I am a teaching assistant for cs 511. I will help you to understand and finish the course well. My goal is not to punish you for a wrong answer. I wrote this to help you (the students) to get a good grade and to succeed in the class.

Assignment  I’ll explain how to deal with your assignments.

Are you ready to solve it?  A homework will be posted on the website at least one week before the due date. You have to read the questions thoroughly. Ask yourself: Is this question divided into two parts? Do I have to show an example? Do I have to prove something? You have to figure out what is the question and what should be answered. Then, you can set up strategies to solve the problems.

I recommend that you to solve the problems at an early stage. If you have questions before the due date, then you can consult the TAs. Otherwise, you can’t. The homework may include some topics those were not covered in the course. In that case, you can solve them later. When you solve a question, do not assume anything that was not described in the question. If a problem is unclear, please consult the TAs.

General strategy to solve a question: Try to make a connection between question and the topics what we’ve covered: if you solve a question in the maximum flow problem chapter, you should assume that the problem may be solved by constructing a flow network with objects in the question. Check the text book again: find if there is any explanation which related to the question. Think before you search for the answer on the Internet: you are smarter than you may think (am I right?). Please tease your brain to reach the answer. Search the Internet: you may find a correct answer or some answers for some similar questions. Do not just rephrase them. Read and understand them. Write your own solution without copying them.
found many students are sharing some solutions. This is easily recognized. Please do your own homework.

Writing  Please type your homework if possible (if you are not paraphrasing your friends homework just before the due date. I know many do.) Many students write their homework in script. The TAs have problems understanding characters and even sentences. Do not just start writing. Writing an answer is not what you can “Just Do It”. So please type your homework. Then you can edit clearly. Also you can copy & paste when some parts are repeated (do not copy & paste what others have written.) If you write clearly, The TAs can grade quickly & easily without missing partial creditable sentences. If you are a senior, M.S., or Ph.D. student, I recommend that you write your homework in Tex or Latex. Or you can use LyX (google it.) This note is made using LyX.

Do not forget to mention what you know. Your answers will be scored based on what you’ve written not on what you know, but haven’t mentioned or on what you’ve meant to. Unless you have a crystal ball, please write in detail what you want to say. I don’t have one.

In cs511, you will be asked to give a proof for an answer. These are hints to write a proof. First, prove formally. Google “mathematical proof”. You may find many good resources on the Internet. You cannot answer like “this is obvious”, “this is easy to see”, and “There may be an example”. You can not prove a statement with examples unless they are used for a counterexample. Write what you want to prove/disprove formally at first then start your proof. You should declare variables before you use them.

Oh, before you submit your homework, please check spellings. It only takes a few minutes.

Grading  Your answer will be one of these two categories: a correct answer and a wrong answer. We will give a partial credit for a wrong answers. In other words, we will give a penalty for the wrong answers. We tried to grade students’ different answers fairly. Fair doesn’t mean giving you high points. Fair grading gives you same points for same answer. Fair grading is based on well defined standards. I set up criteria after reading some or all of students’ answers so that many students can get some points on the answers.

Always remember: your answer will be graded based on what you’ve written.
Complaining (or asking questions) in a smart way  When you received your homework, you may be unhappy with your unexpected score. Usually, TAs commented on answers why it is wrong, how can it be corrected, and what’s the penalty (or partial credit) for the wrong answer. You should read and understand these comments first. If you still have a doubt, then consult the TAs.

Before you complain, please allow a day to TAs (if you are not complaining about final exam.) Some students are complaining because of their mood – usually they are angry. During that day, read and understand the solution. If you can’t, ask help from your friend. One time, I met my TA and I explained why my answer is right for an hour (and he returned me because the office hour is over). And I found by myself that my answer was wrong. When you complain about your score, you have to persuade me why your answer is right or can get some partial credits. Then I can show you my grading criteria.

If you want to ask a question, you can meet me during my office hours. If you want to get a proper explanation about your questions, please send me an email about your question before you meet me. Because I am not omniscient about the topics of the class. I also have to have time to prepare an answer. Your question should be specific enough (not vague.) You should clarify what you don’t know and what you know. I will try to answer everything related to course materials. However, I cannot answer directly about how to solve questions in an assignment to be submitted. The Socratic method may be used to help you solving the problem (I will ask you a series of question. For example, why do you think so?)

Exam  This will be quite similar as the assignments. Usually, you are required to understand questions and answers on previous assignments.

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