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CS 302

Homework 10

1) My course will consist of the following components:

- several homeworks throughout the course
- two exams (one in the middle, one at the end)
- 3 projects

The homeworks and projects will be graded on an absolute scale, whereas the exams will be graded on a curve. Homeworks would get some type of “check plus, check, check minus” scale since I think that homeworks are where students should learn material, not demonstrate mastery of it (but they should make a sincere effort). In the past I’ve been happy with posting a grading worksheet for projects that show the student how many points they’ve received in each of about 2 dozen categories—it also helps cut down on regrade requests. In terms of the exams, I think the curve works well since it can be very difficult to predict the overall performance of the exam (and students have a fixed amount of time as well).

I think that each exam should be worth 20%, the projects should be worth 50% together, and the homework worth 10%. As to the projects, perhaps the first will be worth 10%, and the second and third would be 20% each.

I personally like extra credit assignments, but I fear that they will be seen as “required” and will bog down students in too much work. Perhaps a system where a student can only submit extra credit after they’ve already submitted their project. I will likely not throw out any homeworks, since I expect to only give 5 or 6 (and they will have a week at least to work on them... so... unless there is some type of multi-week excuse... which will also hurt them since then they’ll miss like 12.5-25% of the class...

Partnership does add complication to grading. I will probably divide students into groups of two, and will give them the same grade for whatever they turn in together (project report, code, test cases...) I think that making an exam question related to their project is fair game, and could help to motivate students to learn each other’s part of the project.

2) My policy would be that there is no bending of scores at all. If you get an 89.4, you get a B+, not an A-. If you get an 89.5, then it would round up to 90 and you would get an A-.

Having said that...

If the final course grades were lower than the departmental guidelines, I would reserve the right to slide everyone's grade up to meet that guideline (via horizontal shifting everyone's grade until the mean is right for the course).

While this policy is somewhat strict, once I sat down and tried to write out a borderline policy I couldn't really see how to write down a specific policy that students could feel good about during the course.