I take academic integrity very seriously: it is a core value for a teacher and researcher. Therefore, I want to state unequivocally what behavior I expect from everyone in this course. Although I do not want to browbeat you on this topic, I have learned from past experiences that it is best to deal with this issue early and clearly, before any questionable incidents occur. So, as a preventative measure, I am asking everyone to read, sign/date, and return this document. A blank copy is available on the Handouts link on the course web page. I will not record your grades until you sign, date, and return this document to me.

Summary: You should not use unauthorized materials or materials unavailable to all your classmates, especially those that would afford you an unfair advantage (e.g., materials from previous students).

**Homework for the Lectures:** These are not graded, so you may collaborate with anyone and do not need to acknowledge collaboration on your work. In fact, I encourage collaboration on these problems.

**Take Home Quizzes:** All course materials, books, the world-wide web, etc. are acceptable resources for finding answers to these questions (you must cite any sources external to my web pages that you use), and you may spend as much time on these quizzes as you want. But, students may not discuss the material on these quizzes: they may not collaborate with each other, nor receive written or oral help from anyone (except the instructor), whether it be in person, by phone, e-mail, texting, etc. In addition, you may not search for/look at solutions to the specific problems, either on the web or in print, if they are posted from previous versions of this course.

Quizzes are typically graded by one TA, first grading question 1 for every student, then question 2, etc. They often read an “interesting” answer that sticks in their head: an answer that is very good, very bad, or just very strange (sometimes in its use of terminology or notation, or just strange code). If they come across a similar answer on another quiz, they will compare all the answers on these quizzes, looking for other similarities. They can often discover cheating by this protocol.

**Programming Assignments:** Some programming assignments allow (and others disallow) students to work in pairs, submitting one copy of their joint work. Obviously when working in pairs, designing, synthesizing, documenting, analyzing, and debugging code while discussing it with your partner is an integral part of the assignment; all are important skills that we expect you to acquire. In addition, you are welcome to discuss high-level ideas about a programming assignment with anyone else. It is fine to discuss its specification and approaches to designing/solving the problem, to picture or object diagrams, etc. In fact, you are even welcome to discuss how to debug your code with other students.

But the student/pair seeking help may not examine code written by any other students/pairs, and anyone helping debug a program should not rewrite it into the code that they wrote. I don’t want to limit high-level discussions about the assignment, but you absolutely cross a real boundary when you examine someone else’s code: I expect you to wrestle with some problems on your own (or jointly, with your partner). Think of a history paper: you can discuss the material, in class and with other students, but must write your own outline and use all your own words when you write a paper. Looking at someone else’s paper invites plagiarism.

If a “friend” asks you to show him/her your code (especially if the request is to receive a file or listing of your code), you are opening the door wide for a possible charge of academic misconduct for both of you. I have seen friendships crumble when student A innocently supplies a copy of his/her code to student B, who then plagiarizes it, getting both in trouble. Do not be an accessory; truly help a friend by saying “no”.

The best source for help on programming assignments is the instructor or staff (in person, by e-mail, online). We are experienced at providing the right kind of information and help, designed not only to solve your immediate problem, but other similar ones that may arise. Or, use the message forums appropriately.
We use the program Moss (measure of software similarity) to analyze all submitted programs. Moss does a thorough job of comparing code (in ways designed to detect cheating: so operations like changing names, moving code around, etc. don’t fool it). This information is automatically indexed on a web page that makes it very efficient for me to examine the similarities that it detects (adding in my 30 years of experience with this issue). The programs that we choose to examine closely have similarity metrics a few standard deviations above the mean (they are very very similar). When I use assignments from previous quarters, I run moss with solutions from those quarters as well. I will demonstrate moss during one of the lectures, so you can see it in action.

In-Class (written/programming exams): Students are expected to do all their own work, quietly in the classroom, and do it during the allotted time (stopping when directed to), with the benefit of only the materials explicitly allowed during the exam. Students may not bring in any other materials, nor access such materials nor communicate with each other directly or via any technology: cell-phones, PDAs, calculators, pagers, IM, e-mail, miniature TV cameras, etc.) Information about in-class work should not be discussed with students in other labs that I teach, until the end of the day.

Students have been caught bringing unauthorized notes into exams, copying from a neighboring student, and using an I-Pod to access the web during an exam Please put all your materials (including electronics) underneath your desk before you start an exam.

Penalties: The penalty for violating my rules is a grade that is the negative of the number of points that the assignment is worth (i.e., cheating is worse than failing by not handing in an assignment). In addition, I also send a letter to the Associate Undergraduate Dean of the student’s home school, who will determine whether to sanction any further penalties, at the University level. They archive these letters, and second offenses typically result in suspension for a quarter.

A Safety Clause for Collaboration: If you collaborate with anyone, document it on the work that you submit, by including the name of that person and the nature of the collaboration. Doing so helps insulate you from any Academic Integrity charge, although getting unauthorized help can still result in a grade penalty. But, I cannot levy a charge of plagiarism when a citation of collaboration appears on the work. I might call in all the students involved, to discuss appropriate and inappropriate levels of collaboration in case you crossed a boundary that seems fuzzy to you, and can use this information in determining grades.

General Advice: If you are unable to perform well on an assignment, contact me immediately to discuss the problem (you will be at a advantage if you do not wait until the last-minute to start your assignments: the biggest reason students cheat is poor time management skills); such problems can be resolved in many ways. I should be your first contact point in stressful situations. If a friend comes and asks to see homework prohibited by this agreement, don’t show it to him/her. I understand the peer pressure to “help a friend”, but let me assure you that this is truly not the way to help: you are exposing your friend –and yourself– to a negative grade, and a possible University-level penalty; a friend wouldn’t ask you to expose yourself in this way. During in-class exams, I even suggest that you not sit near your friends. If a student feels guilty about an incident and admits to cheating before I contact the student, he/she will receive only a grade of 0 (and no University-level action). This has happened.

Bottom Line: Faculty are here (and assignments are designed) to maximize your learning and ensure that you receive a fair grade. If you cannot trust us to perform this function faithfully, and cooperate with us to do so, you are missing something important in your education at UCI. I want to create a positive environment, where students truly help each other. But, you must know which boundaries not to cross.

Signature: Acknowledge that you have read this document, understand it; see me or post on a forum if you need any clarification. You must adhere to the letter and spirit of its content during this course, or receive the stated penalties.

Name (signed) ______________________ Date ____________

More information about this topic is available in the Syllabus, under the topic of Academic Integrity.