CSC 590: Thesis Seminar
Fall 2009
Course Syllabus

September 24, 2009

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What	When	Where
Lecture	F 1:10 – 2:00pm	14-232B

Office Hours

	When	Where
Monday	8:30am - 9:30am	14-215
Wednsday	8:30am - 9:30sm	14-215
Thursday	9:00am - 22:00pm	14-215

Description

This is a 1-hour graduate seminar designed to aid M.S. students in conducting their research and preparing and delivering their thesis document.

The main course objectives are:

- To learn what is involved in writing a thesis.
- To learn how to do reasearch.
- To learn how to present research: orally and in writing.

Textbook, Readings

The class does not have an official textbook.

Topics

No.	Date	Topic
1.	September 25	Syllabus and Introductions
2.	October 2	M.S. research and thesis
3.	October 9	Thesis document structure
4.	October 16	Thesis document: Introduction, Background, Related work
5.	October 23	**FURLOUGH** Guest lecture
6.	October 30	*Short Presentations*, Helloween party
7.	November 6	Thesis Presentation
8.	November 13	*Long Presentations*
9.	November 20	*Long Presentations*
10.	December 4	*Long Presentations*

Furlough

During this academic year all Cal Poly faculty is observing a furlough.

Each full-time faculty member is required to observe **six days of furlough** during the Fall quarter.

I will be observing the following days:

No.	Date	Day of Week	Effect
1.	September 29	Tuesday	*no effect*
2.	October 14	Wednsday	no class, no office hours
3.	October 23	Friday	no class
4.	November 16	Monday	no class, no office hours
5.	November 27	Friday	*no effect* (Friday after Thanksgiving)
6.	December 3	Thursday	*no office hours*

I will be off-campus and unavailable for emails on furlough days.

Note. Please be aware that while the faculty are furloughed, the students are not. Unless otherwise announced in advance, the lectures are cancelled on furlough days, but all your assignments remain in force. *Assignments may be due for submission on faculty furlough days.*

Grading

Your grade will be determined by the quality of the following deliverables:

1.	Thesis reading and critique	15%
2.	Research blurb/Thesis Intro	15%
3.	Experimental design	10%
4.	Related work	20%
5.	Short presentation	5%
6.	Long presentation	30%
7.	Class participation	5%

Course Policies

Exams

The course has **no final exam time** and no final exam.

Assignments

The course involves three types of assignments: *reading assignments*, *writing assignments* and *oral presentations*.

Reading Assignmnets

There will be two key reading assignments in the course:

Thesis reading and critique: you will be provided with a number of M.S. thesis documents from past Cal Poly M.S. students. You will read these documents, and you will prepare and present your assessment/critique of one of the theses.

Relevant literature: you will be asked to prepare a bibliography of academic literature relevant to your thesis/research topic. You will then be asked to read a number of papers from your bibliography.

Writing Assignments

The course will have the following writing assignments:

Research Blurb/Thesis Intro: you will write a succinct introduction to your research area. This introduction should provide an overview of the broad reasearch area within which you are conducting your thesis research and should motivate your specific thesis research. As such, this text can be viewed as a draft of your thesis introduction section.

Experimental design: you will come up with a validation framework for your thesis (creative part of the assignment) and present a short write-up describing it (writing part of the assignmnet). This can eventually become part of the Validation section of your thesis.

Background/Related work writeup : based on your bibliography of related work you will provide a succinct writeup detailing the background information relevant to your thesis research topic. This may later morph into Related Work or Background sections of your thesis.

Oral Presentation Assignments

You will formally deliver two presentations in this course:

Short presentation: A short (up to 5 mins) presentation describing the essense of your thesis research in terms accessible to your peers.

Long(er) presentation: A longer (15-20 mins) presentation describing your thesis research in more technical terms. This may serve as a prototype of your eventual thesis presenation.

Other Assignments

There may be other assignments in the course:

- **M.S. Defense attendance.** If any M.S. defenses are scheduled this quarter, we will attend them (ideally, I'd want everyone to attend 1-2 defenses).
- **Peer reviews.** Some class activities may involve peer reviews of material produced by others (e.g., past theses) or by other students in the course (e.g., their wiki submissions).

Web Page

Class web page can be found at

http://www.csc.calpoly.edu/~dekhtyar/590-Fall2009

Through this page you will be able to access all class handouts including homeworks, project information, reading materials and lecture notes (should the latter be written).

Wiki

The course will feature a wiki:

http://wiki.csc.calpoly.edu/590

All assignment deliverables shall be submitted to the wiki. Some written assignments will use wiki pages as deliverables, while others will require you to produce an electronic document (e.g., Word or LaTeX) which would then be uploaded to the wiki. Other materials (your presentation slides, e.g.) will also go there.

Academic Integrity

University Policies

Cal Poly's Academic Integrity policies are found at

http://www.academicprograms.calpoly.edu/academicpolicies/Cheating.htm

In particular, these policies define *cheating* as (684.1)

> "*. . . obtaining or attempting to obtain, or aiding another to obtain credit for work, or any improvement in evaluation of performance, by any dishonest or deceptive means. Cheating includes, but is not limited to: lying; copying from another's test or examination; discussion of answers or questions on an examination or test, unless such discussion is specifically authorized by the instructor; taking or receiving copies of an exam without the permission of the instructor; using or displaying notes, "cheat sheets," or other information devices inappropriate to the prescribed test conditions; allowing someone other than the officially enrolled student to represent same.*"

Plagiarism, per University policies is defined as (684.3)

> "... the act of using the ideas or work of another person or persons as if they were one's own without giving proper credit to the source. Such an act is not plagiarism if it is ascertained that the ideas were arrived through independent reasoning or logic or where the thought or idea is common knowledge. Acknowledgement of an original author or source must be made through appropriate references; i.e., quotation marks, footnotes, or commentary."

University policies state (684.2): "Cheating requires an "F" course grade and further attendance in the course is prohibited." (appeal process is also outlined, see the web site above for details.). Plagiarism, per university policies (684.4) can be treated as a form of cheating, although a level of discretion is given to the instructor, allowing the instuctor to determine the causes of plagiarism and effect other means of remedy. It is the obligation of the instructor to inform the student that a penalty is being assessed in such cases.

Course Policies

First, all traditional warnings concerning cheating apply in this course. In particular, solicitation of help from people not involved in the course and submission of materials/code etc.. not developed by you are absolutely prohibited. Any outside materials used in preparation of homeworks, reports, project assignments must be properly documents. For example, you must properly cite all papers you refer to, all web resources used in perparation. You must also note any open source, off-the-shelf, etc. . . software or code fragments that you have incorporated in your solution. If you have questions concerning allowable use of such materials, please consult me **in advance**.

For example, if an assignment is to design and implement an XML parser, you are supposed to build one from scratch and not use any available parser code (which is plentiful). On the other hand, if you want to use an open-source library, or some code developed by one of the team members prior to the course as part of a project solution, this may qualify as allowable use, if the code is used in support of the main tasks of the project.