solutions independently. You may *not* directly copy solutions or code from other students, or from materials distributed in previous versions of this or other courses. You may *not* make your solutions available to others: files in your home directory should not be world-readable, and you may not post solutions to public websites or repositories.

Unlike the homeworks, your **work on the midterm and final exams must be completely independent**. You may *not* discuss problems with other students. You may *not* directly copy solutions from other students or from external reference materials. You may ask the course staff to clarify questions, but they will give fewer explicit hints than they do for the homeworks.

Write up: Formatting homework & exam solutions

Your answers to all questions, with the exception of Matlab source code, must be included in a single pdf document. Number your answers by question and part using the same order as in the handout. To allow anonymized grading by the teaching assistants, write your Brown Banner ID at the top of the first page, but do *not* put your own name in your solution document. Result plots must be submitted as figures in the same pdf as your other answers, *not* as separate files.

We strongly recommend that you use LaTeX to typeset your solutions, but if you prefer, you may use another program that generates easy-to-read pdf files. Any English text in your answers must be typed, *not* handwritten. We allow an exception for mathematical derivations, which if you prefer may be scanned and included in your single solution pdf. However it is your responsibility to make sure that any scanned math is legible, and graders have the discretion to deduct points for illegibility. Remember to be clear, and make it easy for the graders to check your work!

Submit: Electronic handin of homework & exam solutions

On the CS department filesystem, change to the directory (`cd`) your work is in. When you list files (`ls`), the only files should be `hw.pdf`, and the Matlab source code you have written. The Matlab code does not need to be extensively documented, but it should be readably commented, and we may run it. You should *not* turn in any folders or data (`.mat`) files, and please do not turn in copies of external Matlab packages (like optimization toolboxes) that you have used without modification.

To submit execute `/course/cs142/bin/cs142_handin hw?`, replacing `?` by the appropriate homework number. Similarly, use the command `/course/cs142/bin/cs142_handin midterm` to submit your midterm exam solutions, or `/course/cs142/bin/cs142_handin final` to submit your final exam solutions. This has been tested to work, but if it doesn't for any reason, e-mail your solutions to `cs142tas@cs.brown.edu` with a full problem description including warning messages.

The unix `groups` command may be used to verify that you have been added to the `cs142student` group, as required by the handin script. If your handin is successful, `username@cs.brown.edu` will receive an email confirming the submission time. Please be sure you check this message to ensure that all of your solution files were properly uploaded.

Late submission policy

Homework assignments are due by 11:59pm on Thursday evenings, and answers uploaded after that time will be counted as late. You may run the handin script multiple times before the deadline, and each time it will erase any old handins with your latest files.

Homeworks may be submitted up to 4 days late, by Monday evening at 11:59pm. After this point, solutions will be distributed and handins will no longer be accepted. You may submit up to two late assignments without penalty. For each subsequent late assignment, 20 points (out of a maximum of 100) will be deducted from the overall homework score. The allotment of two "free" late submissions is designed to cover common conflicts such as personal or professional travel, other course or research deadlines, and religious holidays; additional extensions will not be granted in such cases. Exceptions to this policy are only given in unusual circumstances, such as family or medical emergencies, and must be requested in advance by e-mail to the instructor.

The midterm and final exam are each distributed three days before their due date. See the course website for due dates and times. **You must submit exam solutions to receive course credit, and late submissions are not allowed!**

Grading policies

There will be nine homework assignments, each due at least one week after it is handed out. Homework problems will combine mathematical derivations and Matlab implementation of learning algorithms. The scores of all nine assignments will be averaged equally to determine an overall score (we will not "drop" any homeworks). Overall course grades will be assigned as follows: 65% homeworks, 15% midterm exam, 20% final exam.

Homework solutions will be posted in the course directory, and grades distributed via email. If you would like to dispute the points you received for some assignment, do so by emailing `cs142headtas@cs.brown.edu` with a clear description of your concerns. Resolving complaints requires discussion among the course staff, which may take several days. Certainly do tell us about cases where a correct answer was missed or given only partial credit. If your answer is partly correct and you received partial credit, we are unlikely to change the amount of partial credit.

We will *only* handle grade changes via email, and the course staff will not discuss homework grading during office hours. If you have significant concerns about your overall course standing, please arrange an individual meeting with the instructor.