

Research Project - Course Outline

COMP 489: 2010

The details here are not solid yet, but will be confirmed in time for the meeting in the first week

This document sets out the workload and assessment requirements for COMP 489 and provides contact information for staff involved in the course. If the contents of this document are altered during the course, you will be advised of the change by an announcement in lectures and/or on the course web site. A printed copy of this document is held in the School Office.

In the first week:

- Choose which projects you are interested in working on by visiting [this site](#).
- Attend the joint ENGR489/COMP489 orientation lecture on Thursday 3.10pm to 4pm in New Kirk 202.

If you don't have one, get a login sorted out as soon as you can, in order to make your project selections.

Aim and objectives

After completing COMP 489 courses you will be able to:

- identify a problem in computer science, and design, develop, and assess a solution to the problem
- compare and analyse the relationship between your solution and that of similar systems and/or approaches.
- communicate, both audio-visually and in writing, the problem and its solution;
- understand and demonstrate scholarship, in particular with regard to academic and technical writing.

Project Selection

During the first week of trimester 1, you need to choose at least three projects that interest you most. You can see the available projects and make your selection by visiting the [project selection page](#). Before making a selection, we highly recommend that you talk with the project supervisor(s) to get a proper understanding of what is involved. Please feel free to email them to set up a meeting time, or simply to drop by their office if you prefer. Finally, you should expect to know what project you have been allocated to by Monday or Tuesday of week 2.

Proposal

The proposal is a short, two page document which: outlines the engineering problem you aim to solve; briefly discusses the approach you will take, including how you will evaluate your solution; and, finally, identifies any budget requirements. A template for the proposal document will be provided.

Interim Report

The interim report is required at (roughly speaking) the mid-way point in the project. The report should: clearly identify the issue being addressed; detail the proposed approach; discuss any progress made so far; and, finally, highlight what remains to be done. The report should be written in such a way that a non-specialist could easily follow and understand the main ideas and concepts.

Conference Day

A conference day will be held during the mid-trimester break of trimester 2. All students are expected to attend, and to give a short presentation of their work. The audience will consist of other students, as well as academic staff members. The presentation should be given in such a way that a non-specialist could easily follow and understand what is said. An examining committee will preside over the presentation, and will be invited to ask questions at the end.

Final Report

The final report is the critical piece of assessment for COMP 489. The purpose of the report is to provide a detailed discussion of: the engineering problem; the design and implementation of your solution; the method adopted for evaluating the solution (including any experimental results); and, finally, to highlight and discuss similar problems and their solutions.

Assessment

Your grade for COMP 489 will be determined through a holistic assessment of the various reporting items that are submitted. The indicative weightings for the five reporting items are given in the following table:

Item	Date	Indicative Weighting
Proposal (beginning of week three, trimester one)	Sunday, Midnight 14th March 2010	-5% if not submitted
Interim report (end of trimester one)	Friday, Midnight 4th June 2010	10%
Conference talk (mid trimester break of trimester two)	Friday, 3rd September (TO BE CONFIRMED)	15%
Final report (end of trimester two)	Friday, Midnight 15th October 2010	75%

Note: These items are assessed formatively. This means you will receive feedback on them as the course progresses, in order to help improve your understanding of the problem and those issues involved. For each, you will receive a grade which gives an indication of how well you have done on that particular assessment item. These grades will be taken into account when determining your final grade for the course.

This is not a fixed formula for arriving at a grade, but does give a starting point for a more holistic appraisal upon completion of the project, so you should treat it as a guide in apportioning your effort. The final appraisal is carried out by more than 1 academic and will involve discussion and comparison across multiple projects.

In general, each of the assessment items is assessed according to the following criteria (weightings will vary according to type of assessment item and nature of what is submitted):

1. Standard of presentation: the item is presented in a clear and understandable fashion. For written reports, this includes the clarity of discussion and argument, and suitability of the overall structure, down to the standard of figures, spelling, and grammar. For oral presentations, this includes clarity of delivery, appropriate slides + other presentation aids.
2. Content: the standard of work.

Mandatory Requirements

All students must attempt the presentation, and submit a final report.

Tests, Exams, Textbook.

There is no terms test, no examination, and no textbook.

Lectures, Tutorials and Laboratories

Although COMP489 has no lectures listed in the VUW timetable, you should aim to go along to many of the lectures being given to ENGR489 students as the material will be directly relevant and helpful for your project work. Some of these lectures will be relevant to both COMP489 and ENGR489 students, while others will have a more clear ENGR focus. You don't need to attend if the content isn't particularly relevant to you as COMP Honours students.

These lectures are: Thursday 3.10-4.00pm in New Kirk 202.

See the ENGR489 lecture schedule for details of upcoming lectures.

Submissions

Please submit each deliverable by using the school's submission system

Notice that when you do so, there are 3 possibilities for the course: each project course comes in F, J and K flavours. These refer to the starting trimester as follows:

trimester started project	code letter
T1	F
T2	J
T3	K

Templates for reports

In order to make life a little bit easier we have provided templates which conform to the various regulations for the formatting of project reports. The files contain examples and give instructions for their own use. We will also be running one or two tutorials about using LaTeX during the year. If you are working on a non-ECS computer you might have trouble accessing the font used to make the VUW logo (front page) - an equivalent image (as .eps or .png) is attached to this page if you need it - see "attachments" at the bottom of the page.

Workload

In order to maintain satisfactory progress in COMP 489, you should plan to spend an average of at least 10 hours per week on this paper. A plausible and approximate breakdown for these hours would be:

- Lectures/tutorials 1 hour per week.
- Project work 9 hours per week,

School of Engineering and Computer Science

The School office is located on level three of the Cotton Building ([Cotton 358](#)).

The notice board for COMP 489 is located on the second floor of the Cotton Building.

Staff

The course organiser for COMP 489 is [Marcus Frean](#)

- *Dr Marcus Frean*
- [Cotton 443](#)
- +64 4 463 5672
- Marcus.Frean@ecs.vuw.ac.nz

The lecturers (strictly, for the ENGR489 course) are [David Pearce](#) and [Ian Welch](#). Many of these will be relevant to COMP489 students and you should plan to attend.

Announcements and Communication

The main means of communication will be via the email list comp489-class@ecs.vuw.ac.nz and the COMP 489 web area at http://ecs.victoria.ac.nz/Courses/COMP489_2010FY/. There you will find, among other things, this document, a link to the [\[\[LectureSchedule\]\]](#) and the [\[\[/cgi-bin/yabb/YaBB.pl?board=COMP489_2010FY\]\]](#) forum. The forum is a web-based bulletin board system. Questions and comments can be posted to the forum, and staff will read these posts and frequently respond to them.

Plagiarism

The [School policy on Plagiarism](#) (claiming other people's work as your own) is available from the course home page. Please read it. If you have had help from someone else, it is always safe to state the help that you got.

Withdrawal

The last date for withdrawal from COMP489 with entitlement to a refund of tuition fees is Friday 12th March, 2010. The last date for withdrawal without being regarded as having failed the course is Friday 14th May, 2010. Later withdrawals may be approved by the Dean in special circumstances.

Rules & Policies

Find key dates, explanations of grades and other useful information at <http://www.victoria.ac.nz/home/study>.

Find out about academic progress and restricted enrolment at <http://www.victoria.ac.nz/home/study/academic-progress>.

The University's statutes and policies are available at <http://www.victoria.ac.nz/home/about/policy>, except qualification statutes, which are available via the Calendar webpage at <http://www.victoria.ac.nz/home/study/calendar> (See Section C).

Further information about the University's academic processes can be found on the website of the Assistant Vice-Chancellor (Academic) at <http://www.victoria.ac.nz/home/about/avcacademic>

All students are expected to be familiar with the following regulations and policies, which are available from the school web site:

[Grievances](#)

[Student and Staff Conduct](#)

[Meeting the Needs of Students with Disabilities](#)

[Student Support](#)

[Academic Integrity and Plagiarism](#)

[Dates and Deadlines including Withdrawal dates](#)

[School Laboratory Hours and Rules](#)

[Printing Allocations](#)

[Expectations of Students in ECS courses](#)

The School of Engineering and Computer Science strives to anticipate all problems associated with its courses, laboratories and equipment. We hope you will find that your courses meet your expectations of a quality learning experience.

If you think we have overlooked something or would like to make a suggestion feel free to talk to your course organiser or lecturer.
