CS 376, Practicum in Computer Science Presentations  
Fall 2012

Course Objectives: At the end of this course, students will be able to:

- Effectively communicate technical information in a professional setting.
- Analyze a proposed presentation to determine the background, viewpoints, and expectations of the expected audience.
- Prepare and present a suitable presentation for a technical project report, professional conference, classroom lecture, business environment, or other environment, suitably adjusted to the intended audience and situation.
- Properly use modern presentation software and equipment, including chalkboards, whiteboards, overhead projectors, computer projectors, PowerPoint™, and other equipment as suitable for a particular presentation.
- Handle questions and technical difficulties that may arise during professional presentations.
- Evaluate presentations given by others, to determine their good qualities and their areas for improvement.

Instructor:  
John Bell  
jbell@cs.uic.edu  
http://www.cs.uic.edu/~jbell  
1035 SEO  
413-9054  
Office Hours: May be MF 1:30-2:30, TTh 2:00-3:00  
- See web for details  
Open Door policy during other times.

Teaching Assistants:  
Grader TBD, ???@uic.edu  
??? SEO  
???-????  
Office Hours: May be ???  
- See web site for details

Prerequisites:  
CS 102  
ENGL 161  
If you are an undergraduate student who does not have the necessary pre-requisites, DROP THE CLASS NOW. Otherwise you will be automatically dropped later, when it will be too late to sign up for anything else instead.

Credits:  
1

Course Web Page:  
http://www.cs.uic.edu/~i376

Textbooks:  
Required:  
- Alley, Michael, “The Craft of Scientific Presentations”

Other Recommendations:  
- Alley, Michael, “The Craft of Scientific Writing”.  
- Wankat and Oreovicz, "Teaching Engineering".  
- Strunk and White, "Elements of Style"
Planned Schedule:

The following schedule is planned, as of August 2012, and is subject to dynamic adjustment as necessary. Activities given with a time are student presentations.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Week(s)</th>
<th>Dates</th>
<th>Reading Assignment</th>
<th>Activities</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>27 Aug</td>
<td>Chapters 1, 6</td>
<td>Course Overview, Introductions (2.5 Minutes)</td>
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<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>3 Sep</td>
<td>NO CLASS – LABOR DAY</td>
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<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>10 Sep</td>
<td>Chapter 3</td>
<td>Preparation &amp; Structure</td>
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<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>17 Sep</td>
<td>Chapter 4, App B</td>
<td>Visual Aids &amp; Posters, PowerPoint</td>
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<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>24 Sep</td>
<td></td>
<td>Topic of Choice (5 Minutes)</td>
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<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>1 Oct</td>
<td>Chapters 2 &amp; 5</td>
<td>Presentation &amp; Delivery</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7 &amp; 8</td>
<td>8 &amp; 15 Oct</td>
<td>Technical Project Reports (10 Minutes)</td>
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<tr>
<td>9 &amp; 10</td>
<td>22 &amp; 29 Oct</td>
<td></td>
<td>Conference Papers (10 Minutes)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>5 Nov</td>
<td>Handout (Wankat 6)</td>
<td>Lecturing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12 &amp; 13</td>
<td>12 &amp; 19 Nov</td>
<td>Lectures (10 Minutes)</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>26 Nov</td>
<td>Business Proposals (5 Minutes)</td>
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<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>3 Dec</td>
<td>Posters (2.5 Minutes), Evaluations, &amp; Final Exam</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>3 Dec</td>
<td>FINAL EXAM</td>
<td>MIDTERM EXAM MONDAY 7:00 – 8:00 P.M.</td>
</tr>
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</table>

NO CLASS MONDAY 3 SEPT - LABOR DAY
MIDTERM EXAM 1, MONDAY 8 OCTOBER, 7:00 – 8:00 P.M.
FINAL EXAM: MONDAY 3 DECEMBER, 7:00 - 8:00 P.M.

Presentation Critiques:

- The main purpose of critiques is to provide positive feedback and suggestions for improvement to your fellow students.
- Student critiques do not affect the grade of the speaker.
- Critiques will be evaluated on the basis of completeness, fairness, effort, courtesy, etc. There are no "right" or "wrong" answers. If you make an honest effort to provide useful feedback to your fellow students, you should get full credit. Incomplete evaluations, vulgarity, obscenity, rudeness, or general lack of real effort may be grounds for less than full credit. Each critique must include at least one positive comment and at least one suggestion for improvement.
Seminar Evaluations:

- During the course of the term, each student will be expected to attend and evaluate at least two presentations of a professional nature delivered by outside speakers.
- Computer Science and other Departmental seminars are recommended choices, and at least one presentation must be from this venue. Other choices are subject to approval.
- A regularly updated list of campus events, including seminars, can be found at http://tigger.uic.edu/announce/ Note that not all of the seminars listed are technical in nature, which means they are not all appropriate for this course. Most seminars from the College of Engineering or the medical / biological fields should be appropriate.
- Up to five presentations total may be evaluated for credit.
- The first two evaluations are mandatory, and worth 10 points each. Up to three additional evaluations are considered "bonus", and are worth 2.5 points each.
- Up to two presentations ( but not the first two ) may include thesis defenses.
- If more than two presentations are evaluated, at least one should be from outside the field of Computer Science.
- Classroom lectures, political speeches, social functions, etc. are not acceptable. If there is any question regarding the acceptability of a particular presentation, prior approval should be acquired.
- At least one evaluation must be turned in by the end of the eighth week, and at least two by the end of the twelfth week. No more than one evaluation can be turned in per week.

Exam Policy:

- All exams will be given as combined-section exams, from 7 to 8 P.M. on the days indicated.
- Any exam conflict needs to be brought to the instructor’s attention for resolution before the regularly scheduled exam. Requests for make-up exams after the regularly scheduled exam will not normally be granted.
- Exams will be closed-book, closed notes, closed calculator, closed neighbor, . . .
- All exams will be cumulative, with emphasis on material which has not been covered on previous exams.
- All material covered in class or in assigned reading or which should have been learned in the course of completing homework is fair game on exams. No more specific information will be provided as to exam content.
- Anyone who fails to stop working on their exam when time is called will receive a minimum of a 5 point late penalty.
Special Considerations

• The specific topic (title) for each presentation must be e-mailed to the instructor (JBell@uic.edu) no later than the Friday of the week before the presentation is to be presented. Points will be deducted if this is not done. The mail subject should include "CS 376".

• Any electronic materials, (e.g. PowerPoints), associated with a presentation must be provided to the instructor BEFORE the presentation, preferably by noon. Copies of any non-electronic materials, (e.g. paper handouts), must be provided to the instructor before the presentation commences.

• Assignments submitted after the due date and time, but within 24 hours, will be assessed a 20% penalty. No assignments will be accepted more than 24 hours after the due date and time.

• All appeals for grading errors, no matter how justified, must be submitted within two weeks after the graded assignments are returned. No appeals for regrades will be heard after that time.

Grading Policy:

Numerical scores will be based upon the following contributions:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Total Possible</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(2) Exams (1 midterm, 1 final)</td>
<td>30 points each</td>
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<tr>
<td>Technical Presentations (5 min / 10 min)</td>
<td>80 points each</td>
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<tr>
<td>Technical Critiques (per day)</td>
<td>20 points each</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Seminar Evaluations (First two / additional)</td>
<td>20 - 27.5 points each</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Posters (2.5 min)</td>
<td>5 points each</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Absences (after one free absence)</td>
<td>negative 5 points each</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tardiness (including after breaks, if any)</td>
<td>negative 2 points each</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In-class assignments and quizzes</td>
<td>as needed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total: Normalized to 100 point scale</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Conversion of numerical scores to letter grades is a serious business, requiring careful consideration of every student’s complete semester performance, and will not be considered until all scores are compiled at the end of the semester.

There are no predetermined grade guarantees. However it is expected that grades will follow the general pattern given below. Regardless of the numerical score, it will not be possible to pass this course without full participation and passing the exams.

The grade break for: will probably be somewhere around:

- A / B: 90
- B / C: 80
- C / ?: 70

Note that the final grade breaks may be either slightly below or slightly above the numbers given here.
**Academic Integrity:**

Students are encouraged to study together and to help each other learn. When one student teaches another, both benefit from the experience.

However, it is a strict violation of class and university policy for any student to hand in any work that is not 100% their own creation. Therefore:

- All work on all exams and all homeworks must be individually performed by the student whose name appears on the paper.
- No student may give or show any other student any portion of their work, either written down, electronically, or through any other means.
- Direct copying of material from any textbook or other source without proper accreditation is strictly forbidden.
- All violations will be reported directly to the Office of Student Judicial Affairs, http://www.uic.edu/depts/sja. First violations will be penalized with zero on the relevant assignment(s) and a penalty equal to the value of the assignment(s), **for all parties involved in the transgression**. Second or more serious violations may result in a failing grade, probation, suspension, or expulsion from the university. The violation will also be recorded on the permanent records of all students involved.