

COMP 440: Directed Individual Study - Course Outline

COMP 440 2016

This document sets out the workload and assessment requirements for COMP 440 when taken as a 400-level "wrapper" for another course. If you are taking the course in a different format, you will have an individualised course outline, negotiated with your supervisor and the organiser of COMP 440

This outline must be read in conjunction with the course outline for the wrapped course, which contains most of the details for the course. As a graduate course, you are required to do work additional to the 300-level wrapped course, generally in the form of an research essay on some topic related to the wrapped course.

Course Organiser: [Peter Andreae](#)

Assessment.

Your grade for COMP 440 will be determined based on the following assessment weightings:

- 80%: Your mark for the wrapped course
- 20%: Research Essay (or other negotiated component)

Research Essay

The essay is expected to be around 3000 words (4000 word limit), and is due at the end of the term: 3 June/14 Oct (Tri1/Tri2), unless the wrapped course has no exam or assessment item due during the exam period, in which case the deadline will be 20 June/7 Nov.

You can choose your own topic for your essay but you must have the topic approved by the organiser of the wrapped course and by the organiser of COMP 440 (Peter Andreae) by 1 Apr/12 Aug, and have a preliminary bibliography of reading for the essay approved by 6 May/16 Sep. You should submit the essay topic, the bibliography, and the final essay as pdf files via the [submission system](#). Please include your name and the code for the wrapped course in the name of the file that you submit.

Unless you negotiate an alternative form of the essay (or an approved practical project), your essay should describe the state of the art of some narrow research area within the area of your course, based around three key research papers, but referring to additional papers for background. The audience for the essay is students who have taken the wrapped course; we intend to make these essays available to future students of the course as resources for them to find out more about the area of the course.

Essay Structure

The structure of the essay will be

- The problem/issue
 - Describe the problem/issue/limitation that the papers are trying to address
 - Explain why it matters - where does the problem arise in practice.
- Explaining the three papers
 - Explain the solutions presented by the three papers, highlighting the similarities and differences between their solutions
- Limitations
 - Discuss the limitations of the solutions - what they don't solve yet.
 - Briefly outline any other approaches from other papers that address any of these limitations, if any.
- Conclusion
 - Summarise the state of the art in addressing the problem, saying what can be done now, and what issues are still open for future research.

Essay Marking

The essay is expected to demonstrate achievement at a graduate level, as in other 400-level courses. The assessment of the essay will be based on criteria such as

- Demonstrated understanding of appropriate research literature.
- Clear exposition of the issue addressed and the approaches presented in the papers that were read.

- Demonstrated understanding of the relationships between the approaches presented in papers, comparing and contrasting the approaches, not simply describing each paper separately.
- Insightful discussion of the limitations of the approaches and the outstanding problems that still need to be addressed
- Well written (spelling, grammar, clarity, structure) with appropriate referencing of the literature.

Late submission of the final essay will result in a penalty of 10% per day, unless an extension is negotiated on the basis of exceptional circumstances.

Rules & Policies

See the Course Outline of the wrapped course for rules and policies.

[Course Outline as PDF](#)
