CS103 and the Stanford Honor Code

Thanks to Julie Zelenski and the Fall 2013 CS103 staff for their input on this handout.

This handout discusses the Stanford Honor Code and how it relates to CS103. I'm sure that many of you probably don't think this handout will be relevant for you – the overwhelming majority of you are hardworking, honest students who would never think of cheating. That said, **please read this handout before starting the assignments in this course**. We've recently seen an unfortunate rise in the number of Honor Code cases that have come out of the CS department.

Most students caught cheating aren't bad people. They don't arrive in CS103 aiming to cheat. Rather, they're typically good students who panic at the last minute and make bad decisions.

Before we outline our formal policy with respect to the Honor Code, we'd like to begin with our expectations. When working on assignments, we expect that you

- will review lecture slides, your own notes, and the recommended reading materials;
- will discuss the problems with your teammates (if you're working in a group); and
- will stop by office hours, ask questions on Piazza, or email the staff list for help.

We also expect that you

- will ***not*** read over other students' answers (unless you're working in a group with them);
- will ***not*** search online for hints, advice, or answers; and
- will ***not*** consult any materials from previous offerings of CS103.

To summarize – our intent is that you solve the problems on the problem sets given the materials we've provided you, without trying to look up the answers somewhere, and working only with students in your group (and the course staff).

Below is our official homework policy with respect to the Stanford Honor Code:

> Problem sets may be completed individually or in groups of up to three people, and each group should submit a single solution set representing the group's work. Unless explicitly mentioned otherwise, we will assume that any submitted problem set is
>
> · your own work (if submitting individually) or purely the group's own work;
>
> · created without assistance from anyone else (except possibly course staff); and
>
> · created without consulting any resources other than the recommended readings and course materials.
>
> If any work you submit in part or in whole does not adhere to these criteria, you are **required** to include a detailed citation in your work specifically explaining what additional assistance you received.

If you discuss assignments with students other than your teammates, look online for information or hints, or otherwise do anything that causes the work you submit to not be completely your own ideas and creations, you need to include a citation in your problem set submission describing the specific assistance you received. This can be as simple as including a sentence like "I spoke with Person X about this problem set to get the insight to think of the parity of the numbers in problem 3.ii" "I learned about automorphisms from website X, which specifically told me how to apply them to problem 5," or "This answer is entirely copied from person X and is not at all my own work; I couldn't figure out how to solve it" As long as you properly, completely, and accurately cite any outside aid you receive, you will not be guilty of plagiarism. However, we reserve the right to assess a penalty, chosen at our discretion, to any work you submit that in our judgment is not your own work.

To clarify a specific point – if you are working on the problem sets in a group, it's okay to discuss the problems with other CS103 students. You will need to make sure to mention this on your problem set submission, and if in our judgment your answers do not appear to be primarily your own work, we reserve the right to assess a penalty.

The Three Day Rule

It can be overwhelming to be working on an assignment right before it's due while also juggling a full course load. The entire course staff can sympathize – we've all been there. It's unfortunate, therefore, when we see submissions that are clearly copied from other sources, since the consequences can be so dire.

To address this, we have the following policy in CS103: **within three days of submitting any assignment, you're permitted to email the staff list to add additional citations to your problem set submission.**

What exactly does this policy mean? We hope it doesn't come to this, but suppose that you're working on an assignment the night before it's due and hit a roadblock. In a moment of panic, you do a Google search for the answer, copy that into your solution, and submit it.

Now imagine what happens when you wake up the next day. At this point, you'd probably realize that you're in serious trouble: you've just submitted someone else's work as your own that you're probably going to be caught. If you are caught, you may be referred to the Office of Community Standards and risk failing CS103, a one-quarter suspension, and 40 hours of community service.

The three-day rule gives you an escape hatch. Within three days of submitting the assignment, you can send an email the staff mailing list explaining which parts your assignment are not your own work. With no questions asked, you've ensured that you are no longer in violation of the Honor Code (assuming, of course, that you're honest in that email). We can then give you partial credit for your work and can offer some help on the parts that you're struggling with.

So why the three-day clock? Our intent with this policy is to make sure that you're accountable for your actions. Everyone makes mistakes, and we want this policy to give you a chance to own up to your errors without getting severely punished for them. However, it's important that you be honest with yourself and admit to any errors you've made around the time that you make them.