

Syllabus for CSC196 Great ideas in Computing
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Teaching Assistant: Tristan Lueger

All the 1st year foundations courses could ambitiously be called "Introduction to critical thinking". The goal of this specific 1st year foundations seminar course is to try to identify some of the past great ideas that have significantly influenced the field of computing and to consider some current ideas that could very well be great ideas. 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. We may also venture into some of the more sensitive and controversial issues relating to different applications of these ideas. Our discussions will depend to some degree on the background and interests of the class. On the course web page "<http://www.cs.toronto.edu/~bor/196f23/>" you can find the slides for each week of the Fall 2023 CSC196 course. This is a first approximation to the topics we will be discussing this term. The course web page for this term is "<http://www.cs.toronto.edu/~bor/196f25/>"

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 Tristan will conduct the tutorials on Fridays. For Mondays and Fridays, the meeting room is BA2139. On Wednesdays we meet in WB119. 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 and that is the basis for the participation part of the grade. There is no final exam.

All assignments should be submitted on Markus. We will post the link to Markus at the start of the term.

Relevant Due Dates:

- A0 September 9. 9PM
This is part of the participation grade and worth 2%. This will allow me to know something about you and will give you an opportunity to submit an assignment on Markus.
- A1 September 24 at 3 PM
- Monday, October 13 No classes, Thanksgiving.
- A2 October 15 at 3 PM
- Q1 October 17 To be held in the class room
- A3 November 5 at 3 PM
- A4 November 26 at 3 PM
- Q2 November 28 To be held in the class room
- Fall classes end December 1 with December 2 as a possible makeup date for the missed class on Thanksgiving.

Advice regarding assignments: Do NOT spend an excessive amount of time on any question and especially not on any bonus question. 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 emails. For general discussions, I suggest using piazza. In particular, some student questions raise 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 also confused.**

Office hours: To be announced. My office is Sandford Fleming (SF) 2303B Beyond any posted office hours, students are always welcome to make appointments (i.e., email me to set up a personal meeting which can be in person or by zoom). Moreover, when I am in my office, the door is open and if I am not already meeting with someone, come in and I usually have some time to talk. In general, **I prefer meetings rather than via email.**