

Monday March 23 - AL2 - Zoom Meeting Notes

Announcements from Carl

- All classes from last semester are available on ClassTranscribe (<https://classtranscribe.com/>). Carl will be working on an index so as to find one's way more easily.
- Most of the material for the class will be made available asynchronously instead of at a fixed time (so that students in different time zones can still access it)
- Carl will use Zoom during lecture time for open discussions, they will be like office hours. Carl is also working towards developing some targeted online lectures on various topics as well. Contents will thus be shared asynchronously, while tackling questions will be done synchronously.
- Office hours have become virtual. There will be two Queues (one for debugging, one conceptual).
- The current guidance from the Department is to help students to be successful next semester, and the CS225 staff is building out their tools with that in mind.
- The deadline for the current MP has been pushed to Friday. There is still a 24 hours grace period.
- Labs will have introduction videos (released on Wednesday) by one of the TA's. Students will be able to collaborate (as usual) with more than one person. In order to facilitate that, we'll set up a Discord for the class. The idea is that it won't be used for debugging (use the Queue for that), but more as a place for students to interact. Note that Discord is there mainly to socialize, but students are also free to create their own zooms to work in groups if they prefer.
- The lab video will be static. For interactivity, the lab times will be replaced by more OH (for personal feedback).
- Unfortunately, for assessment, we can't be as flexible and set times need to be set. There will be two times for quizzes, 11am and 2pm, but students will be free to choose which time they want to take their quiz at. The first quiz will be next Monday (March 30th).
- The current lab is due tomorrow, but future labs will be due on Sundays as normal. We're not cutting labs, there'll be all there. We still very much conceive of the labs primarily as a learning experience, not a grading experience.

Students Questions

Q - Please clarify what we will be doing in future class periods? Since we are viewing past lecture videos, will we be having Zoom meetings in future MWFs?

A - Yes. Lecture time will be open office hours, not focussed on delivering all the contents (even though there might be at times some small targeted materia shared during Zoom meetings). Contents will be delivered primarily through the past lecture videos.

Q - So for now we just watch last semester's lectures?

A - Yes, those will always be available, and some additional contents will eventually be added in the form of videos by Carl (the latter will also appear on Echo).

Q - What would be the corresponding lecture date for today's material if we were to watch the Fall lectures?

A - Today's lecture would be Oct 16 and Wednesday October 23rd due to a change in lecture order.

Q - Will POTDs still be available?

A - Yes, we'll extend the time (they haven't gone up today), and will post about it on piazza

Q - What will the quizzes be like? Will they be on PrairieLearn?

A - Yes, they will be on PrairieLearn. The next quiz will be a programming quiz. It will cover material on trees comparable to the material from lab_tree. Students will be asked to write a short tree program (similar to height), then a slightly longer one (similar to mirror).

Q - How is attendance going to work? Will there be a link sent through email every week?

A - No, it will be automatic. You'll get the 4 points without having to fill any form.

Q - Will zoom lectures like this one be recorded?

A - Yes, but we will be posting the highlights (the document you are reading right now) instead of posting videos.

Q - How do we do the points since MP is cut?

A - The MP being cut is MP7 (used to be MP story). Thus, there will be 6 MPs instead of 7. Since we're cutting a full MP, there are two options - we can spread the points on the remaining MPs or all the MPs from the semester. Carl will run a poll to see what the favourite option is. So far it looks like spreading these points over all the MPs has been the favourite option.

Q - What about the extra credits of the remaining MPs?

A - Overall, the extra credits system remains the same. We still have to figure out what to do about the 7 points of extra credits, as we want the same amount available as last semester. We'll let you know.

Q - If we have issues connecting to EWS remotely, whom should we talk to?

A - EWS works in some places, but can become problematic over long distances. If you're running into issues, try getting help via Piazza. You can also try to reach out to Cites.

Q - Will there be staffing at other hours?

A - Right now, we've tried to cover the usual hours as much as possible, but we realize other times might be needed depending on your time zones. We will work to accommodate this. Let us know about times that you want available. Share them with the admins (Carl, Jiang), and with Thierry (ramais@illinois.edu), and we'll see what we can do.

Q - Can some office hours not be on Discord?

A - Discord will not be for OH. OH will be using google hangouts.

Q - What can we expect with regards to the final exam

A - We can't give you a final answer yet. We'll probably have one day set up, and students will pick the time they want. The final will probably be 3 hours long, and will be built as a take home test. Students will not be allowed to talk to other students, but will be allowed to use basic online material. This is subject to change, however. There will be programming questions, but they probably will be human-graded. We'll ask you to do more complicated things, but might not look into syntax details. We'll be able to give you more details soon.

Q - How many lines of codes do you expect us to write by hand in the final exam?

A - We have not quite yet started to think about that.

Q - Does the visual studio code allow us to live share fastx connection or do we need to code in vsc?

A - VS code is an editor, which you can live share. If you want to be coding on your own machine, it's the best solution. For fastx connection EWS, it might be problematic. Working with EWS extensively is going to be challenging. You should try to run an environment that works locally for you. Check the website for more info on how to do that.

Q - For windows users, would you recommend WSL?

A - Yes, that is a good option.

Q - Do we need to deliver the given mp/lab files to the VSC in order for us to take advantage of the office hours?

A - No, we just found it convenient for OH. You can also simply interact with our CA's and TA's via google hangouts.

Q - Has TeamViewer been considered?

A - Yes, but, unless things change, we probably won't use it.

Q - Could the syllabus on the course website be updated as new changes are made?

A - Yes, it will be as soon as things are getting finalized. Right now, we don't want to be constantly updating all of it, since things might keep on changing in the next couple of weeks.

Q - How many quizzes do we have this semester? Are we dropping some quizzes?

A - There will be 12 quizzes, and we are dropping one still.

Q - *Will we be graded on a curve?*

A - Right before break, I told everyone that the grades were lower than I liked, but wasn't planning on using a curve. Now, given the situation, this will possibly change and it's likely we will apply some curve. We still need to figure it out.

Q - *Is there any way to view our midterm grade? Or to assess how we've been doing in the course till now?*

A - Yes, as always, this information is still on Moodle.

Q - *Can we choose to have a grade instead of pass/fail? It is important for transferring...*

A - We don't know yet what's going to happen on that level. The Department knows about it and is looking into it. We don't want some people to go pass/fail and others to have a grade. We're still waiting for answers from the University, and then the department's own decision will probably follow.

Q - *Will MP_ML be released for practice?*

A - There is no MP_ML. Lab_ML will definitely be released, since we're still doing all the labs. The MP that is not being released is MP_story.

Q - *Are we canceling labs?*

A - Lab times are cancelled, but the labs themselves aren't. Attendance is automatic and you can arrange watching the video and interact with TA's via the Queue on your own schedule.

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!