

CIS*2750, Winter 2019

Course Policies

This document is for teaching assistants (TAs) assigned to CIS*2750 in the Winter 2019 Semester. In the event that the expectations and guidelines presented here are in conflict with the collective agreement between teaching assistants and the University of Guelph, the collective agreement takes precedence. Please notify the course instructor immediately of any such conflict.

1. Course communication

Communication within the Instructional team (instructor, TAs)

All communication between instructor and TAs must take place through one of the following channels:

- For short, high-priority questions use the #general channel on the dedicated CIS*2750 W19 Slack Workspace: cis2750w19.slack.com. This workspace must never be used to discuss individual students. You may reference ticket numbers (see below) in this workspace.
- TAs may email the instructor directly - or send direct Slack messages - on matters that are too private for the public Slack channels or Redmine. Likewise, the instructor may email TAs about private matters.
- All other communications within the instructional team must use the CIS*2750 Redmine page. To access the page, go to redmine.socs.uoguelph.ca and select the project CIS*2750-W19. To send a message to the instructional team, create a ticket on the Instructional Support queue. Assign the ticket or tag watchers on it to notify people about the ticket.
- TAs shall not contact each other directly by email, phone or text about course-related matters. TAs must use Redmine or Slack for communication between themselves, and include instructor in all communications.

Communication between TAs and students

- TAs must use the dedicated course email (cis2750@socs.uoguelph.ca), CIS*2750 discussion forums on Moodle, and the scheduled lab periods for all communication with students.
- TAs may not retain any student contact information or use student contact information for any use unrelated to the course.
- Students may not contact TAs using the TAs' personal email addresses. Please disable messaging in your Moodle profile to prevent students from messaging you directly.
- If a student emails your private email address you should delete the email unanswered.

Communication response time

All members of the instructional team are expected to respond to requests (Slack/email/Redmine tickets) within 36 hours on business days.

2. Confidentiality and privacy

- TAs may not share student information (contact information, performance, grades, grade feedback, etc.) with other people.

- TAs may not discuss course-related matters with each other in public spaces. Conversations with other members of the instructional team may be conducted in private.
- TAs may not release any confidential course materials to anyone. Confidential course materials include, but are not limited to, course lecture notes, assignment descriptions, assignment grading rubrics, tests and exams, test and exam solutions, etc..
- TAs may not share personal information about other TAs with anyone. This includes email addresses, cell phone numbers, full names and all other personal details that a TA may be privileged with.

3. Face to face meetings

- TAs shall attend instructional team meetings as assigned.
- TAs shall arrive on time for all meetings, unless other arrangements have been made with the course instructor.
- TAs shall only attend labs assigned to them by the instructor. Temporary switching of labs - e.g. due to TA illness - must be discussed with the instructor first.
- All new material must be authorized by the course instructor prior to its presentation to students in the labs.
- In cases where there is more than one way to solve a problem, the TA shall use the same method as the instructor and shall refrain from introducing any new methods to students.

4. Preparation

TAs shall familiarize themselves with the assignment descriptions as soon as the assignments are posted, in order to adequately help students in the labs and online discussion forums. TAs are encouraged to clarify any questions that they might have with the instructor.

5. Grading policies

- For both assignments and tests,
 - TAs must follow the grading procedures and rubrics provided by the course instructor
 - TAs must provide information-rich feedback, which will help students learn the material and avoid making similar mistakes in the future. As a result, all deductions must be clearly indicated, and must follow the grading rubric.
- Each assignment must be graded, and the grades returned to the instructor, five (5) business days - or less - after the instructor distributes the assignments for grading. If a TA cannot complete the request within 5 business days, he or she must contact the instructor.
- All student regrade requests will be submitted during a regrade window after each assignment, as described within the course outline. Unless otherwise stated, regrade requests must be processed five (5) business days - or less - after the regrade window closes.
- Final exams may not be taken off the University of Guelph campus. All final exam grading must be completed on campus, during the assigned exam grading hours.

Grading mistakes (assignments)

TAs shall endeavour to avoid grading errors. Such errors will include, but are not limited to, failure to follow the rubric, failure to provide adequate or correct feedback, failure to record the grade correctly, etc.. The rate of acceptable avoidable grading errors by TAs will be 10% or less.

Note: errors in the grading rubric or grading procedure documents do not count as acceptable avoidable grading errors by TAs. Such errors should be reported to the course instructor, who will provide TAs with updated grading guidelines.

6. TA rights and responsibilities

- Students may not record any instructional team members (TAs or instructors) without explicit permission from the instructor / TA who would be recorded.
- Students may not contact TAs outside the channels stated in the course outline: course email (cis2750@socs.uoguelph.ca) and course discussion forums on Moodle. TAs should not provide personal contact information to students.
- TAs are not required to
 - help students with other courses
 - help other instructors
 - help course students outside scheduled lab/office hours
- TAs shall keep track of hours spent and inform the instructor if they believe they are in danger of exceeding the maximum hours of their appointment.
- All members of the instructional team (TAs and instructors) shall be compliant with UofG policies.

7. TA performance evaluation

- TAs will be evaluated by the instructor to provide formative feedback in accordance with the collective agreement in place between the TA union and the University of Guelph.
- TAs shall be compliant with the course policy document. Deviations from the course policy will be reflected in the evaluations. The course policy will be discussed in the first meeting between the TAs and the instructor, and will be provided to the TAs prior to the first meeting. The workload agreement form will reference the course policy document.
- There will be at least two evaluations for every TA, tentatively scheduled for 6th and 10th weeks of classes. However, more frequent evaluations may be scheduled at the instructor's discretion.
- TAs will be notified of an upcoming evaluation at least seven days prior to the evaluation meeting.
- TAs will be invited to private in-person meetings to discuss their evaluations.
- Student input may form part of the evaluation, but will not be the entire content of the evaluation.