

Teaching Guidelines

2004–2005

Department of Computer Science
Illinois Institute of Technology

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The Computer Science Department understands and appreciates the time and commitment it takes to be an effective teacher. Our goal is to provide supportive infrastructure and uniform policies to insure that all courses are taught well and with common standards; this document outlines the responsibilities and standards for teaching courses in the department. It applies to all courses, undergraduate or graduate, required or elective, single section or multi-section, day or evening, Main Campus or Rice Campus, live or Internet or TV. It applies to all faculty, tenured or untenured, tenure-track or non-tenure-track, full time or part time.

This policy document is not a set of vague suggestions to instructors; it is a set of *requirements* for teaching in the department. The departmental tenure-track faculty have approved these requirements for all instructors and are committed to follow this policy themselves.

This document covers the following key areas: syllabus, course management, office hours, assignment and management of TAs, treatment of students, resources for students, cheating, student evaluations, archiving final exams, and submission of grades.

1 Syllabus

Instructors must provide a detailed syllabus for students delineating the objectives of the course. The objectives must substantially match those of the official course outline provided by the relevant course manager for a given course (for a list of course managers and course overviews see the web page www.cs.iit.edu/~abet): instructors have no flexibility in 100- and 200-level courses, very little flexibility in 300-level courses, limited flexibility in 400-level courses, and some flexibility in 500-level courses.

The syllabus must also indicate topics covered in the class, homework assignments, projects, exams, grading standards, and a clear policy on handling of late assignments/projects and academic irregularities (cheating—see below). The syllabus must be posted on the course home page linked from the CS web site no later than the end of the first week of the semester and, except for minor changes, must not be altered once published.

2 Course Management

Almost all courses have an assigned a course manager.¹ The course manager is responsible for coordinating the activities of each section of the course. Instructors are obligated to meet and work with the course manager to insure the content and uniformity of courses both within a given semester and over the course

¹At present only undergraduate courses have assigned course managers; graduate courses will eventually.

of different semesters. Make sure to obtain the most current set of objectives for the course. The course manager will also provide guidelines for textbook choice, homework assignments, exams, grading, and student workload for the course.

In any semester, all instructors teaching a course must coordinate with one another and the course manager as to the course outline, text(s), exams, homework, and projects. *Specifically, all sections of a course must use the same texts, reading lists, course outline, schedule of lectures, homework assignments, projects, and grading standards; all sections must use comparable exams.* Those teaching like-numbered courses must meet regularly to insure that the courses are progressing in parallel; they must work closely with one another in the assignment of final grades. In case of disagreements among those involved in a course, decisions will be made by the course manager or by the senior faculty member involved.

Plan to meet three times each semester with the Course Manager. The first meeting should be before the semester starts, to review the course syllabus, course policies, and course assignments to insure consistency. Meet again about halfway through the semester to check how things are going. Meet after the semester ends to discuss how things went, to review the “Course Self-Assessment by Instructor” and “Course Assessment by Students,” and to develop course enhancements.

While the choice of homework, projects, and exam questions is up to the instructor (subject to consistency across sections as outlined above), it is common sense to avoid reuse of problems, projects, or exam questions from prior semesters. Refresh your course each semester with new problems, projects, and exam questions.

3 Teaching Materials and Textbooks

No materials are to be reproduced and sold (even at cost) to students. Materials may be reproduced by the instructor and given to the students at no charge, or the materials may be placed on the course web page so that students can download and print them.

If a text authored by someone teaching for the department is required in a CS course, the royalties received by those authors for such texts sold at IIT should be donated to the department.

4 Office Hours

Establish and post reasonable office hours. Your office hours and location must be given on course web site; your office hours must be posted prominently on your office door. The location and times of office hours should match the location (main Campus or Rice) and times (day or evening) of the course. Be present in your office for all posted office hours. If you are teaching a course that includes part-time students, try to accommodate them by having some office hours on nights/weekends.

5 Grading Standards

Be certain that the students know what is expected of them. Establish grading standards for how much various components of the course (homework, quizzes, midterm exam, final exam, projects, and so on) will count in final grades, publicize those standards in class and on the course web site, and *adhere closely to those standards*. Do not change the standards once they are set and be careful to apply the standards equally to all students—to do otherwise is capricious grading.

6 Assignment and Management of TAs

Instructors of CS courses will be asked for recommendations for current TAs and prospective TAs at the end of each semester (around finals week). Preference in hiring TAs is given to Ph.D. students and prospective Ph.D. students, students currently doing research with tenure track faculty, and students with the highest grade point averages. Faculty and TA preference also plays a limited role; such preferences are taken into account in making assignments once the TAs are selected. The selection and assignment of TAs is a complicated job in which the overall well-being of the department must be considered, not just the desires of individual instructors or TAs.

You are responsible to be certain that that TAs and graders handle their responsibilities. Monitor their performance and send an evaluation of it at the end of semester so that substandard TAs and graders can be eliminated.

TAs can do some teaching, hold office hours for student questions, assist in designing homework, projects, quizzes, and exams. Both TAs and graders can grade quizzes, homework assignments and student projects. In large courses, under appropriate supervision, TAs and graders can grade exams, but only if you treat their efforts as a first cut and personally review their work. You must also give graders a clear answer key and detailed guidance on the assignment of partial credit.

TA contact information and office hours should be posted on the course web page. TA office hours and location should match that of the course.

Be sure to submit an evaluation of the TA(s) at the end of the semester.

7 Treatment of Students

Be reasonable in dealing with students. Be patient, compassionate, and courteous and be sure your TAs/graders are also. Treat students with a professional level of respect in all written and verbal communications. Give students frequent feedback on their performance on homework, projects, and exams throughout the semester.

8 Resources for Students

Instructors should be aware of the following IIT services for students and refer students to these services when appropriate:

1. Academic Resource Center—Tutoring for undergraduate courses, mostly 100-, 200-, and 300-level.
2. Student Health Center
3. Counseling Center—professional services to help students with academic, career, and personal concerns.
4. Academic Advisors—if any student is struggling or not attending class, especially for undergraduate students, please notify the student's Academic Advisor; see

http://www.cs.iit.edu/faculty/undergrad_advisors.html

9 Cheating

Cheating is an occasional and a sad fact of life in the academic world. To insure consistency of policy across the department, if you encounter duplicate work (homeworks, projects, exams, and so on), take the following steps:

1. Make three copies of each instance of the duplicate work, one for your files, one to hand back to the students, and one for the departmental offices. Keep the original copies.
2. Deposit the copy for the departmental offices with the departmental assistant and include the students' names and ID numbers.
3. Assign each copy a grade of zero until you have talked to the students.
4. Talk to the students. If one student confesses to having stolen the work, or if you have clear evidence who is guilty, the guilty student should get a zero and the student who did the work should get full credit. If no one confesses, all involved should get a zero.
5. Inform students of the "second offense policy": If a student is guilty of a second offense, the student will receive a grade of an E for the course and the department will pursue steps to remove him/her from the university.

A software comparison program called MOSS (www.cs.berkeley.edu/~moss) has been successfully used in CS105, CS106, CS200, CS331, CS401, CS402, and CS430. It is free to use and been used to narrow the number of student programs down that need to be hand reviewed for possible copying.

10 Student Evaluations

You are required to participate in the *IIT Instructor and Course Evaluations* and the department's self-assessment studies at the end of every semester. Evaluations are done on line and you must encourage student participation. Self-assessment forms will be made available for distribution in classes near the end of the semester. Both the IIT course evaluations and the self-assessment forms are customarily reviewed by the Course Manager and the departmental administration; the course evaluations are also reviewed by the university administration.

11 Submission of Grades

Midterm grades must be submitted for all first year undergraduates in 100-, 200-, and 300-level courses. Midterm grades are used by Academic Advisors to identify students for early intervention.

Final grades must be computed following your published standards and submitted in a timely fashion, as required by the university. You must use *Web for Faculty* to submit grades online. You must also submit, in hard copy, your entire grade spreadsheet (showing grades for all assignments, exams, projects, and so on) to the departmental office: Grades for departmental files should be in two forms: (1) alphabetical by last name and (2) rank-ordered.

Grades of "I" (incomplete work) can be given only under limited circumstances: the student's work to date must be of passing quality and the student must have substantial equity in the course with no more than four weeks of coursework to be completed. See the *IIT Bulletin* for details:

<http://www.grad.iit.edu/graduatecollege/programs>

12 Archiving of Final Exams

All student's final exam papers must be retained for one calendar year from the date of the exam. Part-time instructors and teaching assistants should deposit their exam papers, carefully labeled as to course, semester, and instructor, for storage in the department offices. Electronic archival is acceptable when appropriate.