Grad School Essentials

CPS 300: Introduction to Graduate Study
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Announcements

- Departmental meeting next Friday 4:30-6:00
- You will introduce yourselves
- Mentoring
  - Faculty mentor assignments are being finalized
  - PhD students: connect with your student mentors
    - 3 lunches are on us (the department)
  - MS students: a group lunch meeting
    - To be scheduled soon

On picking profs/topics

- Most important: work on things that you love
  - Or else grad life will be miserable
  - But there, tastes are sometimes acquired...
- Flexibility vs. concrete projects
- Large vs. small groups
- Hands-off vs. hand-on
- Practical impact vs. intellectual challenge
- Junior vs. senior
- Funding prospects
- Non-CS advisor is fine; just beware some procedural steps

On approaching professors

- Start early; they want to see you “in action” before committing
- Show you have the required background/skills, or can acquire them quickly
  - Past projects, current course projects, RIP/MS ideas, ...
  - Communicating, thinking, coding, writing, ...
  - Show you have the right attitude/habits
  - Initiative, punctuality, genuineness, independence, meticulousness, tenacity, flexibility, ...

What if...

- You got completely lost in this first meeting?
- You were just given a paper to read?
- Nothing concrete came out of the meeting?

When to meet with advisors

<table>
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<tr>
<th>WHEN TO MEET WITH YOUR ADVISOR</th>
<th>Is there ever a good time?</th>
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| **Beginning of the week**     | Pro: Get it over with quickly
| Gru: You have a guaranteed date with each of Sundays |
| **End of the week**           | Pro: You might actually have something to show by then.
| Gru: You might not! |
| **Mid-week**                  | Pro: Good balance. Give your time to work or feedback
| Gru: Your advisor probably won’t show up (Actually, this might be a pro!)
| **Saturday/Sunday**           | Pro: There is no “pro”
| Gru: Your advisor is a workaholic namas. Good luck with that. |


The guilt game

- Often, advisors make advisees pressured, guilty, and scared
- But it should be the other way around
- Make advisors feel (happily) pressured, guilty, and even scared!


Make meetings more effective

- Be organized
  - Start with a summary of last meeting and an agenda for this one
  - End with concrete goals for next week
- Short productive meetings > long monologs
- Write-ups must show enough polish
  - Faculty have little time, and get tired of correcting simple mistakes
- What if you get stuck?
  - Try alternative approaches yourself
  - Log all things you tried, and why they failed
  - Ask senior students for help with low-level stuff
  - If all else failed, don’t wait until the next meeting to tell your advisor

Communication is important

- Want your advisor to be your best advocate?
- Always keep him/her in the loop!

ON BEING A SCIENTIST

Team discussion!

- “The Selection of Data” (p. 10)
  - JARS, Jymasher
- “Is It Plagiarism?” (p. 18)
  - Bob, Tachikoma

Homework

- Study CS/grad school requirements for Jeopardy! next week—there will be a prize!
- Fill out a (short) “Why Duke?” online survey
  - Survey URL will be emailed to you