How My Courses Work

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About Me

You will be spending quite a bit of time with me over the course of the next semester so I want to take a few minutes to introduce myself to you by way of providing you with assorted facts. I grew up in Taiwan as a son of missionaries. I have a wife, a son, and a daughter. My wife works with techonology services at HSU. I enjoy problem solving (especially with a computer), reading, listening to music, and a variety of sports. My current interest is recreational mountain biking. (I would enjoy the opportunity to show you around the trails at Buck Creek some time.) I also recently became licensed to operate a ham radio station (general class).

I have undergraduate degrees in computer science, in mathematics, and in physical education. My graduate degrees (M.S. from University of Arkansas and Ph.D. from University of Texas at Arlington) are in computer science. I have taught university-level computer science courses at four different universities starting in 1991.

My Expectations

For me, teaching is far more than a simple job in which I provide services in exchange for money. I consider it a calling and a treasured responsibility. I view a university-level course as a partnership between an instructor and his students. In this partnership the instructor works hard to "bring to the front" facts, concepts, and methods necessary for "mastery" of the given topic and students diligently pursue the memorization of facts, the understanding of concepts, and the mastery of methods accordingly.

There are two primary expectations that I maintain for students who are enrolled in university-level computer science courses with me: that students are committed to work hard and that students will act with integrity.

Commitment to Work Hard I expect university-level students to work hard. A "full time" job typically requires 40 clock hours a week. A full-time student averages just over 15 credit hours per semester. Applying high-school algebra to these numbers reveals that a typical 3 credit hour course should require about 7.5 clock hours per week (with nearly 3 of those hours spent in class attendance).

Not all courses are created equally. Upper-level courses and courses that require programming will require significantly more work than a "typical" course. If you intend to do well in this course you will need to spend approximately six hours a week outside of class.

Acting with Integrity I expect university-level students to act with integrity. At a minimum this means compliance with the guidelines regarding academic integrity as outlined in the course syllabus. A student should never submit work that does not reflect their own (independent) thinking and effort. Nor should a student aid another student in violation of this policy. If a student exercises poor judgment and is called to account, they should be transparent in their discussions with the instructor. Another aspect of integrity is acting respectfully toward the instructor and toward other students involved the course. A very simple, but important way to show respect to both parties is to refrain from talking or from being disruptive while the instructor is addressing the class. When in doubt regarding how to properly show respect, apply the “golden rule” as advocated by Jesus of Nazareth: ”Do to others the kinds of things you would want them to do to you.”

How to do Well in This Course

As the semester moves along I will give quite a few suggestions regarding how to approach various assignments and tests. Rest assured that those suggestions come from years of experience and from a desire on my part for you to learn.

If I had to summarize in a single sentence my advice concerning how to succeed in this course it would be this: “Be a FATHEAD.”[1]

[1] See the document entitled “How to be a FATHEAD” for more information.