

JUNIOR CAPSTONE RESEARCH SEMINAR – SYLLABUS

CSc 497, Spring 2014

Aaron G. Cass
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Union College

ADMINISTRATIVE DETAILS

COURSE WEB SITE

<http://cs.union.edu/csc497>

CLASS MEETINGS

The course will meet from 3:05pm to 4:45pm on Fridays in the CROCHET lab (Wold 013).

INSTRUCTOR INFORMATION

name: Aaron G. Cass
e-mail: cassa@union.edu
web site: www.cs.union.edu/~cassa
office: Steinmetz Hall Room 220
office phone: 388-8051
home phone: 382-9671 (before 10pm please)

OFFICE HOURS

If you need help, or just want to chat, please:

- Come by during my scheduled office hours. They are currently scheduled for 9-10am Tuesdays, Thursdays, and Fridays, but check out <http://cs.union.edu/cassa/schedule.html> for up-to-date info.
- Just stop by, especially if you think it will be quick.
- Schedule a meeting, especially if you think it will not be quick. To schedule a meeting with me, go to <http://cs.union.edu/cassa/schedule.html> and follow the easy instructions.

GOALS

Your goals in this course should be:

1. Learn about research and scholarly writing in Computer Science.
2. Develop skill in critical reading in Computer Science.
3. Develop skill in presenting scholarly content, and in participating as an audience for such presentations.
4. **Plan and start your Senior Thesis.**

GROUND RULES

ATTENDANCE AND READING

Attendance is mandatory.

Many class meetings will be devoted to discussions of scholarly papers from different sub-fields of Computer Science. **It is imperative** that you come to those class meetings prepared for substantive discussion of those papers – in other words, you need to have carefully read the assigned reading before class.

LATE WORK AND MAKE-UPS

Late work will **not** be accepted.

ACCOMMODATIONS

I encourage students with disabilities to discuss with me, during the first two weeks of the course, appropriate accommodations that might help facilitate your learning. You will need appropriate documentation from the Office of the Dean of Students. All discussions will remain confidential.

EVALUATION

CLASS PARTICIPATION (10%)

Everyone should come to class prepared to engage in discussion. Mere attendance is not enough to earn 100%.

Also, on days when we discuss scholarly papers, some of you will be tasked with reading especially carefully and then leading the class discussion.

READING RESPONSES (10%)

To ensure that the reading discussions go well, we need to be sure that everyone is ready for the discussion. To ensure that you are ready, you should bring to class a written response to the day's reading. This response should be **at least one half page, typed and single-spaced**, and should respond to the paper, not summarize it. Here are some questions you might consider in your response, but feel free to ask your own questions as well:

- What research question or research problem does the paper address?
- Is the research question or problem important? Do the authors make the case for why it's important? How do they make that case?
- How does this work relate to the rest of the literature? How do the authors place it in that context?
- Why do you think the authors pursued the research question or problem? Why did it occur to them?
- How is the research question or problem addressed? Do the authors give an "answer"? If so, what is it? What evidence do they give for their answer?
- Do you buy the results from the paper?
- Is the research worth continuing? In what directions?

SEMINAR PARTICIPATION (10%)

There will be 5-6 seminars throughout the term that you should plan on attending. You need to attend **and** participate by being engaged and asking questions.

PAPERS (50%)**ANNOTATED BIBLIOGRAPHY (15%)**

You will write a paper based on library research into a topic of your choosing. This should hopefully help you narrow down an idea for your Senior Thesis.

THESIS PROPOSAL (40%)

By the end of the term, you will write a proposal for your Senior Thesis. It should explain your research question and/or problem, why it's important, how it fits into the existing literature, and how you propose to go about addressing it.

PRESENTATIONS (15%)

You will give two presentations during the term, both on your proposal. We will critique, without grading, the first one, which will be a preliminary proposal presentation to get feedback from the class. The final proposal presentation will be given to the department and will be graded.