

Policies

Course Info

The EECS 16 series (Designing Information Devices and Systems) is a pair of freshman-level courses introducing students to EECS, with a particular emphasis on how we deal with systems interacting with the world from an information point of view. Mathematical modeling is an important theme throughout these courses, and students will learn many conceptual tools along the way. Throughout this series, generally applicable concepts and techniques are motivated by, and rooted in, specific exemplary application domains. Students should understand why they are learning something.

EECS 16B deepens the understanding of linear modeling from EECS 16A and introduces dynamics and control, along with additional applications. EECS 70 (which can be thought of as the third course in the sequence – except without any labs) brings in probability and introduces additional discrete structures for modeling problems.

Grade Breakdown

- Homework: 10%
- Labs: 30%
- Midterm 1: 15%
- Midterm 2: 15%
- Final: 30%

Homework Party

Most Mondays there will be a "homework party" from 3–5pm. Homework party is completely optional. GSIs and readers will be present in shifts to answer any homework questions. Students are expected to help each other out, and if desired, form ad-hoc "pickup" homework groups in the style of a pickup basketball game. We highly encourage students to attend homework party.

Homework Grading

The primary way that the homework will be graded is by yourselves. **Homeworks are usually due on Wednesday night at 11:59pm.** You need to turn in both your code and written solutions in the form of a .ipynb file and a .pdf file consisting of your written-up solutions that also includes an attached pdf "printout" of your code. **Any homework submissions that are turned in without both the .ipynb file and a .pdf of the solutions along with the code "printout" (or screenshot) attached will receive a zero on the coded iPython (a.k.a. Jupyter) notebook portions of the homework.** If you have any questions about the format of a homework submission, please go to office hours or homework party.

After the HW deadline, official solutions will be posted online. You will then be expected to read them and enter your own scores and comments for every part of every problem in the homework on a simple coarse scale:

0 = Didn't attempt; or very, very wrong,

2 = Got started and made some progress, but went off in the wrong direction or with no clear direction,

5 = Right direction and got half-way there,

8 = Mostly right but a minor thing missing or wrong,
10 = 100% correct.

Note: All partial credit must be justified with a comment. If you are really confused about how to grade a particular problem, you should post on [Piazza](#). This is not supposed to be a stressful process.

Your self-grades will be due on the Monday following the homework deadline at 11:59pm. We will accept late self-grades up to a week after the original self-grade deadline for half credit. If you don't enter a proper grade by this deadline, you are giving yourself a zero on that assignment. Merely doing the homework is not enough, you must do the homework; turn it in on time; read the solutions; do the self-grade; and turn it in on time. **Unless all of these steps are done, you will get a zero for that assignment.**

We will drop the lowest homework score from your final grade calculation, so getting a single zero on a HW is not the end of the world. This drop is meant for emergencies. If you use this drop half-way into the semester, and request another, we cannot help you.

Just like we encourage you to use a study group for doing your homework, we strongly encourage you to have others help you in grading your assignments while you help grade theirs. This will also help you avoid self-favoritism.

Course readers are going to be grading and sending you occasional comments. Because we have reader grades, we will catch any attempts at trying to inflate your own scores. This will be considered cheating and is definitely not worth the risk. Your own scores will be used in computing your final grade for the course, adjusted by taking into account reader scores so that everyone is fairly graded effectively on the same scale. For example, if we notice that you tend to give yourself 5s on questions where readers looking at your homeworks tend to give you 8s, we will apply an upward correction to adjust.

If you have any questions, please ask on [Piazza](#).

Course Communication

The instructors and TAs will post announcements, clarifications, hints, etc. on [Piazza](#). You must check the EE 16B Piazza page frequently throughout the term. (You should already have access to the EE 16B Fall 2018 forum. If you do not, please let us know.)

If you have a question, your best option is to post a message there. The staff will check the forum regularly, and other students will be able to help you too. When using the forum, please avoid off-topic discussions, and please **do not post answers to homework questions before the homework is due**. Also, always look for a convenient category to post the question to (for example, each homework will have its own category, so please post there). That will ensure you get the answer faster.

If your question is personal or not of interest to other students, you may mark your question as private on Piazza, so only the instructors will see it. If you wish to talk with one of us individually, you are also welcome to come to our office hours. Please reserve email for the questions you can't get answered in office hours, in discussion sections, or through the forum.

It can be challenging for the instructors to gauge how smoothly the class is going. We always welcome any feedback on what we could be doing better. **If you would like to send anonymous comments or criticisms, feel free to use [this anonymous form](#).**

Collaboration

We encourage you to work on homework problems in study groups of two to four people; however, you must **always** write up the solutions on your own. Similarly, you may use books or online resources to help solve homework problems, but you must always credit all such sources in your writeup, and you may never copy material verbatim. **Using previous EE 16B homework, exam, and lab solutions is strictly prohibited, and will result in a case filed against you with the Office of Student Conduct.**

Submit cheating or suspicious incident reports through [this other anonymous form](#).

We expect that most students can distinguish between helping other students and cheating. Explaining the meaning of a question, discussing a way of approaching a solution, or collaboratively exploring how to solve a problem within your group is an interaction that we encourage strongly. But you should write your homework solution strictly by yourself so that your hands and eyes can help you internalize the subject matter. You should acknowledge everyone whom you have worked with, or who has given you any significant ideas about the homework. This is good scholarly conduct.

Don't Be Afraid to Ask for Help

Are you struggling? Please come talk with us! We would much rather deal with misunderstanding early on. Even if you are convinced that you are the only person in the class that doesn't understand the material, and that it is entirely your fault for having fallen behind, please overcome any feelings of guilt and ask for help as soon as you need it – we can almost guarantee you're not the only person who feels this way. Don't hesitate to ask us for help – we really do care that you learn!

Additionally, the earlier we learn about your struggles, the more likely it is that we can help you. Waiting until right before an exam or the last few weeks of the semester to let us know about your problems is not an effective strategy - the later it is, the less we will be able to help you.

Advice

The following tips are offered based on our experience.

Do the homeworks! The homeworks are explicitly designed to help you to learn the material as you go along. Although the numerical weight of the homeworks is not huge, there is usually a strong correlation between homework scores and final grades in the class.

Keep up with lectures! Discussion sections, labs and homeworks all touch on portions of what we discuss in lecture. **Students do much better if they stay on track with the course.** That will also help you keep the pace with your homework and study group.

Take part in discussion sections! Discussion sections are not auxiliary lectures. They are an opportunity for interactive learning. The success of a discussion section depends largely on the willingness of students to participate actively in it. As with office hours, the better prepared you are for the discussion, the more you are likely to benefit from it.

Come to office hours! We love to talk to you and do a deep dive to help you understand the material better.

Form study groups! As stated above, you are encouraged to form small groups (two to four people) to work together on homeworks and on understanding the class material on a regular basis. In addition to being fun, this can save you a lot of time by generating ideas quickly and preventing you from getting hung up on some point or other. Of course, it is your responsibility to ensure that you contribute actively to the group; passive listening will likely not help you much. Also recall the caveat above, that you must write up your solutions on your own. We

strongly advise you to spend some time on your own thinking about each problem before you meet with your study partners; this way, you will be in a position to compare ideas with your partners, and it will get you in practice for the exams. **Make sure you work through all problems yourself**, and that your final write-up is your own. Some groups try to split up the problems ("you do Problem 1, I'll do Problem 2, then we'll swap notes"); not only is this a punishable violation of our collaboration policies, it also ensures you will learn a lot less from this course.