

BIG DATA ARCHITECTURES 2019/2020

ADVICE ON LAB SESSIONS AND SUBMISSIONS

1 Purpose of the lab sessions

I can't overstate the importance of asking questions. The best time and place to do so is a lab session. Otherwise, you can get in touch with me via email (some delays might occur though).

The lab sessions are also meant to help you prepare for the final exam. The more time you invest in assignments, the better you will understand the intricacies of Big Data Architectures. In the end, it's all about understanding the principles and the rationale/motivation behind them rather than memorizing them.

Besides, the exam may always turn out to be difficult. It is a great asset to have scored a fair amount of points from the lab assignments.

2 Time management

We all know that time management is a crucial thing when it comes to delivering your work. Humans tend to procrastinate and, since it's a common thing for most of us, you need to act upon that much in advance. Please plan ahead and budget enough time to make sure you succeed in submitting your assignments on time. Don't start coding on the last day.

Punctuality is a virtue and many people value that more than you may think. In fact, it is a matter of respect to others and it shows that you are a responsible person. At the same time, some people tend to struggle in meeting deadlines for variety of reasons. For some it may be an anxiety about the approaching deadline. Perhaps an unexpected event happens: you may be meeting your friends or having a date, or you are simply being lazy. Whatever causes the problem, do account for that.

What matters is that you actually manage to get through the material, learn, and deliver your work. For this reason you should aim at meeting the deadline. However, if you run a coding marathon on the last day and you still feel that you're about to finish, don't give up and try to make it. After midnight the penalty grows exponentially every hour. It means that a small delay will cost you 1 or 2 points (and maybe it's worth it?), while big delays start to be problematic due to bigger penalties.

Don't get me wrong, timely submission is always the best.

3 Version control systems

It is in your best interest to organize your work on assignment well. To manage your code base efficiently you may want to use a version control system like git, svn or mercurial, etc. This solution helps you track the modifications in your code (in the granularity of commits), and, to some extent, it may work as a backup plan. For instance, if you use a cloud provider that manages a remote repository at their server, it is more secure because they store a copy of your files. Remember to keep the repository private! You cannot share your code with others.

We are in the database course, so keep in mind that no backup is no excuse. Therefore, probably the easiest way to keep track of the evolution of your code is to store it under a version control system.

Best of luck,
Paweł