CSC 590: Thesis Seminar  
Winter 2011  
Course Syllabus  

January 2, 2011

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office: 14-215

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>What</th>
<th>When</th>
<th>Where</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Lecture</td>
<td>M 2:10 – 3:00pm</td>
<td>14-232B</td>
</tr>
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Office Hours  

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>When</th>
<th>Where</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Wednesday 2:10pm - 3:00pm</td>
<td>14-215</td>
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<td>Thursday 1:10pm - 4:00pm</td>
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<tr>
<td>Friday 1:10pm - 2:00pm</td>
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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 research.
• To learn how to present research: orally and in writing.

Textbook, Readings

The class does not have an official textbook.
Topics

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No.</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Topic</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>January 3</td>
<td>Syllabus, introduction</td>
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<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>January 10</td>
<td>M.S. research and thesis</td>
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<td>3.</td>
<td>January 17</td>
<td>No Class: Martin Luther King’s Day</td>
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<td>4.</td>
<td>January 24</td>
<td>Out of town</td>
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<tr>
<td>6.</td>
<td>February 7</td>
<td>Short Presentations, Validation</td>
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<td>7.</td>
<td>February 14</td>
<td>Related Work</td>
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<td>8.</td>
<td>February 21</td>
<td>Thesis Presentation</td>
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<td>9.</td>
<td>February 28</td>
<td>Thesis Presentation</td>
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<tr>
<td>10.</td>
<td>March 7</td>
<td>Final Exam: Long Presentation</td>
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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. However, we may need to find time during the finals week for the long presentations. (Current plan is to do final evaluation during the last day of classes).

Assignments

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

Reading Assignments

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 research 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 assignment). 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 essence 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 presentation.

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-Winter2011

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 lim-
ited to: lying; copying from another's test or examination; discussion
of answers or questions on an examination or test, unless such discus-
sion 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 inap-
propriate 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 au-
thor 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 website 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 instructor 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 documented. For example, you must properly cite all papers you refer to, all web resources used in preparation. 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.