The Computer Science Graduate School at UWO in 2016

Marc Moreno Maza

Western University, Canada

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Outline

1. People
2. Facilities
3. Policies
4. Teaching Assistantship
5. Graduate Programs
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**Administration**

Department Chair (acting): Dr. John Barron  
Assistant to the Chair: Dianne McFadzean  
Graduate Chair: Dr. Marc Moreno-Maza  
Graduate Program Assistant: Janice Wiersma  
Undergraduate Chair (acting): Laura Reid  
Undergraduate Assistant: Cheryl McGrath

**Support from the office Staff to graduate students**

- Janice Wiersma (admin issues)  
- Cheryl McGrath (supplies, help with copying)  
- Dianne McFadzean (Keys)

**System Group**

- Art Mulder (Web Manager / System Administrator)  
- Jeff Shantz (Manager, Technology and Computing Services)
Statistics

- 25 faculty members + 1 full-time lecturer
- Around 120 graduate students
- A research intensive department
- Good contacts with industry (in particular through MITACS and with IBM, Microsoft, Maplesoft, . . .)
- Our Department consistently ranks among the top Canadian universities in most ranking systems
- More on all this during the Faculty Introductions on Friday.
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Office space

For graduate students

- Grad Student/Faculty offices:
  - Middlesex College: 3rd, 4th floors, part of 2nd floor and basement
- Access to all undergraduate labs (Middlesex College basement, 2nd, 3rd floors)
- All students receive office space and computer (coursework students MC 215)
- Graduate Lounge: MC 312
- **Keep your work space clean and tidy** (no eating or drinking in office/lab)
User accounts

**UWO account:** Wireless access, campus email

**CSD account:** Machines within the department

**Web page:** You are encouraged to create your own Web page
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Before your academic year can start

- Do not forget to pick your student card and bus pass (already included in your tuition fee)
- You must present your original valid citizenship and immigration Canada student authorization document to the School of Graduate & Post-Doctoral Studies (SGPS) asap (otherwise not allowed to unroll)
- You must attend the SGPS Orientation from 9:00 to 13:00 at the Alumni Hall.
- Please read all documents in your information package
- You need to complete SGPS Academic Integrity Module or you will not be able to register for the next term.
  
  http://grad.uwo.ca/prospective_students/preparing/academic_integrity.html

This short module is designed to provide you with the necessary knowledge and resources to abide by academic principles during your graduate career and to help combat scholastic offenses.
Regarding integrity: cheating policy

- If an instructor does not specify a penalty, the following will apply:
  - The penalty for a first offense is mark = 0%.
  - The penalty for a second offense is withdrawal from the university.
- Ignorance is NOT an excuse.
You will be expected to write and speak in English as part of your classes:

- Giving presentations, writing technical documents
- Communication of results and ideas is an essential part of this profession.

If you are not confident in your speaking or writing, there are resources available to help you.

- Teaching Support Centre: http://www.uwo.ca/tsc/
- Writing Support Centre: http://www.sdc.uwo.ca/writing/
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Teaching assistantship (1/2)

In brief

- Many of you will be a TA for classes
- Two TA workshops given by the University:
  - One was last Thursday
  - The other one is tomorrow (Wednesday) from 9:00 to 16:30 in the Health Science Bldg Room 40.

TA rules (1/2)

- Do not date your students
- Do not embarrass your students
- Do not discuss students, or their work, with other students (enrolled in the course or in the graduate school)
- Do not blame your students
- Always explain the reasons for a student’s grade on an assignment or examination.
Deadlines for grading assignments must be met.
Office and/or laboratory hours are to be kept.
If you have a problem, try to arrange for a substitute. At the least, let the instructor know.
Unauthorized absences, such as for vacation, are not permitted.
I don't know all the material in the course that I'm assigned to
- This is to be expected sometimes: Science and, even more, Computer Science evolve quickly!
- Talk to the instructor and other TAs.
- Basically, you may have to learn something new. And that is healthy!

I'm working too many hours
- First, discuss this with the instructor.
- If this doesn't work, then talk to the undergraduate chair.
- Other people in the Department to talk to are the Graduate Chair and the Graduate Program Assistant.
- You can also go to the TA union.
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Graduate courses

In brief

- We have three levels of courses: 95XX, 96XX, 98XX
- The department also has reading courses for MSc students:
  - Each professor has their own reading course number.
  - If you are signing up for one, just write reading course and the professors name on the course registration form.
  - Janice will assign the course number.

Advice for Success

- Come to class on time, do your assignments on time, start projects early and follow through on things.
- Ask questions! Don’t be shy!
- Pursue topics that interest you:
  - **Learning how to learn on your own is an invaluable skill**
  - **Budget your time carefully**: Everything takes longer than you think it will, in particular in developing research projects, writing papers and theses.
MSc and PhD degrees: TRICS

Participation to the TRICS seminar

- You must attend at least 5 TRICS (Topical Research in Computer Science) seminars during 1st Year
- TRICS seminars are presented by faculty members, postdocs, visitors, and senior grad students
- TRICS seminars highlight research conducted in the Department, and
- Teach you about interesting research problems and solutions, how to prepare and present a research talk
MSc Thesis Degree

- Four courses

- Constraints:
  - At most one course can be a MSc reading course (98xx)
  - At most one course can be a cross-listed course (95xx)
  - At most one course at the graduate level can be taken outside the department with supervisor approval

- Thesis:
  - Equivalent to four courses
  - Should contain novel and original research: Explained clearly, thorough literature review
  - Public presentation of thesis
  - Committee: 3 members (2 from department, 1 outside)
MSc Coursework Degree: courses

- Eight courses
- Constraints:
  - One course must be CS 9680 - Directed Study
  - Two courses must be cross-listed (95xx): one from List I and one from List II.
  - At most one reading course (98xx)
  - At most two courses at the graduate level can be taken outside the department, with the permission of the Graduate Chair
MSc Coursework Degree: directed Study

- Supervised work on an approved project
- Equivalent to one course
- Should involve an investigation of issues related to computer science, but not specifically covered in other courses
- Well written report detailing the work
- should be submitted at the end of the course
- Pass/Fail
- You must find your own supervisor
Requirements

- 4 graduate courses
- **Undergraduate Breadth Requirement:**
  - We have forms that most of you have already given us, which we will use to assess your CS background.
  - If you lack background in some area you will be required to take and pass a 3rd year course in that area

- Advisory Committee
- In-depth Study
- Yearly seminar
- Yearly progress report
- Dissertation
Ph.D. Graduate Courses

A student must complete four graduate courses:

- At least one course must be a topics course (98xx)
- At most one course can be a cross-listed course (95xx)
- At most one course at the graduate level can be taken outside the department with supervisor approval.
Advisory Committee

- Should be appointed within one year after registration
- Must consist of 3 faculty members, including the supervisor
- All members must be members of the SGPS and approved by the Graduate Chair
- The Committee reviews the students progress and is available for research advice.
Ph.D. In-depth Study

- The objective is to test the student’s ability
  - to master a research area
  - demonstrate ability to do critical analysis of research papers, and
  - generate new ideas.

- The **Research Topics Survey/Proposal (TSP)** consists of:
  - a literature search
  - a research proposal: identify research directions

- The TSP should be submitted by the 4-th term
- Examination to be done by 5-th term
- Two examiners from the Department
Yearly Seminar

- Each PhD candidate must present at least two publicly announced seminars.
- At least one in the third year and at least one in the fourth year of the program.
- UWORCS – the yearly CSD grad meeting – is an excellent venue for satisfying this requirement.
  
  https://www.facebook.com/media/set/?set=a.10155375358065364.1073741837.465984595363&type=3

- Conference presentation counts as a seminar.
- **Do not count:** Presentation in a course, proposal presentation and PhD defence presentation.
Yearly Progress Report

- Each Ph.D. student must submit a yearly progress report:
  - what has been achieved
  - what is planned for the next year

- Evaluated by supervisor and advisory committee

- No report = no progress

- The idea is to make sure you are on the right track
Dissertation

- Requirements:
  - Thesis document
  - Public presentation

- Examination:
  - Committee of four examiners (2 from department, one from outside the department, and one from outside the university)
  - Questions will be asked from the committee
Questions?