

Computer Science and the Stanford Honor Code

Parts of this handout are based on similar handouts by Eric Roberts and Mehran Sahami. Thanks to Julie Zelenski for her input.

This handout discusses the Stanford Honor Code and how it relates to CS106A. 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**. Over the past few years, we've seen an unfortunate rise in the number of Honor Code cases that have come out of the CS department and CS106A in particular.

Most students caught cheating aren't bad people. They don't arrive in CS106A 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, the textbook, your own notes, and other course handouts,
- will work through some practice problems from the readings and section handouts, and
- will ask questions to your section leader or in the LaIR; and

We also expect that you

- will **not** read over other students' code;
- will **not** search online for hints, advice, or answers; and
- will **not** consult any materials from previous offerings of CS106A.

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:

Unless explicitly mentioned otherwise, we will assume that any submitted code is

- your own work;
- created without assistance from anyone else (except possibly course staff); and
- created without consulting any resources other than the course materials.

If any work you submit in part or in whole does not adhere to these criteria, you are **required** to include a citation in your work explaining what additional assistance you received.

If you discuss the programming assignments with other students, 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 tell us this in your assignment set submission. This can be as simple as including a comment like “I spoke with Person *X* about this program to get the insight to use for loops in `StoneMasonKarel`” or “I got a hint for this program on website *X* after searching online.” As long as you properly 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.

The One Week 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 CS106A: **within one week of submitting any assignment, you're permitted to contact Keith, Alisha, or your section leader to add additional citations to your assignment 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, and you're probably going to be caught. If you are caught, you may be referred to the Office of Community Standards and risk failing CS106A, a one-quarter suspension, and 40 hours of community service.

The one-week rule gives you an escape hatch. Within one week of submitting the assignment, you can send an email to the course staff 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 one-week 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.