Collaboration Policy
Spring 2019

Contents

IMPORTANT: Please read this document and submit the form below. You will not receive credit for any assignments until we have this on file.

1 General Course Policy

In CS1380, you should do your own thinking, your own design, and your own coding. You're allowed to talk to other students about the content of the lectures and of the textbook and about high-level concepts in general. You may answer questions from other students about packages used for assignments, as long as the problem is a narrow one and not one that helps in the problem-solving process at large. Finally, you may assist another student with debugging if he or she is stuck with a specific low-level problem that has been impeding progress on the work.

Obviously, code should be shared liberally between group members on group assignments. We encourage you to practice pair-programming.

On a general level, what is not allowed is that you let yourself be led by another student to the extent that your task becomes significantly less challenging because of your discussion with him or her. More specifically, you should do your own problem solving, program design and decomposition, and design your own data structures. In conversation with other students, be sure not to venture into design and coding specifics and, especially, never sit down to discuss an assignment with someone else before you've analyzed the problem in depth on your own.

To be blunt, the most blatant violation that can occur is code-copying, and this absolutely will not be tolerated. We reserve the right to do a "wire-pull test" (i.e., ask you to explain your program). In addition, we will use highly reliable tools to compare your code to that of other students (including assignments from years past) for violations. In a similar vein, make sure that all of your coursework on the filesystem has the proper permissions so that other students cannot view and potentially copy your work. See `chmod(1)` or ask a consultant for help if you don't know how to go about this. Failure to do this can potentially be viewed as a violation of the academic code.

Similar guidelines hold for written homework assignments. You may work in groups in the process of solving the problems, but in all circumstances, the written answer must be your work. You must completely understand the answers you give, and we reserve the same "wire-pull test" rights as on programs.

It is a violation of Brown's academic code to find solutions to problem sets and projects from outside sources, including the internet or the department's file system, and then present them as your work. If you accidentally encounter solutions, you should provide a citation in your handin so that it's clear it is not your own work.

We believe that this policy is explicit enough to guide your judgment and that we have not left you many gray areas. If you are ever in doubt about the legality of your actions, be sure to clear them with Professor Benson or a TA, even if only after the event has occurred. When we confront a student with a case of suspected violation, an answer of "I didn't know that this was wrong" is not likely to find much sympathy.

Again, note that you are expected always to approach a problem initially on your own and seriously attempt to find a solution. You are honor-bound to preserve your independence of thinking. And remember that the TAs should always be your first resource when you have a question or problem.

Beyond what is written here, you should also make sure that you abide by the University's Academic Code (see Basic Policy, "Principles of the Brown University Community"[1]).

2 Testing and Debugging

Testing ideas and a testing plan are part of project design, and you may collaborate to come up with them. Test code, however, must not be shared. Saying something like "Oh, have you tried calling `runtime.Gosched()`? I had a strange problem with that" is fine, but "Try using these several lines of Go code" is not.

You may not look at or copy anyone else's code for the purpose of helping you write your own, and you may not permit anyone to look at or copy your code for that purpose. You are permitted to work together on debugging, and may look at someone's code or work together to modify code for the purpose of helping him/her debug, as long as your code is not open concurrently. Note that this policy is significantly more lenient than that of most CS courses. You all have different skills when it comes to problem solving, so we encourage you to help each other. You can often learn just as much from your peers as you can from TAs. If you receive help on debugging, you must cite this help in your README. For example, "I received debugging assistance from jcarberr."

3 Piazza Policy

This course uses the Piazza web site for answering questions. When posting questions on Piazza, students must keep in mind the collaboration guidelines noted above, and use those guidelines to determine:

- Whether to mark your post "private to the instructors" or public;

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[1] https://www.brown.edu/academics/college/degree/sites/brown.edu.academics.college.degree/files/uploads/Academic-Code.pdf

- How much detail and help to provide in an answer to a fellow student

Part of the learning process is struggling with the material until you arrive at the right insight for you to understand it. Posting too much detail in response to a request for assistance can impair learning. On the other hand, sometimes it's great to be nudged in the right direction when you're not able to get out of a rut. And of course, misunderstandings of the assignment or tools available should be helped rapidly. Please use your best judgment when posting to Piazza, as if you were collaborating with your friends in person. A few rough guidelines:

- *Please do post and answer publicly:* Misunderstandings of the assignment; clarifications about the requirements; bugs in the assignment spec or reference implementation or tests; small, detailed questions about the operation of system calls, functions, etc.

- *Please don't post or answer publicly:* More than a few lines of code; in-depth explanations of how your system works; questions about the best approach for architecting the system at a high level; questions about your grade; problems with your partner; etc.

Please use your judgment between these two examples. If you post privately, please let us know whether or not it would be OK to mark the post public if we feel it would be beneficial to the class to make it public.

4   GitHub

In CS 1380, your programming projects will be contained in a private GitHub repository created for you and your partner by the course staff. If you would like to post your code in another GitHub repository or elsewhere online, please be aware that posting your code public could be (and has been) an academic code violation. While it's understandable that you may want to post your code in a location other than the respository created for you in CS 1380, so that, for example, potential employers can view it, it's not necessary that your code be publicly viewable. GitHub and other version control repositories and Internet hosting services may allow private postings. In the case of GitHub, you may use the free GitHub Education Pack[2] to gain access to private repositories.

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[2]https://education.github.com/pack

5   Contract

Once you have fully read thru and understood the policies laid out here, please fill out this form. You will not receive grades for assignments until we have it on file.

Collaboration Policy Contract Form[3]

Please let us know if you find any mistakes, inconsistencies, or confusing language in this or any other CS1380 document by filling out the anonymous feedback form:

`http://cs.brown.edu/courses/cs138/s19/feedback.html`.

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[3]`https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSfATlVXqjtdbJAham--tyH3u6MHdKm1uSQL3p_ybSWgshMHSw/viewform`