

Teaching Statement

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Prof. Siskind has redesigned the curriculum for ECE47300, an undergraduate course in AI. The traditional AI curriculum is less relevant for today's ECE undergraduates. AI is primarily a research enterprise. Most undergrads find training in AI of little relevance to their anticipated industrial career. Thus, Prof. Siskind has redesigned the curriculum for ECE47300 to focus on material that is relevant to preparing ECE undergrads for an industrial career. This includes styles of programming that are not covered in other ECE courses: functional programming and symbolic manipulation. Symbolic manipulation forms the basis of the automated reasoning techniques that are the algorithmic focus of ECE47300. Automated reasoning is used by microprocessor vendors for design verification.

In this redesigned course, many techniques and algorithms from AI are taught within the context of solving ECE problems, instead of traditional AI problems. For example, the concept of evaluation is taught by having the students write an evaluator for Boolean expressions, rather than an evaluator for LISP. The concept of rewrite systems is taught by having the students write a simplifier for Boolean expressions, rather than an expert system. The concept of resolution is taught by having the students write a system that uses resolution to find faults in a digital circuit rather than to prove theorems.

The redesigned course focuses on algorithms: evaluation, pattern matching and rewrite systems, constraint satisfaction, and automated reasoning techniques like semantic tableaux, resolution, and congruence closure. It is difficult for students to become fluent in these algorithms solely from the lectures. Thus, the problem sets have the students implement most of the algorithms taught in lecture.

Significant effort has gone into preparing the problem sets. It is not feasible for students to implement the material taught in lecture without a prepared infrastructure. There would simply be too much code to write over the course of a semester. Thus, Prof. Siskind has prepared a framework for each problem set that includes three components: (a) the low-level data-structure manipulation routines, (b) a search engine, and (c) a GUI that handles I/O and often animates the algorithm in operation. Within this framework, students need only implement the concept-rich portion of material taught in class. Having students write code that interoperates with a larger system teaches them how to read and understand APIs and write code that conforms to specifications. Prof. Siskind makes this course material available to other instructors, including ones at Georgia Tech and the University of Washington.

In 2010, Prof. Siskind redesigned the curriculum for ECE57000, a graduate course in AI. As part of the revised course requirements, students do a term paper/project/presentation. Students select and read three papers published within the past three years in a conference or journal in AI, broadly construed to include AI, computer vision, natural-language processing, robotics, machine learning, and cognitive science. They then implement the ideas in one of them and write a six-page term paper in AAAI submission format, three pages of which present a review and critique of the three papers that they read and three pages of which describe their implementation and the experiments/evaluation that they performed. Upon completion, they present a 25-minute conference-style PowerPoint presentation to the class, half of which presents a review and critique of the three papers that they read and half of which discusses their implementation and evaluation. Inter alia, this has been used to satisfy the CS department Communication Requirement for MS students posted at <https://www.cs.purdue.edu/graduate/curriculum/masters.html#communication>.

Teaching Evaluations

	Spring (undergraduate ECE47300)				Fall (graduate ECE57000)			
	course		instructor		course		instructor	
2002	2.42/4	(2.80)	2.93/4	(3.11)	2.88/4	(3.14)	2.72/4	(3.41)
2003	3.02/4	(2.86)	3.42/4	(3.16)	2.94/4	(3.24)	3.31/4	(3.50)
2004	2.31/4	(2.87)	2.27/4	(3.14)	3.50/4	(3.19)	3.60/4	(3.39)
2005	3.35/4	(2.77)	3.47/4	(3.04)	3.56/4	(3.04)	3.71/4	(3.36)
2006	3.81/5	(3.67)	3.73/5	(4.01)	4.77/5	(4.04)	5.00/5	(4.26)
2007	2.38/5	(3.63)	2.94/5	(4.07)	4.82/5	(4.08)	5.00/5	(4.32)
2008	4.29/5	(3.76)	4.64/5	(4.16)	4.8/5		4.8/5	
2009	4.8/5		4.6/5		4.8/5		5.0/5	
2010	4.7/5		4.7/5		4.8/5		4.9/5	
2011	3.7/5		4.3/5		4.8/5		4.9/5	
2012	4.7/5		4.8/5		4.7/5		4.8/5	
2013	4.9/5		4.9/5		4.8/5		4.9/5	
2014	4.2/5		4.8/5		4.7/5		4.8/5	
2015	4.8/5		4.8/5		4.4/5		4.6/5	
2016	4.8/5		4.8/5					

Numbers for Spring 2002–Fall 2005 are course and instructor means (out of 4). Numbers in parenthesis are departmental average means for corresponding undergraduate or graduate lecture courses. Numbers for Spring 2006–Spring 2008 are course and instructor means (out of 5). Numbers in parenthesis are departmental average means for corresponding undergraduate or graduate lecture courses. Numbers for Fall 2008–Spring 2016 are the medians for the “Overall” questions (out of 5). Departmental average “Overall” medians are not provided to instructors.

PhDs graduated

Andrei Barbu, December 2013, postdoc MIT.
 Siddharth Narayanaswamy, May 2014, postdoc Stanford, postdoc Oxford.
 Daniel Paul Barrett, May 2016, Sandia National Laboratory.
 Scott Alan Bronikowski, May 2016, General Motors.
 Haonan Yu, May 2016, Baidu.

MS students graduated

Vamsi Vytla, May 2005, Schlumberger, Lawrence Berkeley Laboratory.
 Pranay Gupta, December 2005, Google.

ECE49600 students

Abhilasha Bhargav, Fall 2002, PhD Purdue CS, Intel.
 Keith Henderson, Fall 2002, MS Berkeley, Lawrence Livermore Laboratory.
 Ross Beranek, Fall 2007.
 Iheukwumere Onwuka, Fall 2007, Spring 2008.
 Seongwoon Ko, Fall 2010, MS Columbia.
 Colin Graber, Spring 2015, PhD student UIUC.

ECE47300 honors contracts

Jordan R. Glassley, Spring 2013.
 Colin Graber, Spring 2014, PhD student UIUC.

Other independent study students

Alejandrina Cristià, LING59000, Spring 2008, PhD Purdue Linguistics, Laboratoire de Sciences Cognitives et Psycholinguistique, Centre National de la Recherche Scientifique, ENS-DEC, EHESS.
Tsz Kwan Lam, LING69000, Spring 2013, PhD Purdue Linguistics, Chinese University of Hong Kong.

SURF (summer undergraduate research fellowship) students paid

James J. Sherman, Jr., 2003, MS Maryland.
Vamsi Vytla, 2003, Schlumberger, Lawrence Berkeley Laboratory.
Andrei Barbu, 2006, postdoc MIT.
Shami Didla, 2006.
Sarah Fortune, 2006.
Anchal Dube, 2008, MS Cornell.
Isaac P. Jones, 2009, MS CMU.
Brian Jay Thomas, 2009, MS Brown, Facebook.

Undergraduate students paid by Mind's Eye

The following undergraduate students were paid under the DARPA Mind's Eye cooperative agreement in winter 2010. They were all coauthors on a paper published in UAI (2012).

Alexander Bridge
Dan Coroian
Sam Mussman, Google.
Lara Schmidt
Jiangnan Shangguan
Jinliang Wei, PhD student CMU.
Yifan Yin

The following undergraduate student from University of Pennsylvania was paid under the DARPA Mind's Eye cooperative agreement during the summers of 2011, 2012, 2013, and 2014. He was a coauthor on a paper published in UAI (2012).

Zachary J. Burchill, PhD student Rochester.

Other undergraduate students paid

Vamsi Vytla, Summer 2002, Fall 2002, Spring 2003, Schlumberger, Lawrence Berkeley Laboratory.
Abhilasha Bhargav, Summer 2002, Fall 2002, Spring 2003, PhD Purdue CS, Intel.
Bingrui Foo, Summer 2003, Fall 2003, Uber.
Pranay Gupta, Summer 2003, Google.
Anchal Dube, Fall 2008, Spring 2009, MS Cornell.
Brian Jay Thomas, Fall 2009, Spring 2010, MS Brown, Facebook.

Other students mentored on an *ad hoc* basis

Jason duFair
Blake Matheny, Google.
Jeremy Tryba
Rajat Agarwal
Rezwanuzzaman Chowdhury
Seth Benjamin, BS student Columbia.
Stephen Michael James Bulley
Jun He
Anantha P. Raghuraman, MS Purdue.

Qualifying Examinations

Prepared and graded the CE-3 QE question (AI) 15 times: January 2003, August 2003, January 2004, August 2004, August 2005, January 2006, August 2006, January 2007, August 2007, August 2009, August 2010, August 2011, August 2012, August 2013, August 2014.