

Orientation of New Graduate Students in the Computer Science Department

Marc Moreno Maza

University of Western Ontario, Canada

September 9, 2021

Outline

- 1 Agenda
- 2 People
- 3 Facilities
- 4 Policies
- 5 Teaching Assistantship
- 6 Public Health
- 7 Graduate Programs

Outline

1 Agenda

2 People

3 Facilities

4 Policies

5 Teaching Assistantship

6 Public Health

7 Graduate Programs

Orientation

Today's agenda

- 13:30 Presentation by the graduate chair and the graduate secretary
- 14:10 Questions and answers
- 14:30 Presentation by [PSAC Local 610 \(GTA Union\)](#)
- 14:45 Presentation by [SGPS](#) on [Own Your Future](#)
- 15:00 Presentation by [SOGS](#)

Other orientation events next week and after

TA Day: Tuesday September 8th (9:00 - 12:00) [Register here.](#)

SOGS: Thursday September 13-18 [Graduate Student Orientation Events](#)

TA Series: [TA Training Modules](#). Registration closes by 16:00 on Sept 13.

Outline

1 Agenda

2 **People**

3 Facilities

4 Policies

5 Teaching Assistantship

6 Public Health

7 Graduate Programs

Computer Science Department: Administration

Administration

Department Chair: Dr. Michael Domaratzki

Graduate Chair: Dr. Marc Moreno-Maza

Undergraduate Chair: Dr. Mahmoud El-Sakka (Winter) and Dr. Michael Katchabaw (Fall)

Graduate Program Assistant: Janice Wiersma

Administrative Officer: Lindsay Bos

Undergraduate Program Coordinator: Alex Bannon

Administrative Assistant: Sara Willemse

Program Coordinator: Rim Zakaria

System Group

- Joe Clarke (System Administrator)
- Gary Molenkamp (System Administrator)
- Art Mulder (Web Manager / Software Specialist)
- Jeff Shantz (Manager, Technology and Computing Services)
- Hisham Shoblaq (Client Support Specialist)
- Ticketing system

Graduate students

- As of January 1: 51 MSc thesis/project, 28 MSc course-work and 57 PhD students, total: 136 students.
- Since January, 14 PhD students and 16 (resp. 2) MSc students defeded their theses (resp. directed studies).
- 25 Students started last January or 54 are starting this September.

Faculty members

- 23 research faculty members + 2 full-time lecturers
- A research intensive department
- Strong connections with industry (in particular through [MITACS](#) and [NSERC](#) Bell, IBM, Microsoft, Maplesoft, . . .)
- More on all this during the Faculty Introductions this Friday.

Outline

1 Agenda

2 People

3 Facilities

4 Policies

5 Teaching Assistantship

6 Public Health

7 Graduate Programs

Facilities

Hardware

- All graduate students can receive office space and a desk computer upon request
- Graduate Lounge: MC 312
- Keep your work space clean and tidy (no eating or drinking in office/lab)

Software

UWO account: access to the wireless, OWL, Zoom, etc.

OWL access: OWL is UWO's online learning management system

Web page: You are encouraged to create your own Web page

Grad list: [How to Get Added to the Grad List](#)

Resources

SGPS: School of Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies

OYF: Own Your Future - Doctoral Professional Development

CTL: Centre for Teaching and Learning

WSC: Writing Support Centre

LIB: Western Libraries

COVID: COVID Updates

Outline

1 Agenda

2 People

3 Facilities

4 Policies

5 Teaching Assistantship

6 Public Health

7 Graduate Programs

Before your academic year can start

- Do not forget to pick up 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 need to complete **Academic Integrity Module** or you will not be able to register for the next term. See also:

https://www.uwo.ca/ombuds/academic/graduate/academic_integrity.htm

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.

English Proficiency

- You will be expected to write and speak in English as part of your studies:
 - Giving presentations, writing technical documents
 - Communication of results and ideas is an essential part of this profession.
- If you are not a native English speaker, we recommend that you take advantage of the following resources:
 - Centre for Teaching and Learning: <https://teaching.uwo.ca/>
 - Writing Support Centre: <http://sdc.uwo.ca/writing/>

Outline

1 Agenda

2 People

3 Facilities

4 Policies

5 Teaching Assistantship

6 Public Health

7 Graduate Programs

Teaching assistantship (1/2)

In brief

- Many of you will be a TA for undergraduate courses
- Recall: [TA Training Modules](#). Registration closes by 16:00 on Sept 13.

TA rules

- Do not blame or embarrass your students.
- Do not discuss students, or their work, with other students (enrolled in the course or in the graduate school).
- 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, let the instructor know ahead of time.
- Unauthorized absences, such as for vacation, are not permitted.

Frequently asked questions (FAQ)

I dont know all the material in the course that Im 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!

Im working too many hours

- First, discuss this with the instructor.
- If this doesnt 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 GTA union.

Outline

- 1 Agenda
- 2 People
- 3 Facilities
- 4 Policies
- 5 Teaching Assistantship
- 6 Public Health**
- 7 Graduate Programs

Take Care! (1/5)

Vaccination

- Western has both a vaccine and a mask mandate.
- Effective September 7, all members of our community including students, employees and visitors will be required to provide proof of vaccination to be on campus this fall.
- Testing in lieu of vaccination is now only available to those with a medical or Ontario Human Rights Code exemption.
- Everyone attending campus must provide proof of vaccination or have an exemption, and those with an exemption must be tested for COVID-19 twice weekly.
- Students who are not fully vaccinated by October 12th 2021 and who are not granted an exemption under the policy will be issued a trespass order. Enforcement of this trespass order will be carried out by campus police, and will be accompanied by academic sanctions, up to and including expulsion.
- Individuals found to have attended class without appropriate vaccination, or who are found to have engaged in fraud related to the vaccination policy, will face academic sanctions up to and including expulsion.
- [COVID-19 Vaccine Information](#)

Take Care! (2/5)

Mask wearing

- Students will be expected to wear triple layer non-medical masks at all times in the classroom as per Western policy and public health directives.
- Students who are unable to wear a mask for medical or religious reasons must seek formal accommodation through at [Accessible Education](#)
- Students with accommodations approved by Accessible Education must make arrangements with the instructor before coming to class, lab, practicum or clinical site.
- Eating and drinking are prohibited in the classroom to facilitate proper mask wearing.
- Students not wearing masks will be asked to leave the classroom.
- Students unwilling to wear a mask as stipulated by Western policy and public health directives will be referred to the Department, and such actions will be considered a violation of the student Code of Conduct. [advice of the Chief Medical Officer of Health.](#)

Take Care! (3/5)

Daily symptom checklist

- Students must complete the symptom checklist every day.
- Students, who are found to be on campus and who have not completed the symptom checklist or have failed the daily symptom check, will be referred for investigation under the Student Code of Conduct.
- Students are expected to carry their student cards to campus each day in anticipation of spot checks by Building Ambassadors.
- [Return to Campus Questionnaire.](#)

Take Care! (4/5)

Impact on teaching

- All instruction (classes in particular) do not need social distancing. This includes activities that involve instruction such as labs.
- However, for other situations, distancing remains in place. In particular, distancing should be observed in grad student offices.
- Grad students are responsible for managing this.
- Office hours can be run online, as long as GTAs adhere to their times, and clearly indicate what the times are.

Take Care! (5/5)

Additional information

- Late arrivals of International Students due to the impact of the pandemic on international travelling.
- Main source of Information on the pandemic.

Outline

- 1 Agenda
- 2 People
- 3 Facilities
- 4 Policies
- 5 Teaching Assistantship
- 6 Public Health
- 7 Graduate Programs**

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! Dont 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 degrees (1/3)

MSc Thesis Degree

- Four courses
- Constraints:
 - At most one course can be a MSc reading course
 - At most one 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 from outside)

MSc degrees (2/3))

MSc Coursework Degree: courses

- Eight courses
- Constraints:
 - One course must **Directed Study**
 - **At most one** reading course
 - **At most two** courses at the graduate level can be taken outside the department, with the permission of the Graduate Chair.
 - The other courses must be CS grad courses.

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: See Section 2.2.1. in [PhD in Computer Science](#).
- Advisory committee
- In-depth study
- Yearly seminar
- Yearly progress report
- Dissertation

Ph.D. Graduate Courses

A student must complete four graduate courses:

- At most one course can be a 95xx course
- At most one course at the graduate level can be taken outside the department with supervisor approval.
- See also the requirements described in Section 2.2.2. in [PhD in Computer Science](#).

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
- See also the requirements described in Section 2.3. in [PhD in Computer Science](#).

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

2021: [UWORCS 2021](#)

- 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
- The report must be
 - submitted through [Pathfinder](#)
 - 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?