

Section Leading

Most of this handout was written by the CS198 coordinators, past and present.

As you know, the CS106 program at Stanford uses section leaders—the vast majority of whom are undergraduates—to provide the outside-of-class instruction that is so essential to learning the basics of programming. We are about to hire new section leaders for the fall quarter, and I'd like to encourage those of you who have done well in 106A and B to consider applying for the position. The rest of this handout supplies the relevant details.

Apply to section lead

Are you interested in teaching and want a fun job that makes a difference? If so, apply to become a section leader for the CS106 program! The section-leading application for Spring 2012–13 is now online on the CS198 web site (<http://cs198.stanford.edu>)! Applications for students currently in 106B are due by Thursday, February 21 at 11:59P.M.

Why should I section lead?

There are a plenty of reasons:

1. *Teaching and grading help you solidify your knowledge.* Section leading gives you a good opportunity to review Java and C++ nuts and bolts that you might have forgotten. Explaining a concept to someone really helps you understand that concept a lot better.
2. *Teaching feels good.* Do you remember those times you frowned at the screen and wondered why the ball didn't hit the brick when you're implementing Breakout? Do you remember the gratifying moment when you mastered recursion? Section leading is a perfect place for you to share your past pain as a student and your passion in CS!
3. *Fun!* You might have enough of programming, but you can never have enough fun! CS198 strives to create a fun and tight sense of community among section leaders. We hire new section leaders every quarter, so you get to know more people every quarter. Teaching is cool and all, but we know how to have real fun! We party, play capture the flag, play foursquare, and more!
4. *Tech companies and grad schools love us.* Section leading hones your teaching skill, technical skill, debugging skill, and people skill. Those are the skills that job market and grad schools are looking for. Many companies come hang out with us to get to know us and . . . hire us!

A little bit about CS198

First quarter section leaders receive 3 or 4 units of credit through enrollment in CS198, Teaching Computer Science. New section leaders who take the 3-unit option are paid for the time they spend grading, holding Interactive Grading sessions, and holding extra office hours in the LaIR, while experienced section leaders are paid hourly for every aspect of work related to section leading. Section leaders cross all disciplines, from English to EE, SymSys to Bio, and of course, CS.

Just look what section leaders have had to say:

Section leading gives you a chance to work with other students, to share an area of study that interests you and to help them get out of it what you find so exciting, creative and rewarding. I love this job!

It's amazing how much I've learned through teaching.

It's easy to get frustrated sometimes when you're bogged down with work in upper division classes. But section leading serves to continually remind me of what got me interested in computer science in the first place, and it keeps me going.

Section leading is probably the best thing you can do in my opinion at Stanford. The key with founding or working at a company is that a few of you together can do more than the sum of what you can do individually. And being a section leader really is about communication and teaching and learning and understanding other people, and that gives you the set of skills you can use to build an awesome team.

—Mike Schroepfer, VP of Engineering at Facebook

I love CS198. It changed my life.

—The CS106 Facebook page

I am ready to apply!

In order to qualify to be a section leader, you must have completed or be currently enrolled in CS106B, CS106X, or CS107, or have equivalent experience. We are looking for applicants who are enthusiastic about teaching..

In general, online applications for the section-leading program are available Autumn, Winter, and Spring quarters (for the following non-Summer quarter) approximately midway through the quarter. The application for Spring 2011-12 is available now.

Before applying, be sure to read “About the CS198 Program” on the web site to familiarize yourself with the structure of CS198, particularly the responsibilities of the section-leader position. In particular, ensure that:

- You'll have room in your study list to enroll in 3-4 units of CS198 in your first quarter
- You'll be able to attend CS106A lecture (MWF 1:15–2:05 P.M.)
- You'll be able to attend CS198 staff meetings on Mondays from 4:45–6:00 P.M.

The online application consists of a few informational questions and some short-response questions that test your ability to find bugs and explain concepts. We attempt to interview as many applicants as humanly possible, but, that said, we cannot, regrettably, interview everyone. In that vein, we determine which applicants to interview based on the application essays. The interview has two parts: the teaching portion and the technical portion. The teaching portion is a ten-minute presentation of a typical section problem. The technical portion of the interview is a roleplay of a situation in helper hours, where the applicant plays the part of a course helper and helps correct an excerpt of buggy code. We look for demonstrated and potential teaching ability, effective communication skills, interpersonal skills, enthusiasm, and strong technical ability.

For more information about the CS198 program, email the CS198 coordinators, Eric Yurko and Patrick Costello, at cs198@cs.stanford.edu.