

All About Written Homework

This handout describes some general thoughts and techniques for doing homework, as well as what is required, how to submit it, how late homework is handled, and other administrative matters.

Turning In Homework

All homework is due at 11:55pm on the due date, unless noted otherwise on the assignment. These will be graded and comments returned to you as quickly as possible; we'll try for three class periods, but can't guarantee it.

You must turn in an ASCII or a PDF version of your answers (you can use any text processor you like to generate these). Please *do not* submit Microsoft Word or Apple Pages files; because the graders may grade these on UNIX-based and Linux systems, they will not be able to read those files. If your file is an ASCII file, please choose a name that ends in ".txt". If your file is a PDF file, please choose a name that ends in ".pdf".

Please turn in your written exercises electronically using Canvas. If you need to turn in something on paper (for example, a diagram that you can't draw using your text processing program), please hand it to the professor or the TA before the assignment is due, and put a note in what you submit electronically that you have done this. That way, the reader will know to look for something written, rather than mark you off for that problem.

When you are asked to analyze something, or explain something, please be complete, and show your work (including any commands you give, and their output, to show how you did the problem). Otherwise, even if you get the right answer, you will get **ZERO** (that's *0, zip, nada, rien, nothing*) points. Think your answer through and do a rough draft. Students (and professionals, actually) often overlook this, but it is vital. Write clearly and cogently. If the question asks for an opinion, state your opinion clearly, justify it, and don't ramble. Answers that start, "My opinion is yes . . ." and conclude with ". . . on the other hand it could equally well be no" won't get much credit.

Be aware that computer security is unlike many other computer science subdisciplines, in that answers may not be clear-cut analytically the way an answer to the complexity of an algorithm is. This is because computer security exists in a context, and answers to questions must take into account the context of the question. So be sure you state any assumptions you make that are critical to your answer. Your grade will often depend upon your justification.

Late Homework

You can turn in your homework up to one class period late (unless the assignment says otherwise). If you turn it in late, we will grade it normally, and then deduct 20% as a late penalty. Requests for exceptions will be handled on a case-by-case basis; for example, medical reasons tend to get extensions. So please do feel free to ask!

Grade Reviews

If you feel that there is an error in grading, please come see me and I'll look over it (and possibly talk with you about it). However, don't dally; any such request must be made within one week of when the grades were made available. After that, we won't change your grade.