CS 161: A Discussion of Academic Honesty[1]

Academic Honesty Policy

For all assignments, any code submitted must represent the work of you (and your partner if relevant) only. Accordingly, you should never read or copy another student's code, exchange computer files, share your code or solutions, use code from the internet or past students or, in general, hand in work done by someone else under your own name(s). Most instances of academic dishonesty are clear cut and students know when they have violated the rules.

One confusing situation for students is knowing if it's okay to ask another student for help. Students may give or receive help for specific problems with software or computer programs. When someone asks you for help, you become a *student mentor* and as such should follow these rules:

- Do not simply tell the student you are helping the solution (e.g. "Oh, just type this...").

- Never show another student your code. Instead, you should look at their code and only with the intention of helping. In general, no student should look at another student's code for their own benefit.

- Ask helpful questions, e.g. "Why are you doing this?" or "What does this section of code do?" or "Have you thought about doing this?"

Any help given must be limited to the immediate problem. Two students sitting side-by-side and working through a program step-by-step together will certainly produce work that will be considered illegal collaboration.

Failure to abide by these rules is considered plagiarism. The first offense typically results in failure in the course. Please read the University of Puget Sound's Academic Integrity policy (`http://www.pugetsound.edu/student-life/personal-safety/student-handbook/academic-handbook/academic-integrity/`) for further information.

Please do not put us, yourself, or anyone else in this unpleasant situation!

Vignettes: What Constitutes Academic Dishonesty?

Below are 3 short vignettes (stories) of students in a fictitious CS161 class. These vignettes may, or may not, describe instances of academic dishonesty. Read through each vignette and decide whether you think the actions of one or both of the students involved constitutes a violation of the academic honesty policy.

Side-by-side
Sarah and Ben are dating and are excited that they are taking CS161 together. Each week they sit side-by-side in Thompson 409 and work independently, but closely, on the assignments. Although they are working on two separate computers, they work on the same methods at the same time. As they encounter errors in their code, they work together to solve them. When one of them finds a solution, they tell the other one what lines of code they added/removed/modified. They submit their assignments within minutes of one another.

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[1]This policy is an adaptation of the academic honesty policy used in the CS department at Pomona College

Housemates

Javier and Blake are housemates and they are both taking CS161 together. Blake is taking a heavy course load and as a result he never seems to have enough time to do the reading or completely finish the homework assignments. The night before an assignment is due, both Javier and Blake are working together in their living room. Javier can tell that Blake is stressed: his code isn't working and he's spent days trying to figure out why it keeps crashing. Javier finishes and submits his assignment and when he gets up to go, Blake asks if he can see Javier's code. He won't copy anything, he just wants to see how Javier got his program to work. That's all. Javier is deeply hesitant but he doesn't know how to say "no" and Blake is desperate. The assignment is due in an hour and Blake really needs to get a good grade. Javier reluctantly agrees. He emails his code to Blake and begs him not to copy it.

It happened so fast

Alexandra and Tom happened to sit next to each other in class and after working together in lab, they've become friends. The week before fall break turns out to be really hectic for Tom: he has two papers he needs to finish and he forgot that his parents were visiting during the weekend. He really needs to get the homework assignment done as soon as possible. One night as Alexandra and Tom are working on the assignment in Thompson 409, Alexandra decides to go and get some food. She's going to come back after dinner so she doesn't bother logging out of the lab computer. While she's gone, Tom is tempted to look at Alexandra's code. If he could just take a quick look, he knows he could figure out his problem. After awhile, the temptation is too much! In a hurry, Tom grabs Alexandra's mouse and emails himself a copy of her code. It all happened so fast. Alexandra returns never knowing what Tom did.