

# Syllabus CS Stars Seminar

Fall 2021

## Important Links:

- **Syllabus/FAQ:**
- **Course Website:** <https://courses.grainger.illinois.edu/cs199str/fa2021/>

## Course Overview:

**Instructor:** Nancy Amato [namato@illinois.edu](mailto:namato@illinois.edu)

**Teaching Assistants:** Sara Aghajanzadeh [saraa5@illinois.edu](mailto:saraa5@illinois.edu)

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**Course Meeting Time and Room:** 5:00 – 6:00 PM in Siebel 2405 (typically we will end at 5:50, but keep the entire hour reserved)

**Grading:** The course is heavily focused on hands on planning and active, in-class participation. Attendance is mandatory unless extenuating circumstances arise, which should be communicated to the instructor and course staff. So long STARS attend and participate in course meetings, a point will be received for the week for a total of 15 points in the semester (every week except fall break).

**Letter Grade:** A: 14+; A-: 13; B+:12; B:11; B-:10; D 9 and below

**The course schedule will be maintained and updated on the course website as the semester progresses.**

## Course Description

This course is designed for CS STARS recipients as one part group meeting and planning time and one part research and mentorship learning and coaching. Research topics will include researcher hygiene, the hows and whats of doing research, and how best to prepare research for presentation and publication. Mentorship and leadership content will include team building and similar effective leadership and mentoring topics. Equity and justice will be covered in conjunction with department E&J sponsor talks and may be augmented with follow up course meetings. Additionally, STARS will use class time to discuss and plan to implement community building efforts and other opportunities within UIUC CS.

## FAQ

**Q: Required?** Is enrollment in this course required if I am a CS STAR?

**A:** As the course time serves as dedicated planning for CS STARS activities, registration is required.

**Q: Schedule Conflict?** I have a one-off schedule conflict, what should I do? Will my grade be impacted?

**A:** We want to be flexible where we can be. If extenuating circumstances arise, let the staff know and we will accommodate what we can!

**Q: Communication?** Is email the only way to communicate?

**A:** No! We will be inviting everyone to the UIUC CS Community slack during the first course period, which can be used for planning and community building outside of the course time – as well as building camaraderie with your fellow STARS!

**Q: Non-CS STAR?** Can I enroll if I'm not a CS STAR?

**A:** At this time, the course is restricted to CS STARS only.

## Important Info Not Specific to the Course

### Classroom Climate

The goals of this course can only be accomplished in a setting of mutual respect. As your instructor, I am committed to creating a classroom environment that welcomes all students, regardless of their identities (e.g., race, class, gender, sexual orientation, religious beliefs). We all have unconscious biases, and I will try to continually examine my judgments, words and actions to keep my biases in check and treat everyone fairly. I hope that you will do the same. If you feel comfortable, please let me know if there is anything I can do to make sure everyone is encouraged to succeed in this class.

Here's the official UIUC text that has helpful info:

The intent is to raise student and instructor awareness of the ongoing threat of bias and racism and of the need to take personal responsibility in creating an inclusive learning environment. The Grainger College of Engineering is committed to the creation of an anti-racist, inclusive community that welcomes diversity along a number of dimensions, including, but not limited to, race, ethnicity and national origins, gender and gender identity, sexuality, disability status, class, age, or religious beliefs. The College recognizes that we are learning together in the midst of the Black Lives Matter movement, that Black, Hispanic, and Indigenous voices and contributions have largely either been excluded from, or not recognized in, science and engineering, and that both overt racism and micro-aggressions threaten the well-being of our students and our university community. The effectiveness of this course is dependent upon each of us to create a safe and encouraging learning environment that allows for the open exchange of ideas while also ensuring equitable opportunities and respect for all of us. Everyone is expected to help establish and maintain an environment where students, staff, and faculty can contribute without fear of personal ridicule, or intolerant or offensive language. If you witness or experience racism, discrimination, micro-aggressions, or other offensive behavior, you are encouraged to bring this to the attention of the course director if you feel comfortable. You can also report these behaviors to the Bias Assessment and Response Team (BART) (<https://bart.illinois.edu/>). Based on your report, BART members will follow up and reach out to students to make sure they have the support they need to be healthy and safe. If the reported behavior also violates university policy, staff in the Office for Student Conflict Resolution may respond as well and will take appropriate action.

## Accommodations

I want this course to be accessible to everyone beginning on the first day! In my experience, we can't count on timely official accommodation information. There is no expectation or need for students to share personal information about *why* a particular accommodation would or wouldn't be helpful. And we can continue to iterate during the semester. If there's something that might get in the way of you being successful in the class - feel free to reach out!

Here's the official UIUC text that has helpful info ([LINK](#)):

To obtain disability-related academic adjustments and/or auxiliary aids, students with disabilities must contact the course instructor and the Disability Resources and Educational Services (DRES) as soon as possible. To contact DRES, you may visit 1207 S. Oak St., Champaign, call 333-4603, e-mail [disability@illinois.edu](mailto:disability@illinois.edu) or go to <https://www.disability.illinois.edu>. If you are concerned you have a disability-related condition that is impacting your academic progress, there are academic screening appointments available that can help diagnose a previously undiagnosed disability. You may access these by visiting the DRES website and selecting "Request an Academic Screening" at the bottom of the page.

## Wellbeing and Distress

I care about you first and foremost as a human (not as a student). I hope for your wellbeing to be your top priority and much more important than this class. I think of this wellbeing as being able to continually meet your needs for sleep, food, exercise, socializing, relaxing, and emotional support. Additionally, this sense of putting the human first is a focus I want to see in our community building efforts, as well!

I'd be thrilled to be someone you reach out to if any of these aren't going great. We can work together to identify what resources might be helpful (some great UIUC resources are described below). I want to *destigmatize* distress, but not *normalize* distress. It is unfortunately common to experience distress in school and I want you to know that you're not alone if you're experiencing some form of distress! When this happens, reaching out is essential! If we *normalize* this distress, we might incorrectly assume that we shouldn't reach out. (Often times new researchers get stuck and feel trapped – advisors *want* them to reach out! But we know it can be scary for them! The same thing applies to us!)

### Important info from the CS Mental Health Committee

The CS Mental Health Committee is a student organization dedicated to promoting dialogue and improving mental health resources for students in the community. We have worked on a lot of event and outreach initiatives in the past such as our Mental Health Awareness Nights, De-stressing Events, or our Mindfulness Monday posts on [social media](#). We even worked with the Illinois Senate Government to get CR/NC grading for students last semester.

This year, we are hosting a new [Mental Health Forum](#) for students to discuss challenges they may be experiencing with mental health, look for campus resources, and hear from

peers about tips around well-being and self-care, as well as a new Faculty Mental Health Ambassador program to create more mental health-friendly course policies and dialogue in classes.

You can also find a list of mental health resources at <https://csmhcollinois.com/t/mental-health-resources>.

Here's the official UIUC text that has helpful info:

As members of the Illinois community, we each have a responsibility to express care and concern for one another. If you come across a classmate whose behavior concerns you, whether in regards to their well-being or yours, we encourage you to refer this behavior to the Student Assistance Center (1-217-333-0050) or online at [odos.illinois.edu/community-of-care/referral/](https://odos.illinois.edu/community-of-care/referral/). Based upon your report, staff in the Student Assistance Center reaches out to students to make sure they have the support they need to be healthy and safe. Further, as a Community of Care, we want to support you in your overall wellness. We know that students sometimes face challenges that can impact academic performance (examples include mental health concerns, food insecurity, homelessness, personal emergencies). Should you find that you are managing such a challenge and that it is interfering with your coursework, you are encouraged to contact the Student Assistance Center (SAC) in the Office of the Dean of Students for support and referrals to campus and/or community resources. The SAC has a Dean on Duty available to see students who walk in, call, or email the office during business hours. For mental health emergencies, you can call 911 or contact the Counseling Center.

Diminished mental health, including significant stress, mood changes, excessive worry, substance/alcohol abuse, or problems with eating and/or sleeping can interfere with optimal academic performance, social development, and emotional wellbeing. The University of Illinois offers a variety of confidential services including individual and group counseling, crisis intervention, psychiatric services, and specialized screenings at no additional cost. If you or someone you know experiences any of the above mental health concerns, it is strongly encouraged to contact or visit any of the University's resources provided below. Getting help is a smart and courageous thing to do – for yourself and for those who care about you.

Counseling Center: 217-333-3704, 610 East John Street Champaign, IL 61820

McKinley Health Center: 217-333-2700, 1109 South Lincoln Avenue, Urbana, IL 61801

## Confidential Resources

If I learn about a situation in which a student is in danger of harming themselves or others, or has been seriously harmed, I may be legally required to notify the Title IX Coordinator. If students want to speak with someone confidentially, the following resources are available on and off campus:

- <https://wecare.illinois.edu/resources/students/#confidential>

Speaking with a confidential resource does not preclude students from making a formal report to the Title IX Coordinator. Confidential resources can walk students through all of their

reporting options. They can also provide students with information and assistance in accessing academic, medical, and other support services they may need.

Here's the official UIUC text that has helpful info ([LINK](#))

The University of Illinois is committed to combating sexual misconduct. Faculty and staff members are required to report any instances of sexual misconduct to the University's Title IX and Disability Office. In turn, an individual with the Title IX and Disability Office will provide information about rights and options, including accommodations, support services, the campus disciplinary process, and law enforcement options. A list of the designated University employees who, as counselors, confidential advisors, and medical professionals, do not have this reporting responsibility and can maintain confidentiality, can be found here:

<https://wecare.illinois.edu/resources/students/#confidential> Other information about resources and reporting is available here: [wecare.illinois.edu](https://wecare.illinois.edu).

## Religious Observances

For people of many religions, school conflicts with their religious holidays. Please let me know if you need to miss a class for a religious holiday - we can create a plan so that you can get the most out of the class. Even when religious holidays don't fall on a class day, you might typically take time off from work to celebrate. I'm happy to figure out alternate plans so that you can take this time off! Just let me know!

Here's the official UIUC text that has helpful info:

Illinois law requires the University to reasonably accommodate its students' religious beliefs, observances, and practices in regard to admissions, class attendance, and the scheduling of examinations and work requirements. You should examine this syllabus at the beginning of the semester for potential conflicts between course deadlines and any of your religious observances. If a conflict exists, you should notify your instructor of the conflict and follow the procedure at [odos.illinois.edu/community-of-care/resources/students/religious-observances/](https://odos.illinois.edu/community-of-care/resources/students/religious-observances/) to request appropriate accommodations. This should be done in the first two weeks of classes.

## Academic Honesty

It is unlikely you will run into situations where academic honesty is a concern in this course, given it is primarily a space for collaboration and group planning. We will discuss some about academic honesty as it pertains to research, as it is important to appropriately cite and reference work. I hope you develop a deeper understanding of and commitment to academic honesty during the class and help build that commitment into the community at UIUC CS.

Here's the official UIUC text that has helpful info:

The University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign Student Code should also be considered as a part of this syllabus. Students should pay particular attention to Article 1, Part 4: Academic Integrity. Read the Code at the following URL: [studentcode.illinois.edu/](https://studentcode.illinois.edu/).

Academic dishonesty may result in a failing grade. Every student is expected to review and abide by the Academic Integrity Policy: [studentcode.illinois.edu/article1/part4/1-401/](http://studentcode.illinois.edu/article1/part4/1-401/). Ignorance is not an excuse for any academic dishonesty. It is your responsibility to read this policy to avoid any misunderstanding. Do not hesitate to ask the instructor(s) if you are ever in doubt about what constitutes plagiarism, cheating, or any other breach of academic integrity.

## Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA)

I plan to ensure that I provide the same FERPA protections to you as my student as we provide to our students, future mentees, and other student community members we interact with.

Here's the official UIUC text that has helpful info:

Any student who has suppressed their directory information pursuant to Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) should self-identify to the instructor to ensure protection of the privacy of their attendance in this course. See <https://registrar.illinois.edu/academic-records/ferpa/> for more information on FERPA.

## Emergency Response

Emergency response recommendations can be found at the following website:

<http://police.illinois.edu/emergency-preparedness/>. UIUC encourages you to review this website and the campus building floor plans website within the first 10 days of class.

<http://police.illinois.edu/emergency-preparedness/building-emergency-action-plans/>.