This document outlines the course policy on academic integrity and collaborations. It is posted on the course web site for your reference. You must read this document at the beginning of the course and sign a statement with each assignment indicating that you have complied with the policy. If you are uncertain as to how to comply with this policy, please ask the instructor or TAs.

1 Homeworiks and Labs

In general, verbal discussion of ideas, general approaches, etc. with other students is permitted for homeworks and labs. Algorithms courses aren’t much fun if you can’t discuss your ideas! However, each student’s written work outside of class is expected to be entirely his or her own. The following rules try to balance everyone’s desire for free discussion with our need to assess each student’s individual capabilities.

1.1 Collaboration with Other Students

1. Please keep group discussions of the homework problems to no more than four people, all of whom are participating. In larger groups, it is difficult for everyone to contribute their ideas.

2. You must spend at least 30-45 minutes working on each problem before talking to anyone about the problem.

3. If you discuss an assignment with another student, each of you must write your solutions separately. Neither party may carry any written material or code away from the discussion. This rule also means that you can’t save email from a discussion to refer to later while writing your solutions.

4. In order to follow the rules when attending office hours, you are not allowed to carry any written material pertaining to the homework outside office hours. The TAs will have notepads and sheets of paper that you can use to solve problems while in the office hours, but you must leave them behind when you leave.

5. You must not read someone else’s written solutions or code or give your own solutions or code to someone else to read unless both of you have already turned in your assignments.

6. If you discuss a problem with another student, you must then go do something completely unrelated for at least one hour before writing any part of your own solution.

7. You must state the names of all your collaborators when you hand in your assignment.

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1 This document is “borrowed” almost verbatim from Dr Buhler’s academic policy statement.
We ask that you please honor the spirit as well as the letter of these rules. Please try to do as much of the assignments as you can on your own before seeking help from your peers. Don’t just tell other students how to solve a problem; instead, give them hints or try to explain the basic principles that will let them solve specific problems themselves. If you ever feel uncomfortable discussing your work, or you don’t see how to help someone without simply giving away answers, please refer them to the TAs or to myself rather than trying to sort things out on your own.

Keep in mind that your performance on exams constitutes more than half your course grade, so it ultimately does no good to let other people do your assignments for you without learning the material. Conversely, you’re not doing your fellow students a favor by helping them do their assignments without learning the material.

1.2 Acknowledging Sources of Assistance

You may use your course text, the course staff, and any written materials we provide to help you with your assignments. You must acknowledge all other sources when you turn in the homework. You may not use any of the following sources at all:

- previous years’ solutions to homeworks, labs, or exams;
- solutions, code, or worked examples from other written sources (e.g. the Web) that solve a problem equivalent or highly similar to one appearing on an assignment or lab;
- Blogs, newsgroups, or other assemblages of “experts.”

As an exception to the above rules, you can use whatever reference material you want to answer general questions about Java, the mechanics of compiling / running your programs, and discrete math or proof techniques (e.g. the Sun JDK online reference, the O’Reilly UNIX tool guides, and your 240 textbook are all fine).

As a special exception, if you are retaking the course, you may reuse code from your own labs (please indicate that you are doing so when you turn the new labs in). Note that the labs may change in subtle ways between editions of the course; you are responsible for making any required changes and using the most recent version of the provided code.

Discussions with friends who aren’t currently taking the course, other faculty, your mother, Don Knuth, Edsger Dijkstra (if you can find a good medium), etc. are subject to the rules and guidelines outlined in the previous section. You must tell the other person in advance that the discussion pertains to a current course assignment.

2 Take-Home Exam

This course may contain a take-home exam. You must treat this exam as though you were taking it in class. You should talk to absolutely no one (not even your roommate who is not taking the class, or your mother) about any aspect of this exam until one hour after the exam deadline, even if you think that the conversation is harmless. For example, if someone asks you how many problems you have solved, you must refuse to answer the question. If someone asks you how the exam is
going, you must refuse to answer. After all, you wouldn’t answer these questions if they
were asked during an in-class exam. Even if you have turned in the exam, other
people may not have. Hence the restriction about one hour after the deadline.

For the exam, you are not permitted to use any sources other than the class
textbook, the course notes, and any notes you may have taken. You must not use any
one else’s notes. Even if you normally share notes with a friend, you can not do so
during the take-home exam.

3 Sanctions

In cases where a student is found to have willfully violated the course
collaboration policy, the minimum penalty is loss of credit equal to 200% of the
assignment on which the violation occurred. For example, if an assignment is worth
10 points in your grade, you will receive no credit for the assignment and an
additional 10 points off your final grade. If it is a homework containing 3
problems, then it will be as though you missed 6 problems. Notice that missing 6
problems is equivalent to losing one your letter grade, that is, dropping from an A to
a B.

At the instructor’s discretion, more severe penalties may be given for particularly
egregious or repeated violations, including failure of the course and such other
disciplinary actions as are warranted and allowed by Washington University.
Incidents of known or suspected cheating are also recorded permanently by the CSE
Department and by the Office of the Dean of Engineering and may affect your
ability to graduate.

FYI, we have caught people cheating in the past. The most common violations
have been copying of code from other people’s labs and trying to pass off code
found on the web as the student’s own work. Please note that we can and do detect
these incidents even if you change all your variable names and change or delete any
internal documentation.