CSC 196 Great ideas in Computing Syllabus
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All the 1st year foundations courses could ambitiously be called "Introduction to critical thinking". The ambitious goal of this specific 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. We may also venture into some of the more sensitive 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/196f20/" you can find a list of possible topics.

NOTE There is also a document on the course web page relating to COVID issues.

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(s) 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 and that is ithe basis for the participation part of the grade. There will not be a final exam.

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

Relevant Dates:

- A0 September 20. This is part of the participation grade

- A1 October 8

- Q1 October 22

- A2 October 29

- *Note:* November 8 is the last day to drop a Fall (F) course.

- Reading week is November 8-12.

- A3 November 19

- Q2 November 26

- A4 December 3

- Fall classes end December 8.

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 also confused.**

Office hours (zoom or skype): To be announced. Beyond any posted office hours, students are always welcome to make appointments (i.e., email me to set up a personal meeting perhaps outside, or a zoom/skype session). In general, **I prefer meetings rather than via email**.