



CS856 COURSE OVERVIEW

January 8, 2019

INSTRUCTOR

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DC 3621

Office hours by appointment

I am **not an expert** on blockchains

- and last taught a seminar course in **2004**

COURSE GOAL

To learn a **lot** about blockchains

- foundations: consensus
- applications
- system view
 - not crypto or formal verification

Hands-on project

RESEARCH SKILLS

1. How to **read** a paper
2. How to **review** a paper
3. How to **analyze** a paper's strengths and weaknesses
4. **Formulating** a research problem
5. Choosing a research **path**
6. **Written** and **oral** presentation skills

(see hyperlinks in syllabus)

COURSE STRUCTURE

2 lectures

- this week

2 papers per class; 2 classes per week; 11 weeks of classes = 44 papers

- we will discuss each paper in class
- Socratic questioning: class participation is essential
- one student will present both papers
- to sign up, post to 'paper_signup' folder on Piazza
 - FCFS, starting 10am Wednesday

PLACE CARDS

Please prepare a place card, and try to sit in the same places each time

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COURSE STRUCTURE

Project

- teams of 2
- need to submit two drafts and a final project report
- presentation at the end of the term
- encouraged to work with mentors/local startups

PIAZZA

We will use Piazza for all **course-related questions**:

<http://piazza.com/uwaterloo.ca/winter2019/cs856/home>

You can also use it to **discuss papers** and **find teammates** for projects

PAPER REVIEWS

We will use hotcrp.com for paper reviews

<https://waterloo-cs856w19.hotcrp.com/>

Enter your reviews by **8am on the day of the class**

MARKS KARMA

This course is not about marks

Don't cheat yourself!

Reviews can be gamed: don't

- instead, cite
- I will reward highly-cited reviews

AUDITING

Auditors are welcome to attend classes

- but please **do not speak unless you are asked**

Auditors can participate in discussions on Piazza

No need for paper reviews or course project

WAIT LIST

If you are not enrolled, but want to, send me a **one-paragraph email** describing why I will rank and admit students based on this paragraph

LAPTOP/PHONE USE IN CLASS

Laptops/phones are OK to use in class

- but only to look up papers and reviews
- be mindful of distractions

RF paths are reversible

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WHAT IS THIS?

