

Introduction to Natural Language Processing
Spring 2008
(as of 2/26/2008)

CS 490K/580M

TTh 9:30–10:45 AM

PM 252

Instructor: Dr. Reva Freedman
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Course web site: <http://www.cs.niu.edu/~freedman/courses/csnl/>

Course goals: To gain an appreciation of the wide variety of natural language applications in computer science today, the difficulties involved in building such applications, and useful software and algorithms for doing so.

Communication with the professor: I would be happy to talk to you in person about any topic relating to this course or to artificial intelligence or computer science in general. I try to respond to email within a day, but there are exceptions. As a practical note, I rarely pick up messages from my office voice mail. I try to maintain a course web site. Many files will be distributed via email, so make sure I have your preferred email address.

Special needs: If you have individual circumstances such as a disability, religious holiday, etc., please feel free to contact me at any time for suitable accommodations. Please note that circumstances that apply to all students are generally *not* special circumstances.

Textbook and software: Much of the software and reading for this course will come from the Natural Language Toolkit at <http://nltk.org>. Other readings will come from the web or from handouts distributed in class or in email.

Class attendance and participation: As this is a small class, it will be run more like a seminar. As a result, *class attendance is required* (with unavoidable exceptions of course permitted). Please ask if you don't understand, if I make a mistake, or if you just have a question. Questions about details, big ideas, concepts, algorithms, examples, related ideas, and applications are all welcome.

Assignments: There will be several types of homework, including experiments with existing software, pencil-and-paper simulation of algorithms, and small programs. There will be three major projects. Many of the assignments will involve a short report (5 minutes or less) to the class. Turn in hardcopy at the beginning of the class period, and email a copy to be received before class. In general, *late homework is not permitted* because it disturbs the flow of the class. All assignments are required in order to receive a grade. There will be no in-class exams or term papers. However, a report on the final project will be presented during the final exam slot, so *attendance at the final exam is required*.

Please use at least 12 point proportional type (like this handout) or 10 point non-proportional type (e.g., Courier). Programs must be printed using at least 10 point non-proportional type (e.g., Courier). Avoid 2-up printing. Homework should be turned in on 8 1/2 x 11 paper, stapled, and labeled with your name, the assignment number and the date.

Academic honesty: You are expected to do your own work and give credit where credit is due.

Cheating includes both copying work from other students or letting other students copy your work. All cheating will result in the filing of an academic misconduct form and will affect your course grade, with the possibility of failing the course. Note that a second academic misconduct offense may result in your expulsion from the university.

Grading: Each homework and project will be assigned a point count according to difficulty and the amount of time required. All assignments are required. Final grade will be based on total number of points acquired.

<u>Score</u>	<u>Grade</u>
90%	A
80%	B
70%	C
60%	D
below 60%	F