

CSC344 Social Distancing Parameters and Procedures

1 Overview

This document details the procedures we will follow for the duration of the social distancing necessary due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

CSC344 has been designed for live face-to-face meetings, thrice weekly. Students are supported by office hours held by the course instructor and TA hours held by the teaching assistant. The course is based around theoretical discussions in class and projects which apply those concepts. Projects are assessed through live demos. The general architecture of the course will survive the transition to a socially distanced format, only with face-to-face meetings replaced by digitally mediated meetings primarily using Blackboard Collaborate.

It is worth noting that this transition will likely not be seamless, and it will certainly not be ideal. It must be understood that, given these new constraints, none of us will be at our best. But, if each of us puts forward our best effort and remains patient and willing to adapt, the course can still be a success. The contents of this document are simply an initial plan, and there may be changes required as we learn more about this style of teaching and learning together.

What follows in the next three sections is a discussion of how the various course components will be adapted to this new format. Section 5 details a new resource.

2 Class Meetings

Class will be held regularly during the scheduled time, MWF 11:30-12:25, on Blackboard Collaborate. Students may access Blackboard Collaborate by clicking the *Collaborate* link on the left side of the CSC344 Blackboard page. Fifteen minutes prior to the scheduled class time a session named “Class” will appear which you should join. Recorded sessions will **not** be available, except perhaps in the first week while we work out any technical issues. More notes and sample programs will be uploaded to Blackboard to help those who might miss a live session.

Blackboard Collaborate will allow for interaction in ways slightly removed from what is possible in a true face-to-face meeting. Students may raise their hands virtually and speak using a microphone when called on. There is also chat feature which we will likely only use in the case of technical glitches disrupting audio. We may use additional features such as polls and breakout groups (for, *e.g.*, progress reports) as the semester progresses and we are all more comfortable with the technology.

The current period for which campus events are no longer scheduled ends on April 13. Should it occur that we are still practicing social distancing at final exam time, procedures will be relayed for taking exams remotely.

3 TA Hours

The teaching assistant will hold hours using Blackboard Collaborate during their usually scheduled times, making use of the “TA Hours” session. Students will join the session and indicate in the chat feature the general topic they would like to discuss. In the order these messages are received, the TA will move students to private breakout sessions where they can discuss the issue. Features such as screen sharing will be available.

4 Instructor Office Hours

The course instructor will hold office hours minimally during the previously scheduled times, and likely more frequently. These office hours will be held using a session on Blackboard Collaborate still to be determined. (It may be a session within the CSC344 Blackboard Collaborate page, or a link to another session used for all courses may be sent.) As with TA hours, students will join the session and indicate in the chat feature the general topic they would like to discuss. In the order these messages are received, the instructor will move students to a private breakout session where they can discuss the issue.

Because of the disruptive nature of this transition, the Thursday and Friday before spring break, as well as the Monday after, will not be counted against project grades (*i.e.*, the Clojure project will still be worth 110 points the day after break).

5 The “Course Room”

There is a session in Blackboard Collaborate called “Course Room”. In this room anyone who joins has the default role of presenter and can share their screen, use a virtual whiteboard, etc. My intention is that you can use this room with your classmates to provide the kind of social assistance which occurred organically during the physically co-located portion of the course.

In your use of this room, I ask that you please be careful of providing assistance or sharing answers in a way that could be construed as academic dishonesty. Please remain cognizant of the fact that any student can drop into the room at any time, and that it is monitored by myself and others.