CS 301, October 11, 2004

- two handouts: "Misconceptions ..." and homework 3
  - please read the "Misconceptions ..." paper for next week

- time management

- workload we expect of a 20-hr/wk t.a. in a non-lab course
  - we enroll 60 students per 20-hr/wk t.a.
  - attend lecture (3 hrs)
  - meet with instructor (1 hr)
  - run discussion sections (2-4 hrs)
  - prepare for discussion sections (1-2 hrs)
  - hold office or terminal room hours (6 hrs)
  - help grade exams (1 hr)

- miscellaneous (4 hrs)
  - give review sessions
  - read and answer email, newsgroup postings
  - write up homework solutions
  - install or maintain course software (e.g. Web pages, data files, grade files)

- which of the above are underestimates?
  - grading exams
  - preparation for section
  - maintaining course software
  - t.a.s aren’t supposed to work more than they’re getting paid for

- how to save time?

  - preparation for discussion
    - share with other t.a.s (from previous semesters too)
    - “buddy system” (one t.a. runs twice as many sections in half as many weeks)
    - ask instructor for ideas

  - lab
    - efficient question handling (make sure each question is from ≥2 students)
    - check off multiple students at once
    - make good use of lab assistant (specialize in checkoffs or answering questions)
    - pipeline checkoffs
    - give a mini-lecture in lab after 30 minutes, or after noting that several people are confused
    - answer questions not with answers but with suggestions about experiments with which students can determine the answers

  - office hours
    - schedule intelligently
    - get students to help each other
    - have other stuff you can work on in case no one shows up
    - schedule the end of office hours at a hard-and-fast boundary

- grading
• try to minimize startup overhead

▼ miscellaneous
• chunk time to minimize task switching
• keep a notebook for good ideas so you don’t have to reinvent them
• get work done when you’re most alert
• answer e-mail when you’re least alert
• keep track of how you spend your time
• get ideas from instructor
• work at home

▼ false economy
• relying on last semester’s notes
• not going to class