

# CS 161: A Discussion of Academic Honesty<sup>1</sup>

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## Academic Honesty Policy

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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:

- 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.
- Do not just give the student you are helping the answer. Instead, 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!*

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## Vignettes: What Constitutes Academic Dishonesty?

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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.

### **Working Together**

Sarah and Ben are dating and are excited to take CS161 with each other. They decide to work on the assignments together in Thompson 409 on the lab computers. They read through the assignment write-ups together, talk about what Java classes and methods they need, and then start coding (on separate computers) at the same time. As they encounter difficulties in their code, they work together to solve them. They usually finish their assignments around the same time and submit them within minutes of one another.

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<sup>1</sup>This policy is an adaptation of the academic honesty policy used in the CS department at Pomona College

## Housemates

Javier and Peter are housemates and they are both taking CS161 together. Peter 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 Peter are working together in the living room. Javier can tell that Peter is stressed: his code keeps crashing and Peter is getting more and more frustrated. Javier finishes and submits his assignment and when he gets up to go, Peter 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 Peter is desperate. The assignment is due in an hour and Peter really needs to get a good grade. Javier reluctantly agrees and shows Peter his code.

## 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.

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## How To Be Successful

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Academic dishonesty is often the result of practicing poor time management skills – sometimes for years. Below are tips to help you be successful in your classes so that you never find yourself in a situation where you're tempted to make poor decisions.

- Get organized
  - Get a planner and write down the things you need to do along with their due dates.
  - Make a (realistic) hourly schedule for your week.
  - Go to sleep at a reasonable time and get a full night's rest.
- In-Class
  - Always try to solve the in-class exercises.
  - If your group is not helpful, find another group.
  - Take complete and organized notes that will be helpful for studying later.
- Homework
  - Homework always takes longer than expected. Start the homework as soon as it's posted and allot more time than you think you need.
  - Break large assignments into smaller easily-achievable steps.
- Studying
  - Find a place free from distraction where you can focus. Turn off your phone while studying.
  - Keep up with the assigned reading.
- Tutoring
  - There are evening tutoring hours Sunday through Thursday from 7-9pm (in this room)
  - The CWLT also has a Computer Science subject tutor. Call or drop-in to make an appointment with the tutor.