

Wednesday March 25 - AL1/AL2 - Combined Zoom Meeting Notes

Announcements from Carl

- Make sure to join Discord if you can (see email). We imagine it as a place where students can socialize and interact informally. There are specific channels meant for students from labs to meet. We don't see being on Discord as a requirement (particularly since we know it is blocked in some places), so we won't restrict making announcements on that platform only. We can't guarantee we'll monitor it as often as Piazza, but students are still free to post questions on it, and we'll try to do our best answering them.
- Remember that last semester's lectures are available on Class Transcribe.
- The condensed, targeted lecture videos will be released roughly weekly. The first one will cover material from today, Friday and Monday (hash tables). It will hopefully be released some time tomorrow (Thursday), and we will make sure it's both on Echo360 and Class Transcribe. The videos cover the core parts of the lectures, combined together as a more coherent whole. It will hopefully be easier to reference and to check than each individual lectures.
- The new lab has been released. The lab is just on btrees and the intro will go through the slides that have been already provided. Note that you don't need to wait for the video if you want to take a look at it. The making of the video introduction for it has been a little delayed. We're working on it and it should be available asap.
- Students are free to send either public or private questions during Zoom meetings.

Students Questions

Q - Can there be multiple partners for labs?

A - Yes, this is still true for the rest of the semester. Groups for labs are also welcome to use the breakout channels on Discord, or create their own Zoom meetings. Note that all MP's, on the other hand, will likely remain solo.

Q - What will be the platform used for the quiz?

A - PrairieLearn.

Q - Do we have to register for a specific time to take the quiz?

A - Probably not, but we'll make sure you can only take it one time. At this point, and depending on the department's decision concerning pass/fail versus grades, we might either have a window open all day, or limited to the two lecture times (in the latter case, you'd be able to choose on or the other lecture time).

Q - Do we know if the class is going to be pass/fail? Do the professors get to decide?

A - We do not know yet. The Department is in a discussion about what is going to happen, and we will follow their guidance. We will tell you as soon as we have information.

Q - Will the student be able to choose pass/fail or grades by April 30th, like the email stated?

A - The email was confusing. The deadline of April 30th referred to the credits/no credits option. Credits/no-credits is not the same as pass/fail. If the latter came into effect, it would apply to the whole class without exceptions. Again, we are waiting on the department's guidance to figure out if the class will switch to pass/fail. Some of the decisions about how we'll run the course will depend on the dept's decisions.

But you are free to choose credit/no credit and you can wait until that limit to decide. Note that your choice of credit/no credit is hidden from professors - we won't know.

Q - Wouldn't pass/fail affect my chances to transfer/be considered for internships?

A - We believe that people realise this is a unique event affecting students on a world-wide level, and the university (and, hopefully, future employers) will treat it as such.

Q - How's the quiz going to take place? Do you know when the study guide/list for quiz 6 will be posted?

A - We still don't know how the quiz will be delivered (see above), but we should have a study guide up soon. We can already tell you that there will be two programming questions (one simple and short (like generating a function on a tree to compute the height), another more difficult (like writing a function that returns a mirror on a tree), both recursively).

Q - Are we going to be able to connect to EWS to take the quiz?

A - We have no real answer yet, but working with EWS might prove difficult, so you should not count on being able to use EWS for the quiz. Note that, as a result, we won't enforce having to use valgrind for it. However, we are working at increasing the feedback that the test case gives you (we do realize that students have complained that some error messages were not always the most helpful). This way, it will be easier to debug your issues directly, whatever your work environment is.

Q - What is the corresponding Fall lecture for today's lecture about hashing?

A - Today's lecture would be equivalent to that of October 23rd (first lecture on hashing). The lecture before that had a little bit of introduction (otherwise it was the b_tree lecture). After the 23rd, the lectures are lined up. This Friday's lecture will be the equivalent of that of October 25th)

Q - Will we still be covering KD trees?

A - Yes the October 16th covers KD trees. We'll be working with them and if we realize that students have had issues with that (after looking at MPs), we might do a video on them.

Q - Do we only have to watch future targeted videos?

A - You can. If the material covered in them is not complete (for example, if it's covered significantly more comprehensively in the lecture video, or vice versa), we will tell you. The Quiz will not test you on material that is not covered in the videos, or not covered in labs or MPs.

Q - When is Quiz 6?

A - Next Monday. Again, we'll let you know about time windows as soon as we know more. Carl will post up the quiz description before tonight (Wednesday).

Q - Could there be coding demos during Zoom lectures?

A - Carl is considering the option. Carl might be doing a live video on his own coding process next week, maybe on the basis of an old POTD that we retired. Maybe we could also use an old quiz question we've released and which we are now using only as a practice question. This way, you could see how Carl would deal with a programming quiz. If we decide to set up such Zoom meeting, we'll of course announce it.

Q - Will the new MP get posted today?

A - No, will be posted on Friday (when the current one is due).

Q - Will the extra credits submission deadline for MPs be extended too?

A - The extra credit for the MP will still be the 7th day starting after the MP. It will be the Friday after. Note that we still need to decide how students will be able to earn the extra credits for the cut MP.

Q - Where can we access the online office hours? -

A - <https://courses.engr.illinois.edu/cs225/sp2020/info/office-hours/>

Q - Can we share screens in office hours instead of using vscode extension?

A - Absolutely, particularly if it's not working for you. The VS code extension is very good, but our goal is to use whatever works for you.

Q - Are we having live lectures or live discussions?

A - For the moment, just live discussion. If we decide to make the Zoom meetings more lecture-like (like a code demonstration), we will let you know. We're on zoom to help you with questions, but you don't have to be here. This is more like generalized office hours. Right now, the questions are relatively logistical in nature, but it will probably turn into more of a discussion of concepts in the future, while still not being mandatory to attend (the old lectures and/or the targeted videos should be enough).

Q - Why is there only one lecture on KD trees?

A - KD trees are an interesting structure that we aim at having you learn by doing rather than by describing. They're just another tree, but the way you store data in it is unique. Your experience of it will come mainly from working with the MP. We suspect we'll get higher level questions ("what is the point that is nearest in multiple dimensions?" (horizontal/vertical splits, etc)) about

them when the MP is released, and we'll be happy to answer them. We will consider if more information is needed, since MP-mosaic uses kd-trees (finding the nearest picture to a color, given a color exists in three dimensions (like RGB)).

Q - Has a list been created that links the lectures from past semester to what we are supposed to be doing now? Also, just to clarify, we can only access past lectures through class transcribe, and not through Echo360 right?

A - The list of correspondances has to be done, but, from today's lecture on, they should follow the order of last semester's (see above). You can also check dates by looking at last year's website (/cs225/fa2019/pages/lecture.html) and comparing the topics. Yes, right now classes only available on Class Transcribe.

Q - Will your topic videos come with slides to reference?

A - We could make the slides available if there is a demand for them. They will be derived from the slides available from the lecture.

Q - Will we use a curve for the class?

A - Again, we need to hear more from the department's guidance before making that decision.

Q - What of MAC users working remotely?

A - We understand that there is nothing quite like Valgrind that runs on MACs. You might want to check out LLDB, particularly if you're comfortable with GDB. All the features of LLDB are quite similar to GDB. Check <https://lldb.lldb.org/use/map.html>

Q - Will you add more conceptual office hours?

A - We can definitely look into it if there is a demand for it. Note that it is also fine to go to a debugging OH and ask a conceptual question if necessary (maybe not the other way around if we can avoid it, however).

Q - And are you answering emails or should we be going straight to our TA?

A - Send them to whomever you're most comfortable is: faculty, TA's, all admins, or Thierry.

END OF THE ZOOM MEETING

Feel free to tell us on Piazza how you feel about the transition, what you're happy/not happy with, and how we can make this experience better!