

## Grading Policy:

A grade of *A*, either on an individual assignment or for the entire semester, indicates work that is truly outstanding in the opinion of the instructor, demonstrating excellent understanding of the concepts covered. A grade of *B* indicates very good work, above the instructor's level of expectation for the class. A grade of *C* indicates work that is satisfactory, demonstrating sufficient comprehension of the material to merit the student's receiving credit for having achieved the course objectives. A grade of *D* indicates work less than satisfactory, but nevertheless sufficient to merit receipt of credit for the class, while a grade of *F* indicates work far below satisfactory, demonstrating insufficient achievement in the skills or level of knowledge required. Note that grades are based only on assignments given to every person in the class. Opportunities to earn extra credit may be announced to the entire class at various times during the semester, but extra-credit assignments will NOT be custom-crafted for individual students.

Your instructor will be pleased to provide extra help to any student who requests it. However, the student who needs help must **both**: (i) take the initiative on his/her own to seek out the instructor, **and** (ii) seek help in a timely manner and not wait until the last minute, when the examination or assignment due date is already imminent.

**Quizzes and Examinations:** There will be several brief in-class quizzes given at irregular intervals throughout the semester, usually without warning. These will be based **both** upon the reading assignments, regardless of whether or not the readings were covered in class, that were due up to **and including** the date of the quiz, **and** also upon the material covered in class up to the moment of the quiz, regardless of whether or not the assigned readings also cover the same material. In addition, there will be a term paper and a final examination.

Regarding the quizzes, *occasionally* a student may have a bad day and will therefore not perform up to his/her level of knowledge. Alternatively, circumstances may come up either that prevent him/her from covering the day's assignment on time, or that preclude his/her attendance on the particular day when a quiz is given. In either case, this will result in a quiz grade below the norm for that student, or in an automatic grade of zero if the quiz is not taken, regardless of reason. To avoid excessive anxiety on the part of a student who experiences a rare bad day, and to avoid having to take up students' and instructor's time with the giving and judging of explanations and excuses, as a matter of policy the lowest **two** quiz grades for each student will be dropped. Students are warned not to use up their two opportunities frivolously (e.g., don't miss class without grave cause), so that they can preserve their allotment of excused low quiz grades for circumstances of real need.

**Class Participation:** Vigorous student participation in class discussion makes for a much more lively and interesting class for all. To encourage participation in class discussion, the grading mechanism includes the opportunity for the student to earn a reward (details given below) for participating both **vigorously and constructively** in class. Note that your mere attendance is **not** considered to be "class participation". Attendance is mandatory, and therefore no rewards will be meted out for attendance. However, your vigorous and constructive participation in class discussion

## Grading Policy

will certainly make the class more interesting both for your instructor and for your fellow students as well as for yourself, and can possibly result in an enhancement to your grade as well.

**Assignment of Grades:** Makeup of overall grade for the semester will be as follows: First, a numeric score will be calculated based upon the student's performance on all the examinations on the quizzes and homeworks, and on the term project. The basis for calculating the numeric score is:

Collected Homeworks and In-class Quizzes:	30 pts
Term Project:	30 pts
Final Exam:	40 pts
TOTAL:	100 pts
Opportunities to be announced, and participation in class discussion can earn extra points :	
	≤10 pts

After the numeric scores have been determined, letter grades will be assigned based upon the distribution of the numeric scores. Your instructor makes **no** commitment in advance regarding the letter-grade equivalent of specific numeric grades. The standard cutoff scores for grades are: 90 for *A*, 80 for *B*, 70 for *C*, and 60 for *D*. However, the instructor reserves the right to lower the cutoff points in accordance with his/her judgment after studying the actual distribution of numeric scores.

**Enhancement of Grades for Vigorous Class Participation.:** An initial assignment of grades is made to all members of the class as described above. After the initial assignment of grades has been made, additional points will be dispensed to those students who participated vigorously and effectively in class discussion. This may result in the improvement of the grades for such students. Thus, non-participation will not lower anyone's grade, but high-quality participation may **possibly** raise it.

**Legibility and Clarity-of-Communication Requirements for Quizzes, Examinations, Homeworks, and Term Papers:** It is up to you, the student, to demonstrate to the satisfaction of your instructor that you have mastered the course material. We know that at the time of your birth you knew nothing about the subject matter of this course. If a change has occurred between then and now, then *you* must demonstrate that this has taken place. Therefore, your writing and drawing must be clear and unambiguous, and your answer should be obviously correct on its own, without benefit of any *post hoc* verbal explanation that you may provide of your answer. What this means is that:

- (i) your handwriting must be legible to the instructor;
- (ii) you must, yourself, bear the burden of choosing the correct words and technical terms that answer the question;
- (iii) your drawings must be neat, technically correct, and properly labeled;
- (iv) your sentences must be properly structured, and paragraphs must be correctly and logically organized;
- (v) you must thoroughly address **all** the specific issues raised by the question; and

## Grading Policy

- (vi) for multiple-choice, fill-in-the-blank and other short-answer type questions, you are responsible for marking the answer in the correct place on the answer sheet. The grader will **not** be responsible for searching for the correct answer in other places, nor can credit be given after the fact for notations made on your question booklet that were not reflected in the answer marked on your answer sheet. Be careful, and check what you are doing. It can be very frustrating for student and instructor alike when a student who knows the material has to take a lower grade than he or she could have earned, because of carelessness in marking the answer properly on the answer sheet. Nevertheless, Computer Science, like airline piloting, is notoriously unforgiving of mistakes, and minute attention to detail is one of the personal properties that the faculty tries to inculcate in our students.

Unclear answers will be marked **wrong**. Instructors are human and sometimes make mistakes, too. You are entitled to complain politely after class if you honestly feel that your answer is both clear and correct, but was misunderstood at grading time by the instructor. If the instructor agrees that a mistake was made, then your grade will be cheerfully corrected.

### Rules for Examinations:

- (1) No calculators, no books, no notes.
- (2) The JMU Honor Code must be scrupulously observed.
- (3) All work **must** be shown on your examination paper. You will certainly be given extra paper if you ask for it.
- (4) You must provide exactly ONE answer to each test question. In the event that you should provide more than one answer, the answer that is **wrong** is the one that will be graded.
- (5) All examinations **must** be taken at the scheduled time. If you miss the scheduled examination, you are responsible for providing **timely** documentation to support a medical or other *bona fide* emergency to avoid getting a grade of zero for the examination. Medical exemption requires certification from a licensed medical practitioner or facility. The documentation must be provided on the practitioner's letterhead and must be dated and signed by the practitioner, and must clearly certify the time range over which you were incapacitated. The practitioner's telephone number must also appear on the document.