

CSC 301: Analysis of Algorithms

Spring 2024

Instructor Information

Name: William Rebelsky
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Office Hours: TBD

Course Information

Dates: January 22 – May 10
Times: 10–10:50, 3–3:50 MWF
Classroom: 3813 (Morning) 3820 (Afternoon)

Mentor Sessions

This course employs the use of a mentor to aid you in navigating the course. Our course mentor will assist us in class, and host 1 – 2 mentor sessions throughout the week. Mentor Sessions may review course content, provide practice problems, practice interview skills, or provide homework help.

Mentor(s): Hyeyun Jung (Morning) Bradley Ramsey (Afternoon)
Mentor Session Times: TBD

Course Description

Welcome to the Spring 2024 sections of Grinnell College's CSC-301, Algorithm Analysis. CSC-301 is the department's advanced course in algorithms. It serves as a successor to CSC-207, Object-Oriented Problem Solving, Data Structures, and Algorithms. In this course, we will work to develop your skills in the design, implementation, analysis, and verification of algorithms, abstract data types, and data structures.

Along the way, we will consider a variety of classic algorithms, ADTs, and data structures - the "literature" of CS, as it were. Why do we read the literature? Because knowing how problems have been solved in the past helps us solve future problems.

Goals

Upon completion of this course, students will:

1. be familiar with and apply classic algorithms, Abstract data types (ADTs), and data structures.
2. learn to read the literature of computer science, specifically within the domain of algorithms.
3. be able to explain why comparison-based sorts take order $n \log n$ in the worst case.
4. have a better understanding of the interplay between algorithms, technology, bias and structural inequity.
5. improve their ability to justify the runtime and correctness of their algorithms.

Learning Outcomes (LO)

Upon completion of this course, students will be able to:

1. write/develop a loop invariant alongside an algorithm.
2. prove the correctness of an algorithm via loop-invariant technique.
3. use the formal definitions of Big-Oh, Big-Omega and Big-Theta to prove properties of these classes.
4. develop a recurrence relation, given an algorithm which uses divide and conquer.
5. solve problems using divide and conquer.
6. solve a given recurrence relation using the substitution method.
7. solve a given recurrence relation using CLRS Theorem 4.1.
8. recall and apply linear sorting techniques (Radix, Bucket, Counting) to relevant problem cases.
9. solve problems using the greedy strategy.
10. solve problems using dynamic programming.
11. solve problems using Network Flow.
12. justify algorithmic design choices they make when solving problems.
13. explain the tradeoffs between different data structures when they are used for similar problems.
14. implement an advanced data structure or algorithm, demonstrating good software design practices including documentation and testing.
15. implement a balanced tree.
16. have a stronger sense of growth mindset

Class Format

The current plan for the course is as follows:

- Readings for a day are to be read before class not after
- There will be weekly homework assignments (Assigned Wednesday, due 1 week later)
- There will be a weekly take home quiz (Assigned Friday, due Monday night, 30min time limit)
- Fridays will (mostly) be in class discussion sections (given a problem, work through it with small groups, ask Mentors and Instructor for help when you get stuck) in order to practice solving problems and learn how others approach problems
- I will be utilizing the "token" system for late days and re-submissions

Tokens

Tokens reflect that life inevitably rears its ugly head in some fashion and ruins your best-laid plans. You begin the course with **3 tokens**. Tokens may be used for:

- Turning in a homework late (1 token per homework max, gives 2 late days)
- Re-doing a homework or Quiz marked non-satisfactory (1 token per attempt, max 2 extra attempts)
- Making up for an unexcused absence in class (1 token per missed class)

You may not use more tokens than you have. In addition to the 3 tokens you start with, there will be multiple opportunities to earn more:

- Attending an extra curricular event for one of your classmates that is announced in advance (list will be here: TBD).
- Attending Convocation
- Attending Department talks

After attending the event, submit a one-paragraph reflection on the event in the Tokens assignment on Gradescope within one week of the event.

Class Requirements/Components

Quizzes

We will have weekly Quizzes to test learning outcomes covered during the week. Quizzes will be released on Gradescope every Friday with a due date of the following Monday. Each Quiz will have a 30min time limit from the time you start. Each problem on the Quiz will be graded on a scale of *satisfactory (S)* or *not-satisfactory (N)*.

Problem Sets

There will be problem sets in which you will put into practice what we are learning, through analyzing algorithms and implementation of data structures. Problem sets will be graded on a scale of *satisfactory (S)* or *not-satisfactory (N)*. You may receive an *S* on each problem set by meeting the following criteria:

- The assignment must be complete, by providing answers to all questions, and/or following all instructions
- It must show a good faith effort on every problem
- Key understanding is shown for each concept (this will vary by problem set)
- Mistakes are minimal

Essay

As computer scientists, and as Grinnell scholars, it is critical that you examine the role of racism, and bias more broadly, in your chosen field. In this written assignment you will be asked to think deeply about the role of algorithm design more broadly in society, and the potential for harm. This assignment should be completed individually. This assignment will be graded primarily on the depth of your thoughts, and secondly on the grammar and clarity. The essay will be graded on the *S/N* scale.

Exams and Projects

There will likely be a midterm exam, but the format is not yet determined. There will likely be an end of course project.

Attendance And Participation

Your attendance and participation in class is an integral part of your learning. On each day of class, you will either be marked as *satisfactory (S)* or *not-satisfactory (N)*.

You may be excused for a class under certain situations. Excusable reasons to miss class include college sponsored sports absences, religious holidays, family emergencies, and illness. Please email me at least a week in advance in the event of a planned absence. In the case of illness, I may request documentation from a doctor's office or SHAW. Please do not attend class if you suspect you may have COVID-19. If you are excused from class, then you will receive an *S* for the day.

Letter Grades

This course will rely on the ideas of [specifications grading](#) and [mastery grading](#). These systems, inspired by adult learning theory, are designed to create a “low-threat” learning environment where:

- Mastery obtained via exploration, experimentation, and failure is encouraged and valued as highly as “getting it right” the first time.
- Your final grade accurately reflects your mastery of the learning goals of the course.

I reserve the right to update requirements for grades as circumstances dictate over the course of the semester (e.g. if the number of assignments or Quizzes changes).

Letter grades for the entire course will be assigned according to the bundles in the table below. You will receive the grade corresponding to the bundle for which you meet all the requirements. All bundles list minimum amounts, you may exceed the requirements for a bundle and still qualify for it. All numbers in the table are the minimum number of satisfactory grades achieved.

Grade	Attendance (out of 42)	Problem Sets (out of 10)	Quizzes (out of 11)	Essay	Midterm/Project
C	36	7	7	1	0
B	38	8	9	1	1
A	40	10	11	1	2

D: 3-4 requirements of a C are met

F: 0-2 requirements of a C are met

Half letter grades (C+,B+): all of the lower tier (C/B) requirements met, two of the higher tier (B/A) non-essay requirements met.

Half letter grades (B-,A-): all of the lower tier (C/B) requirements met, three of the higher tier (B/A) non-essay requirements met.

Examples (x completed with S):

- 36 Classes, 7 Problem Sets, 11 Quizzes, 1 Essay, 2 Midterm/Project: C+
- 38 Classes, 7 Problem Sets, 9 Quizzes, 1 Essay, 1 Midterm/Project: B-
- 40 Classes, 9 Problem Sets, 9 Quizzes, 1 Essay, 1 Midterm/Project: B
- 40 Classes, 10 Problem Sets, 9 Quizzes, 1 Essay, 1 Midterm/Project: B+
- 40 Classes, 10 Problem Sets, 11 Quizzes, 0 Essay, 2 Midterm/Project: D (Essay must be satisfactorily completed to earn above a D)

One of the fundamental principles behind this grading scheme is that you will have opportunities to re-try assignments if they do not originally obtain a satisfactory grade. My goal in using this schema is to reduce the stress that accompanies typical grading rubrics and give you permission to make mistakes and learn as much as possible. Ultimately, my goal is for each student to learn as much as possible, and I would be very happy to have every student earn an A. Letter grades for the entire course will be assigned according to the bundles in the table above. You will receive the grade corresponding to the bundle for which you meet all the requirements. All bundles list minimum amounts, you may exceed the requirements for a bundle and still qualify for it.

Course Materials

Required Textbooks and Materials

- [Introduction to Algorithms](#), by Cormen, Leiserson, Rivest, and Stein (CLRS)

Resources

- Access our course materials: [PWeb](#)
- Submit your assignments on [gradescope](#) Entry Code: ZW6D7Y
- Databases, journal articles, and more: [Grinnell Library](#)
- Receive Assistance with strengthening your writing: [Grinnell Writing Lab](#)
- Health and Wellness: [SHAW](#)

Course And College Policies

Attendance

I highly encourage you to attend all class sessions. Attendance affects your learning in this course, and thus affects your grade. If you know in advance that you will miss class due to a college-sponsored sport or a religious holiday, please let me know in the first two weeks of the semester. If you have another emergency come up please let me (and the college) know when safe for you.

Late Policy

All assignments are to be turned in electronically by 10:30PM Central Time on the day they are due. I am aware that there are a number of things outside of your control that may affect your ability to complete work on time. If possible, please let me know if you plan to turn in work late. Assignments turned in more than two days late (without prior approval) will not be accepted.

Incomplete Grade Policy

All work for the course is due by 5:00 pm on the last day of finals (17 May 2024). This is a college policy and there is no flexibility in this time. In exceptional circumstances, incomplete grades can be granted. Talk with me if you think you might need an incomplete to complete all the requirements of the course.

Student Workload

You can expect to spend 12 hours per week on this course, including all in-class and out of class time. This number is based off of the Grinnell Guidelines for credit- hours. If you find that you are spending significantly more than 9 hours working on material for this course outside of class each week, please let me know.

Academic Honesty Statement

[Grinnell College's Academic Honesty policy](#) is located in the online Student Handbook. It is the College's expectation that students be aware of and meet the expectations expressed in this policy. In addition, in this course, it is my expectation that students may collaborate on the Problem Sets,

however your collaboration must be attributed and all answers must be written up separately. It is my expectation that Quizzes, Exams, and the Essay will be completed independently.

In this course, you are not allowed to use solutions you find on the internet, and further, you are **not allowed to search for problem solutions on the internet** (this includes resources such as ChatGpt). I know that there is great temptation to look for solutions online when things get difficult. It is my hope that the format of this course eases some of the pressure that you might feel. Additionally, we will work to build our growth mindset in this course, which makes it less uncomfortable to sit with a challenging problem.

For more information on the way I approach academic honesty, it may be helpful to check out Professor Samuel Rebelsky's [extended statement on academic honesty and integrity](#).

Sharing of course materials

Our goal is to create an inclusive learning environment where people feel free to share, fail, and ultimately grow in knowledge. To create such an environment, it is imperative that we be mindful of what we share outside of our learning space. To this end, I request that you refrain from sharing any recordings of our class meetings with others. Recordings of class meetings that we provide, e.g., recorded through Microsoft Teams, are meant for your personal use and should not be shared outside of the class. Students should not make their own recordings of class meetings.

Furthermore, while you retain copyright of the work you produce in this course, we must still uphold the academic integrity of this course. To this end, you may not share copies of your assignments with others (unless otherwise allowed by the course policies) or upload your assignments to third party websites unless substantial changes are made to the assignment (e.g., significant extensions and improvements to your code) so that it is clear that the end product is significantly different from what was asked in original assignment. I do recognize that there are times where you want to do this, e.g., uploading projects to Github for your resume or to show to friends and family, and so I encourage you come talk to me in advance, so that we can ensure that you upload a meaningful project that does not run afoul of this policy.

Religious Observance

I encourage students who plan to observe holy days that coincide with class meetings or assignment due dates to consult with me in the first two weeks of classes so that we may reach a mutual understanding of how you can meet the terms of your religious observance and also the requirements for this course.

Students with Disabilities

I encourage students with documented disabilities, including invisible disabilities such as chronic illness, learning disabilities, and psychiatric disabilities, to discuss appropriate accommodations with me. You will also need to have a conversation about and provide documentation of your disability to the Coordinator for Disability Resources, located on the ground level of Steiner Hall (641-269-3124).

Inclusion Statement

It is my intention that students from all backgrounds and perspectives will be well served by this course, and that the diversity that students bring to this class will be viewed as an asset. I welcome individuals of all ages, backgrounds, beliefs, ethnicities, genders, gender identities, gender expressions, national origins, religious affiliations, sexual orientations, socioeconomic background,

family education level, ability – and other visible and nonvisible differences. All members of this class are expected to contribute to a respectful, welcoming, and inclusive environment for every other member of the class. Your suggestions are encouraged and appreciated.

Take Care of yourself

Do your best to maintain a healthy lifestyle this term by eating well, exercising, avoiding drugs and alcohol, getting enough sleep and taking some time to relax. This will help you achieve your goals and cope with stress.

All of us benefit from support during times of struggle. You are not alone. There are many helpful resources available through campus and an important part of the college experience is learning how to ask for help. Asking for support sooner rather than later is often helpful.

If you or anyone you know experiences any academic stress, difficult life events, or feelings like anxiety or depression, I strongly encourage you to seek support. Student Health and Wellness (SHAW) is here to help: call 641-269-3230 and visit their website at <https://www.grinnell.edu/about/offices-services/student-health>. Consider reaching out to a friend, faculty, or family member you trust for help getting connected to the support that can help.

If you or someone you know is feeling suicidal or in danger of self-harm, call someone immediately, day or night:

- Need to Talk Line: 641-269-4404 (available 24/7 for counseling needs)
- 24/7 Suicidal Hotline: 1-800-273-8255
- **If the situation is life threatening, call 911**

Acknowledgements

- LaTeX [template](#)
- Syllabus based off of Syllabi from Professors [Eikmeier](#) and [Rebelsky](#)
- The inclusion statement has been taken verbatim from <https://lgbtq.asee.org/resources/ally-resources/>
- The Take Care of Yourself Section has been taken verbatim from <https://www.cmu.edu/teaching/designteach/design/syllabus/syllabussupport.html>

Tentative Schedule

The following is a *tentative* schedule for the course. It will be updated as the semester continues.

Week	Class Number	Day	Date	Topic	Reading	Work
0	1	Monday	22 Jan	Course Introduction		
	2	Wednesday	24 Jan	Loop Invariants and Insertion Sort	2.1,2.2	HW0 released
	3	Friday	26 Jan	Designing Algorithms	2.3	Quiz 0 released
1	4	Monday	29 Jan	Asymptotic Analysis	3.1,3.2	Quiz 0 due
	5	Wednesday	31 Jan	Writing Proofs Intro Latex	Good Proof Writing	HW0 due HW1 released
	6	Friday	02 Feb	Discussion 1: Asymptotic Analysis		Quiz 1 released
2	7	Monday	05 Feb	Divide and Conquer	4.3,4.4	Quiz 1 due
	8	Wednesday	07 Feb	Using the Master Theorem	4.5	HW1 Due HW2 Released
	9	Friday	09 Feb	Discussion 2: Divide and Conquer		Quiz 2 Released
3	10	Monday	12 Feb	Greedy Algorithms	15.1-15.3	Quiz 2 due
	11	Wednesday	14 Feb	Greedy Algorithms		HW2 Due HW3 Released
	12	Friday	16 Feb	Discussion 3: Greedy Algorithms		Quiz 3 Released
4	13	Monday	19 Feb	Heaps, Priority Queues	6.1-6.5	Quiz 3 due
	14	Wednesday	21 Feb	Hash Tables	11.1-11.5	HW3 Due HW4 Released
	15	Friday	23 Feb	Discussion 4: Structures		Quiz 4 Released
5	16	Monday	26 Feb	Quick Sort and Sorting basics	7.1-7.4	Quiz 4 due
	17	Wednesday	28 Feb	Lower Bounds, Sorting in Linear Time	8.1-8.4	HW4 Due HW5 Released
	18	Friday	01 Mar	Discussion 5: Sorting		Quiz 5 Released
6	19	Monday	04 Mar	Binary Search Trees	12.1-12.4	Quiz 5 due
	20	Wednesday	06 Mar	Red-Black Trees balance	13.1-13.4	HW5 Due HW6 Released
	21	Friday	08 Mar	Discussion 6: Trees		Quiz 6 Released
7	22	Monday	11 Mar	Midterm		Quiz 6 due
	23	Wednesday	13 Mar	Bias In Algorithms	TBD	Essay Released
	24	Friday	15 Mar	Discussion 8: Bias in Algorithms		No Quiz

Schedule for after Spring break is tentative and will depend heavily on how the first part of the semester progresses.

Week	Class Number	Day	Date	Topic	Reading	Work
8	25	Monday	01 Apr	Shortest Paths Graphs	22.1-22.5	
	26	Wednesday	03 Apr	Min Spanning Tree Union Find Topological Sort	21.1,21.2, 23.1,23.2	HW6 Due HW7 Released
	27	Friday	05 Apr	Discussion 9: Graphs		Quiz 7 Released
9	28	Monday	08 Apr	MaxFlow/Min Cut	24.1-24.5	Quiz 7 due
	29	Wednesday	10 Apr	Bipartite Matching	26.3	Essay Due HW7 Due HW8 Released
	30	Friday	12 Apr	Discussion 10: Network Flow		Quiz 8 Released
10	31	Monday	15 Apr	Dynamic Programming	15.1-15.3	Quiz 8 due
	32	Wednesday	17 Apr	Dynamic Programming	15.4, 15.5	HW8 Due HW9 Released
	33	Friday	19 Apr	Discussion 11: Dynamic Programming		Quiz 9 Released
11	34	Monday	22 Apr			Quiz 9 due
	35	Wednesday	24 Apr			HW 9 due
	36	Friday	26 Apr			
12	37	Monday	29 Apr	NP & NPC	34	
	38	Wednesday	01 May	Approx Algorithms	35.1-35.3	
	39	Friday	03 May			
13	40	Monday	06 May			
	41	Wednesday	08 May			
	42	Friday	10 May	Last Day of classes		