Syllabus-- Part 1

Instructor: Chuck Dana
Office hours: Mon. 3:10-4:00 pm
Tues. Thurs. 4:00-5:30 pm
Course Web site: http://www.csc.calpoly.edu/~chdana/300
Email address: chdana@calpoly.edu or chdana@wildcat.csc.calpoly.edu

TEXTS:
Possible handouts in class.

PREREQUISITE: CSC/CPE 357 and junior standing

GRADING SCHEME:
Formal Oral Presentation .......... 12% ± 5
Informal Oral Presentations ...... 8% ± 5
Notebook (timing).................. 10% ± 5
Individual Assignments .......... 10% ± 5
Paper .................................. 25% ± 10
Lab/Group Projects ............... 10% ± 5
Class Participation .............. 10% ± 5
Final .................................. 15% ± 5

The final may cover all material in the course or it may deal with only selected material. My choice will be announced in class and posted on the class web page at least one week before the final.

All written material will be graded for clarity and content. Note that poor spelling and grammar affect the clarity of the material. The instructor is not a proof reader and may not catch all of your spelling or grammar errors. Those that he does find will, however, cause deductions in the grade.

The instructor reserves the right to assign different individual grades on a group lab project based on an individual’s contribution to that deliverable. The projects themselves may not have equal weight.

Failure to follow directions may result in a grade of 0 on a project or assignment.

The above percentages are my most recent iteration as to what a fair weighting among the categories would be. If the amount of work in a category is very different from what I expect, I may change the weightings within the bounds given above. Any change would be announced in class before the end of the quarter.

The above percentages notwithstanding, the instructor reserves the right to give a failing grade in the class if
a. any grading category is missing
b. You flunk the final
c. You do not get the equivalent of a “C” on the formal oral presentation.
d. You do not get a passing grade on the paper
e. You do not participate in CSC 300 (as shown in class & documented in your notebook).

COURSE CONTENT:

NOTE: While many things may appear similar to my course in previous quarters (and many things are), this quarter is a separate self-contained entity. Be sure to read the material specifically for this quarter because there may be subtle and important differences between this quarter and a previous quarter.

The course is titled “Professional Responsibilities” but it covers more than a discussion of what is required of a computer science professional. Certainly part of being a professional is behaving ethically according to the accepted norms of the profession, and we will indeed discuss professional ethics. But we will also cover the general ethical implications of computer use by anyone, not just professionals. Professionals should also know the effect that their work has on society, so we will also discuss the social implications of the use of computers. Professionals today also work in a regulatory and legal environment of which they must be aware and we will discuss some of those issues.

The course is intended to make you aware of issues. When we discuss topics, especially the ethical topics, I will not be presenting you with a prescribed set of beliefs, opinions, or ethical values. In other words, I will not generally be telling you what you should do in a particular situation. The point of the course is for you to know the range of ethical or social or legal questions involved in a situation so that you can then apply your own ethics and beliefs to the facts of the situation.

While these may sound like “soft” topics, this course assumes a technical background and we will discuss the topics assuming we all understand the technology and its limits. These topics are so important that they are explicitly required of all accredited computer science programs. (We also will discuss what accreditation means.)

Another important part of this course is to give you experience in making professionally competent oral and written presentations in a technical setting. When we ask our industrial advisory council (composed of the kind of people who will hire you when you get your degree) what they want from our graduates, the first thing they list is the ability to communicate (both orally and in writing), and to work in groups. I have sat in on meetings with such groups at both the department level (i.e. just computer science people) and at the college level (i.e. with people from all branches of engineering). The response is the same at either level.

As you will see from the details below, written communication will also be an important part of this course.

Finally, you should have fun (yes, I said fun) with this course. I expect spirited discussions, even controversies to pop up in class. The oral presentations, both formal and informal, should just be the starting points for further discussion. Think of it this way, you will not get a single compiler error message from the work in this course -- what could be more fun than THAT?
CLASS COMMUNICATION

The best communication medium is our classroom; there will be lots of time available to ask questions and for discussion of the topics. Indeed, class participation is a full 10% of your grade.

Electronic mail is another medium for communication with me. Please be sure to include a subject line with your email message that makes it clear the question is about CSC 300. I may miss or delay reading messages that have blank or ambiguous subject lines.

Last, but not least, are the class Web pages. There you will find assignments and other information. The web pages will not be static entities. As the course progresses, new items will be added. For example, the descriptions of the readings, projects, and assignments for the quarter will grow during the quarter; the content you see now will not describe the entire quarter’s work. Note the address above; the web page is not currently reachable from the department home page via my name among the faculty.

THE PAPER

Details of the paper will be forthcoming in Part 2 of the syllabus.

ORAL PRESENTATIONS

Each student is required to give oral presentations in class as follows:

- Informal oral presentations of no longer than 2 minutes.
  I am still debating how many will be required. See Syllabus Part 2 for the result of that debate.

The presentations can be on anything pertinent to the responsibilities of a computer science professional. Informal presentations are not scheduled but may limited on a particular day at the discretion of the instructor. The limit on a day by be as few as none but more typically about 5 per hour of class. Ideas: press releases, news articles, history tidbits, TV shows, journal articles, jokes, Dilbert cartoons, ... See the course web site for a list of possible topic areas if you have trouble coming up with one. The list on the web site is only a list of suggestions; you are encouraged to find a topic not on the list if it interests you. Topics cannot be presented by more than one student except as a response or to present additional information that became available after the initial presentation on the topic. You may give only 1 two-minute talk per class period - plan ahead.

Keep a short abstract of each presentation clearly marked (including the date you presented it) in your notebook. Also, hand in to me some hardcopy representation of the source of your talk. This could be a newspaper clipping (or photocopy), printout of a web page, copy of a picture, etc. Be sure you have your name and the date on this! Without any hardcopy and any indication in your notebook of you giving the presentation, it will not be counted. At least one presentation must be completed or the “Informal Oral Presentation” grade category will be deemed missing and you will therefore fail the course (see above). Grading in the case of only one out of two presentations may not necessarily be linear.

These presentations will not be scheduled, but you are responsible for completing all of them. Note that with discussion following a presentation much more than two minutes may be taken up with these “two-minute” talks. Indeed, some class periods may be completely taken up with discussion...
of topics raised by the two-minute talks. I EXPECT participation; that, too, is part of your grade. Also note that once 10-minute talks start there will be less time for two-minute talks.

Credit for these presentations will be based on the quality of your presentation and the relevance and timeliness of the topic to the class.

- **One formal oral presentation** (of approximately 10 minutes) on a topic pertinent to the responsibilities of a computer science professional. The topic of your talk may be the same as that of your paper, or it may be on another subject. The date of your talk must be scheduled in advance; topics must be approved at least one week in advance of the talk. Proposal and approval of topics and dates will **only** be done through e-mail. In case of multiple requests for the same topic or date, first time-stamp on the e-mail wins. Overheads must be preapproved by the instructor at least two weekdays prior to the presentation. (E.g., approval no later than Thursday for a Monday talk.) This allows time for you to modify the overheads if necessary before final approval. You may sign up for a date without a topic or a topic without a date, but all respective deadlines must be met before the talk is given. **Failure to meet these two approval deadlines will result in the cancellation of the talk.** Note that timeslots for these talks are limited and that failure to give the talk will result in failing the class due to lack of the grading category.

Approval of the overheads must be done in **person in my office** -- no e-mails or dropped-off copies will be allowed. Also please bring hard-copy so that I can write on the draft pages. These requirements are so that I can make comments and ask questions about the details of the slides and your presentation. Rough drafts (even hand-written ones) are acceptable for my first viewing of the slides, but the rougher the initial draft, the more likely approval will be delayed to another time.

The valid topics and content of the papers and 10-minute talks are wide-ranging. One content requirement that will be imposed is that each talk must relate the topic to any relevant sections of Software Engineering and ACM Codes of Ethics (see the “Week 2” reading assignments on the web site for more information on these codes).

**GROUP LAB PROJECTS**

Each student will be in a lab group. You will form yourselves into groups by the end of the first week of class. This is the fourth time I have taught the class with labs so I may still experiment somewhat in how I use the lab time. The lab work will consist of a series of projects. Each group is responsible for knowing the project due dates. Projects are required work; you must complete them to pass CSC 300. I expect you to attend both the lecture section and the lab section! Based on the equipment in each room and what I want to present, I might do “lab-like” activities in the lecture time and vice versa.

**COURSE NOTEBOOK**

Each student is required to maintain a course notebook containing the material listed in the following bullets. Notebooks will be collected on a sporadic basis during Wednesday class time. In any given week, the instructor may collect all notebooks, a random selection, a semi-random or even capricious selection, or ask for voluntary submissions. (If voluntary submissions are collected,
collections subsequent weeks may be additional voluntary submissions, or a “catch up” request for all notebooks not already volunteered.) The point for you to remember is that you must do the work each week and be prepared to hand it in on the due date, even if your notebook is not collected that week.

Material in the notebook must be organized chronologically, by week -- first week first, so it is easy to find. The assignment page lists reading assignments, individual assignments, and in general summarizes what should be added to your notebook each week. Material in the notebook can be handwritten if your handwriting is legible.

**NOTE that this “notebook” is NOT the same as the notes you would be taking in class for your own use. It should contain just the things requested. You should maintain separate books or pages for your own use for taking notes in class.**

- **Reading reactions** (quality will be part of the individual assignments grade)
  
  Write informal comments, in complete sentences, giving your *reaction* to each assigned reading. *Do NOT summarize* the reading; I want you to react to what you read. And please don't do bullet writing! The comments should include some or all of the following depending on your interest or reaction:
  
  a. Your reaction to key ideas
  b. Ideas you find surprising or new
  c. Evidence given for or against the author's arguments
  d. Relationship of the material to other articles or class discussion
  e. Problems you see with the author's arguments
  
  A reading reaction is required for each assigned chapter or paper and must be a minimum of 200 words. In some cases, more words may be required to express your thoughts.

  You do not need to react to each topic within a given assignment or separately to each section of a reading. You may react to the reading as a whole or pick out some particular issue raised and react just to that.

- **Individual Assignments**
  
  You will receive a number of assignments during the quarter; these are to be completed by yourself. Most of these will be exercises from the book with the answers to be placed in the notebook (see the assignments web page for specific details). Some assignments may also ask you to submit assignment deliverables separate from your notebook, but always keep all of your assignments in the notebook.

- **Informal Oral Presentation summaries**
  
  Write a short summary of each two minute report you give in class including the date and the topic discussed. **This will be part of the documentation that you in fact gave the talk (along with the written artifact you must give me). Without this documentation the 2-minute talk will not be counted as being given.**
• Other Participation (1 entry per week)
  Document anything that demonstrates your active participation in CSC 300. Participation activities might include outside reading or active class participation.

Possible Grading Non-linearity

Please note that in those grading areas where a number of repetitions of an item are required, (class participation, notebook handins, two-minute talks, and individual assignments) the grade if there are missing repetitions may not be linear. For example, handing in the notebook only half the time it is requested will NOT necessarily get you half the points for the notebook, but likely much fewer than half.

PLAGIARISM

Cooperative work is an important part of learning and especially this course. You are encouraged to study together, discuss the class and its many issues, but all assignments and tests are expected to be your own individual work. Failure to do so is cheating. Copying work from outside sources without credit is also cheating. Cheating may result in penalties as severe as failure of the course or worse, depending on the severity of the cheating.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

While the specifics of this syllabus are mine, I am indebted to Professor Dan Stearns for the basic design and the original definition of this course as well as for the base text from which I have adapted this syllabus. I more recently have also stolen a refinement or two from Professor Clark Turner’s syllabus.