Frequently Asked Questions

Who is the professor?
: Dr. Dennis M. (Mike) Briggs [call me Mike] (dmbriggs@ucla.edu)

Who is the TA?
Mohamed Aboudina (aboudina@icsl.ucla.edu)

What is the textbook?
Nilsson, 7th edition. I do not recommend using an older version of this book. About 75% of the problems are different, and you will have to rely on friends for the right problem sets that I assign for homework and study.

Will I need the textbook?
Yes. I will be following the book closely. But if you are having trouble with a concept, I suggest looking at the same concept in another book. Sometimes a different way of presenting an idea will make it easier to understand.

What chapters will we cover?
Chapters 1-8, though not all parts of all chapters.

Will we be using EEWEB?
Yes. (www.eeweb.ee.UCLA.edu).

Will there be homework?
Yes. I will assign homework at the end of each Wednesday. It will be due 2 Mondays (12 days) later. The HW is due at the end of the class (920am) on the 12th day.

How many tests will we have?
There will be 3 tests. The 3rd test (the final) will count more than the first 2. See below.

What are the test rules?
No PSPICE, Matlab, or laptops allowed in the tests. Calculators are OK. The tests will be closed book, but you may bring in one cheat sheet, double-sided. More than one sheet is too difficult to monitor.

Do you give partial credit on the tests?
Yes. The TA and I will work very hard to be consistent in granting partial credit. A certain error on a given problem will cost a certain number of points, for any student who makes that error. When the TAs grade the tests, I find that they are usually more liberal with the partial credit than I would be. I am OK with that, as long as the TA is consistent for all students. I back my TAs very strongly, and will not question or change the amount of partial credit he/she grants. Appeals to me for more partial credit are nearly always unsuccessful. This is because changing your partial credit would be very unfair to the other students who made the same mistake, and I won't do it.

Outright grading mistakes are another matter. If a grading mistake has been made, then we will gladly correct it.

What if I miss a test because I'm sick?
There will be no retests, but there can be makeups. Make-ups will be allowed only in the most serious circumstances. Tests can be made up anytime in the week following the regularly scheduled test. Illness is a serious circumstance. You must provide a doctor's slip when you appear for the make-up. For extraordinary problems, see me.
Can I retake a test?
No.

How do you grade?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Component</th>
<th>Weight</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Homework</td>
<td>19%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 Tests</td>
<td>40% (20% each)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3rd Test</td>
<td>40%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Survey</td>
<td>1%</td>
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</tbody>
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I grade on the curve, so your class standing is important. The median of the curve is usually a B- or higher, but its placement does depend on my perception of how the class is doing. I also take into consideration improvement over the quarter, and I do assign optional extra credit projects; both these things can boost your grade. The extra credit is optional, and is added to your grade after the curve is set and the preliminary letter grade is assigned. So the EC can only help your grade; not doing it will only remove a chance to improve your grade.

Your final letter grade will be determined by the scores accumulated, the extra credit, and the improvement factor. The only flexibility on my part to influence your final grade is in the positioning of the median of the curve. With a large class, it is very difficult for me to use assessments of individual students in determining final grades. In order for me to be fair to all the students, I must basically go by the numbers. That is my grading policy, and I will not change it except for the most extreme of circumstances.

What are your office hours?
930am-1100am MW in 66-144.

What else should I know?
It's tough getting through all the chapters, so I'll be pushing to move on in the lecture. Feel free to ask questions, but if there's more than one followup, I'll probably ask you to come see me during office hours. We cover a lot of material in 10 weeks, so don't sluff off during the quarter, and expect to make it up at the end.

So, don't look for perfect understanding during the lecture. Listen to the lecture, take notes, go to discussion, try the homework. Then you should have perfect understanding. If you don't have it after that, come see the TA or me.

Anything else?
Yes. Enjoy the class! This is your first step into a world that is getting more and more important to our daily lives. You will receive an excellent introduction to that world at UCLA. The best advice that I ever received was from my dear departed Aunt Perle. She told me, "Work hard; have fun." That's my advice to you.