



Stony Brook University

CS Graduate Program Orientation

Academic and Professional Ethics

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Program Information

- Program Overview
- Degree Requirements
- Registration
- Financial Support
- **Ethics and Research Responsibility**

Ethical Behavior

- Treat others (as well as their work and products) with respect
- Treat everyone over who you have some power (e.g. TA/student) fairly
- Ensure that the reported results of your work are reliable statements of its outcomes
 - The result in your paper must be true to the best of your knowledge
 - No misrepresentations, obfuscations, “wishful thinking”

Professional Conduct

- Complete high-quality work in a timely manner
- Maintain a safe and welcoming work environment
- Live up to your promises
 - So make promises with care
 - E.g., when you accept a job or internship offer, you cannot continue to interview or accept another offer!

Authorship and Plagiarism

- Your work must be yours!
- Don't put your name on a paper that you did not contribute to.
- Don't put your friend's name on your paper just for his/her benefit.
- Cite any results that you quote from elsewhere.
- Give credit where credit is due

Safety

“First, do no harm”

- Take steps to prevent yourself and others from getting hurt from your work.
- Example:
 - Care of data from medical records
- Consider the impact of your work on the society

RCRS

Responsible Conduct in Research & Scholarship

- Federal funding agencies require every researcher to undergo training and earn RCRS credits.
- Such training is especially critical when handling sensitive data (human subjects, health and social media data)
 - No matter whether the research is federally funded or not.
- All students expecting to be supported as Research Assistants must complete online RCRS training.

Research Misconduct

- **Plagiarism**

- Example: copy from somebody else's paper and use it as part/whole of your project report, thesis.

- **Falsification**

- Fabrication: Make up data, results.
- Manipulation: Rig an experiment to hide actual performance and to show what you want.
- Obfuscation: Hide critical facts, but reveal some others.

- **Serious consequences on your graduate study.**

Possibilities exist for retraction of degree even after graduation.

- If you feel pressured, talk to advisor or graduate program staff.

Professional Misconduct

- **Accepting an internship/job offer (via campus career center or otherwise), and then turning it down later.**
 - Reflects poorly on you as well as the department
 - Employers may not come for campus interviews for future students.
- **False representation in resume for jobs/internships.**
 - Serious consequences on your graduate study. **Possibilities exist for retraction of degree even after graduation.**

Academic Dishonesty

- Do your own work for all exams and assigned class work.
- Do not copy from anywhere, discuss with anybody, solve problems in group.
 - Unless specifically allowed by an explicit class policy.
 - **Check with instructor on what is allowed** in looking for solutions (e.g. github). If allowed, cite sources where you got help.
- Guard your work so that others cannot copy.
- **Serious consequences:**
 - Loss of grade: Many profs will give 'F' in the course.
 - Possible dismissal from program.

Academic Honesty Statement (1)

1. Representing another person's work as your own is academically dishonest.
2. Copying, even with modifications, a solution from another source (such as the web or another person) as a part of your answer constitutes plagiarism.
3. Sharing parts of your homework solutions (text write-up, schematics, code, electronic or hard-copy) is academic dishonesty and helps others plagiarize your work.
4. Protecting your work from possible plagiarism is your responsibility. It is important to save your work such that it is visible only to you.
5. Passing information that is relevant to a homework/exam to others in the class (even into the future!) **for their private use** constitutes academic dishonesty. Discuss only the material that you will be willing to openly post on the class discussion board.

Academic Honesty Statement (2)

6. Academic dishonesty is treated very seriously: instructors will report any incident of academic dishonesty to the Graduate Program, in addition to penalties such **as an F in the course**.
7. Penalty for academic dishonesty may not be immediately administered. For instance, cheating in a homework may be discovered and penalized after the grades for that homework are assigned.
8. The Graduate Program Director may impose additional penalties, up to and including expulsion from the Program and University.
9. There are no extenuating circumstances for academic dishonesty.
10. Any disputes in the allegations or penalties will be resolved by the Graduate Program Director consistent with the policies of the Graduate School and the University.

Ethical Violations: Procedures

Allegations and proposed penalties reported to GPD

- GPD meets students to go explain procedures
- Students enter plea
- Allegations and penalties may be appealed to special graduate committee
 - Formal proceedings: judged by a committee of 2 graduate students and 2 faculty, recommendations sent to GPD
- For serious violations, finding of guilt may lead to dismissal from program.
- Minor violations are recorded in student's file.
 - These records are destroyed at graduation time if there are no other violations.
 - Second violation is grounds for dismissal from the program.

Discussion Topics

[Thanks to Prof. Bender]

- **Why is it important to your professional development to struggle with a problem that you cannot solve quickly?** In other words, the instructor deliberately assigns homework he knows you will likely have to think about for days or weeks to solve. What do you expect to learn from this experience?
- **Why is it academically dishonest to share your solution set with another student?** How can you get burned from just sharing your writeup even if you do not copy yourself?
- **Why is it plagiarism to copy (or approximately copy) solutions from the web or another source, even if you cite your source?**

Discussion Topics (Contd.)

- Some instructors let students work together to solve problems, as long as the students cite their collaborators. **Explain why working together is not academically dishonest in such a setting.**
- **If it is ok to work with other students, is it plagiarism to share and/or copy other write-ups?** Give an example of collaboration that is academically honest. Give another example of collaboration that is academically dishonest.
- **Some instructors say it is ok to discuss problems, but the solutions should be the product of each student's work.** In this setting, give an example of collaboration that is academically honest. Give another example of collaboration that is academically dishonest.

Discussion Topics (Contd.)

- **Why it is better for your grade to leave a question blank, rather than search for answers on the web?** (Hint: calculate approximately how much a homework problem is worth to your raw score versus an exam question. Feel free to include the risk-benefit analysis of getting caught.)
- Imagine that you are employed at a major software company, say Google, Facebook, or Microsoft, and commit code into a product that you copied from a website. **What are the potential risks to both you and the company if this action is discovered by the owners of the code?**

Questions?