

Computer Science 350
Theory of Computation
Spring 2013

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Office Hours:
Tu, W, Th 2:00 – 3:30
or by arrangement

Text: Michael Sipser, *Introduction to the Theory of Computation*, 2nd edition

Grades

Grades will be based on extensive homework assignments, two midterm exams, a final exam, and class participation. All graded activities will be combined into a percentage of possible points (details available if you wish) that will be converted to a course grade on a scale that is at least as generous as the following:

95 – 100	A	80 – 82	B–	63 – 65	D+
91 – 95	A–	78 – 80	C+	< 63	D, D–, or F (depending in part on a subjective assessment of your work)
89 – 91	B+	67 – 78	C		
82 – 89	B	65 – 67	C–		

Midterm exams are on Friday, February 15, and Wednesday, March 27.

The final exam will be a *take-home* exam. It will be distributed near the beginning of the exam week, and will be due by the Friday of the exam week, May 3.

Homework will be assigned regularly. Be ready to hand it in at the beginning of class on the day it is due. Late homework will not be accepted, except according to the extension policy (see back of this sheet). The homework exercises are a critically important part of this course – you need to keep up with them on a timely basis.

Electronic copies

Electronic copies of many course documents and files (PowerPoint slides, handouts, homework assignments, etc.) will be placed in a public folder for this course on File Server 1. This is the **only way** that homework assignments will be distributed. You are also invited to access other documents in the folder whenever you like.

Cell phones: OFF.

(Over)

Policy on homework collaboration

Working together with other people is a great way to learn the kind of material in this course. I encourage you to work together on the homework, if you find that it helps you to learn. However, homework for this course is also graded, as part of your final course grade. Each student must write up his or her own homework solutions. By handing in homework solutions to be graded, you are promising that you took part in solving the problems, and that you are not just copying someone else's work. Handing in homework to be graded when you did not participate in solving the problems is a violation of the Honor Code.

Course content This course looks at computing from an abstract point of view. That is, we ignore all of the messy details of programming syntax, memory size, data representation, etc., etc., and focus directly on the question of what a computer *is* and what it *can do*. The course is very mathematical in its approach – indeed, the subject lives right on the boundary of computer science and mathematics.

In order to allow us to focus on the central issues of this subject, I will be very explicit about the content goals of the course. See the handout on course topics.

Class participation The material in this class cannot be learned just by watching other people and taking notes; it is not a spectator sport. Your participation is expected and will be counted toward your grade.

Make-up Exams and Extensions on Assignments

Extensions on the due dates of assignments and individual re-scheduling of exams will be granted only for the following reasons:

- Serious and verifiable illness or medical emergency
- Participation in an *official* Rhodes College activity (e.g., course field trip, sports team travel)
- Religious holidays
- Major life event (such as birth, wedding, death) – your own or a close family member
- Other genuine emergency that is beyond your control

Notice that this is an extensive list. It does not, however, include situations in which the timing of an exam or assignment is simply inconvenient for you. In particular, there will be no accommodation for ordinary travel arrangements before or after college breaks.

If you wish to request an extension or re-scheduling because of a situation which can be known ahead of time, it is your responsibility to make arrangements in advance. Permission might not be given after the fact. You may be asked to make your request in writing.

In all cases, your instructor is the final judge of whether an accommodation is warranted.