

## CSC 196 Great ideas in Computing

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Teaching Assistant: TBA

The ambitious goal of this 1st year foundations seminar course is to try to identify some of the great ideas that have significantly influenced the field of computing. We will concentrate on mathematical, algorithmic and software ideas with the understanding that the importance and usefulness of these ideas depends upon (and often parallels) the remarkable ideas and progress in computing and communications hardware. The list of topics we shall discuss will depend to some degree on the background and interests of the class. On the course web page "<http://www.cs.toronto.edu/~bor/196f20/>" you can find a list of possible topics.

The course timetable provides for 3 contact hours/week (M,W,F 11-12). I will usually conduct the class on Mondays and Wednesdays and the TA will conduct the Friday tutorials.

The grading scheme will be based on 4 assignments (15% each), two quizzes (10% each), and class participation (20%). Students are expected to attend all classes regularly and participate actively. There will be no final exam.

### Relevant Dates:

- A1 Wed October 7
- Q1 Monday, October 19
- A2 Wed October 28
- *Note:* November 9 is the last day to drop a Fall (F) course. Reading week is November 9-13.
- A3 Wed November 18
- Q2 November 30
- A4 Monday December 7

Advice regarding assignments: Do NOT spend an excessive amount of time on any question and especially not on any bonus questions. If you wish to spend "free time" thinking about (say) bonus questions that is fine but you should not sacrifice time needed for other courses.

Email Policy: I try to read emails regularly but I do NOT promise to reply to all emails. For general discussions, I suggest using piazza. In particular, some questions suggest interesting issues and/or require a more technical answer and I will often respond to such questions in class so that everyone can benefit. **I welcome questions and comments at all times and especially in class. If you are confused, there is a good chance others are confused also.**

Office hours (zoom or skype): To be announced. Beyond any posted office hours, students are always welcome to make appointments and/or drop by (i.e., email me to set up a zoom or skype session) to see if I am available. In general, **I prefer discussions**

**with people in person (meaning for now by zoom or skype) rather than via email.**

In the first week or two, I will set a schedule for the assignments and quizzes.