Computer Science and the Stanford Honor Code

This handout is the product of joint work by all of the CS Lecturers.

Since 1921, academic conduct for students at Stanford has been governed by the Honor Code, which reads as follows:

THE STANFORD UNIVERSITY HONOR CODE

A. The Honor Code is an undertaking of the students, individually and collectively:

   (1) that they will not give or receive aid in examinations; that they will not give or receive unpermitted aid in class work, in the preparation of reports, or in any other work that is to be used by the instructor as the basis of grading;

   (2) that they will do their share and take an active part in seeing to it that others as well as themselves uphold the spirit and letter of the Honor Code.

B. The faculty on its part manifests its confidence in the honor of its students by refraining from proctoring examinations and from taking unusual and unreasonable precautions to prevent the forms of dishonesty mentioned above. The faculty will also avoid as far as practicable, academic procedures that create temptations to violate the Honor Code.

C. While the faculty alone has the right and obligation to set academic requirements, the students and faculty will work together to establish optimal conditions for honorable academic work.

The purpose of this handout is to make our expectations as clear as possible regarding the Honor Code. The basic principle under which we operate is that each of you is expected to submit your own work in this course. In particular, attempting to take credit for someone else's work by turning it in as your own constitutes plagiarism, which is a serious violation of basic academic standards.

All of the following text refers to "you" and "your work," meaning your individual work if you are working alone on an assignment. Some assignments allow for pair work. Of course, if you are working with a partner, any discussion and sharing of work with that specifc partner is completely allowed on that assignment.

Under the Honor Code you are obligated to follow all of the following rules in this course:

Rule 1: You must not look at assignment solutions that are not your own

It is an act of plagiarism to take work that is copied or derived from the work of others and to submit it as your own. For example, **looking at a solution from the Internet**, a solution from another student (past or present), a solution taken from an answer set released in past quarters, or some other source, in part or in whole, that is not your own work is a violation of the Honor Code.

Many Honor Code infractions we see make use of assignment submissions found on the internet. The best way to steer clear of this possibility is simply to not search for solutions to the assignments. Moreover, looking at someone else's solution in order to determine how to solve the problem yourself is also an infraction of the Honor Code.

In essence, you should not be looking at someone else's answers in order to solve the problems in this class. This is not an appropriate way to "check your work," "get a hint," or "see alternative approaches."

Rule 2: You must not share your solutions with other students.

In particular, you should not ask anyone to give you a copy of their answers or, conversely, give your answers to another student who asks you for it (unless you're working in a pair with them) Similarly, you should not discuss your solution strategies to such an extent that you and your collaborators end up turning in the same answers (unless you are working in a pair with them). Moreover, you are expected to take reasonable measures to maintain the privacy of your solutions. For example, you should not leave copies of your work on public computers nor post your solutions on a public website.

Rule 3: You must indicate on your submission any assistance you received.

If you received aid while producing your solution, you must mention who you got help from (if that person is not a course staf member) and what specifcally he or she helped you with. A proper citation should specifcally identify the source (e.g., person's name, book title, website URL, etc.) and a clear and complete indication of how this assistance infuenced your work. For example, you might write "Student X mentioned the idea to combine techniques Y and Z together in part W of this assignment to yield result V."

It is also important to make sure that the assistance you receive consists of general advice that does not cross the boundary into having someone else write the actual solutions or show you their solutions. It is fine to discuss ideas and strategies, but you should be careful to write your solutions on your own, as indicated in Rule 1.

Rule 4: You may only reuse past work in certain, limited situations.

We tend to reuse assignments from quarter to quarter. Following the general principle that the names affixed to a submission should accurately represent its authorship, unless specified otherwise, you may only resubmit work from prior quarters provided that the exact same set of people who initially turned in the assignment resubmit. This means, in particular, that:

- If you completed an assignment in a previous quarter, you may only resubmit that assignment if you do so individually; and
- If you completed a pair assignment with a partner in a previous quarter, you may only resubmit that assignment if you submit with that exact same partner.

To elaborate on that last point, if you worked with a partner in a previous quarter, are retaking the course, and your partner is not also retaking the class, you may not resubmit the past work you did on that assignment.

Rule 5: If you have questions about the Honor Code, ask the course instructor.

If at any point in the quarter you have questions about what behaviors are or are not permissible according to the Honor Code, please feel free to reach out to the instructor of

the course. Your section leader is not authorized to answer questions about the Honor Code, so you should neither ask them for advice about the Honor Code nor treat any of their advice as binding.

The Stanford Honor Code encourages you as a student to discuss the Honor Code with your peers and to help maintain a general environment of academic integrity. However, please keep in mind that your peers are not an authoritative source on Honor Code policies as they're applied in this course. When in doubt, ask the instructor.

Please be aware: all submissions are subject to automated plagiarism detection.

Stanford employs powerful automated plagiarism detection tools that compare assignment submissions with other submissions from the current and previous quarters. The tools also analyze your intermediate work.

These tools are effective at detecting unusual resemblances in programs, which are then further examined by the course staff. The staff then make the determination as to whether submissions are deemed to be potential infractions of the Honor Code and referred to Stanford's Community Standards office.

A Final Note on Collaboration.

We have no desire to create a climate in which students feel as if they are under suspicion. The entire point of the Stanford Honor Code is that we all benefit from working in an atmosphere of mutual trust. Students who deliberately take advantage of that trust, however, erode that atmosphere for everyone.

In computer science courses, it is appropriate to ask others – especially the course staff – for hints or about general problem-solving strategies and how to approach the problem set questions. In fact, we strongly encourage you to seek such assistance when you need it. Discuss ideas together but write your answers up on your own.