

# Spring 2012 CIS 511 Theory of Computing

## General

See **webpage** [www.seas.upenn.edu/~cis511](http://www.seas.upenn.edu/~cis511) for the most recent information about office hours etc.

## Exam/Homework Policies

1. Midterm and Final are closed book, closed notes. You cannot use any electronic devices.
2. Preparing for the course: Give yourself time. What you take away from the course is how to think about problems. So try to reserve time for the homeworks. You are strongly encouraged to try and solve the exercises at the end of the chapters.
3. We will have 6-7 homeworks.
4. You can work individually or in groups of 2 on each homework. Only one solution should be turned in per group. This should clearly list the names of the group members.
5. Homework is due at the *beginning* of the class on the due date. It can be submitted in class, at Levine 502 with Cheryl Hickey, or, if typeset, e-mailed to [cis511@cis.upenn.edu](mailto:cis511@cis.upenn.edu). There will be a 25% reduction in grades if it is turned in late, up to 5pm the next working day. Any submission later than this time will not count towards your grade. In extremely special circumstances (see the next 3 bullets) you can be late without penalty. But in no case can you turn in a solution after we have posted the correct solutions (usually one class period after the due date).
6. If you have a serious medical emergency, please be prepared to show proof of this.
7. If there is an academic/Penn conflict, e.g., you are representing Penn and will be unavailable, you are presenting a paper in a peer reviewed conference, etc., email [cis511@cis](mailto:cis511@cis) as soon as you are aware of the conflict. Definitely do so at least 3 days before the due date.
8. If you are interviewing, be prepared to show a formal letter. Phone interviews do not count. If you have personal reasons or have a difficult schedule, please plan ahead to fit the homework into your schedule.
9. **You cannot use internet or newsgroup resources to solve the problems.** Be mindful of asking clarifications in the newsgroup that cloak a search for solution in the newsgroup. If in doubt, you can ask and the staff will answer as appropriate. If you use a book other than the text you must cite it you will not be penalized in grade for the citation. Remember, if you can google it, so can we.

## Stylistic and Correctness Issues

**Most solutions will require an argument of correctness as well.**

**Prove/show/argue/give an algorithm = PROVE.** If nothing is said, either ask or just to be on the safe side, **Prove**. What is a proof? A proof is an argument that covers all cases. Often the difficulty of a problem is in one particular case; not handling all cases is an incorrect answer. You can say 'this case is similar to...' if no other detail is necessary for that case. Be **extra** careful in using this.

**A wrong answer is a wrong answer.** Partial credit will be given but it is a subjective decision, you are encouraged to get the solutions right. Specially be careful with simple questions since it is almost impossible to decide if the answer was an omission or a typo and there will usually be little partial credit.

**Being a misunderstood genius is hardly fun.** A significant part of any scientific effort is the ability of others to understand and reproduce them. All written work must be neat, well-organized, and include sufficient explanations. Messy, poorly organized, or illegible material will be returned ungraded. A correct answer is typically short and clean. Providing a long winded discussion of all material relevant to the

posed question in the hope that the correct answer will be spotted, will not get you many points. If your argument has to be long winded; then provide a roadmap/intuition upfront. This is similar to providing good documentation for a large and complex program. Often, this is as important as the proof itself.