CSE/ISE300 Communications S12

• Time: Tue/Thur 5:20-6:40PM
• Location: Room E4315 Melville Library, 4th floor, east wing
• Required Book: The Elements of Style, 4th edition (Sep 1999), by Strunk & White, 978-0205313426, $10 new (or $5 bookstore rental)
• Free Online Webbook: Technical Writing, by David McMurrey http://www.prismnet.com/~hcexres/textbook/
• Recommended Text: Pocket Guide to Technical Communication, 5th ed. (2010), by Pfeiffer, 978-0135063965 $43 SBU new, $22 rent; $29 Amazon new
• Instructor: Professor Larry Wittie
• Office: CS Building, Room 1308
• Phone: 631-632-8750 (not 2-8456)
• Email: lw@ic.sunysb.edu
• Office Hours: 4-5pm + 7-7:30pm Tue/Thu or by appointment
• Course Homepage: http://www.cs.sunysb.edu/~lw/teaching/cse300
Common Errors in Papers Submitted Previously

There were only two fatal problems for cse/ise300 papers:
Students who did not submit a paper at all got an F (fail).
Students who submitted plagiarized papers got an F (fail).

What is a plagiarized paper?
One substantially copied from someone else without credit.
In practice, papers in which most of the ideas are found in one
or two other papers even though many of the words have
been changed; OR
Papers which include substantial numbers of phrases or
sentences copied word-for-word from other works without
quotation marks and without credit to each source.

Please remember always to number your pages.
CSE/ISE 300
Common Errors: Purpose of the Paper Is Unclear

The first paragraph of a paper must give the reader a 1- or 2-sentence overview of what the paper will discuss. If the title and first few sentences in a technical paper are not interesting, only the writer’s mother will try to read it. The first one or two paragraphs in a scientific paper are known as the paper’s abstract.

I wore my favorite winter boots today. They are warm and comfortable.

The end of a paper must give the reader a 1- or 2-paragraph reminder saying what important points and discoveries have been discussed in the whole paper. If the abstract is interesting, most readers of technical papers skip to the end to read the conclusion section to learn the important results found in the paper.
CSE/ISE 300
Common Errors: Repeated Sentences and Phrases

Some writers repeat a few long phrases many times.
I help them to find alternate (and shorter) phrases or to delete the repeated phrases. Repeated words and phrases make papers boring and hard to read. Empty words cannot bloat three pages into four acceptable pages.

Some writers repeat nearly the same sentence in two or more parts of the paper.
I delete repeated sentences and paragraphs, which must not count in the $120^+ \text{ lines}$ for a 4-page paper. If your paper is too short because of deleted repeats, try hard not to make errors in the new material that you add to reach 120-lines/4-pages.

Some writers start sentences with redundant connectors.
I delete Also, And, Or, But, So, Thus, Therefore, Then, …
CSE/ISE 300
Common Errors: English Grammar Problems
Verb tenses (action times) change (often randomly) from past-time to present-time to past to present to past …

Contractions (I’m, I’ve, didn’t, can’t) in formal writing. Spell them fully (I am, I have, did not, cannot) except in quotations.

Run-on sentences - two complete sentences - each with its own subject and verb - are joined by a comma (,), not separated by a period (.).

A sentence fragment - part of a sentence and usually a very long when or because or since or as or whether clause - is given a final period as if it were a sentence.
CSE/ISE 300
English Grammar Errors

Verb tenses (action times) change (often randomly) from past-time to present-time to past to present to past …

To fix the error: When telling a story that happened in the past, use the past tense or past-perfect tense forms of verbs when your sentences are part of the story time.

I saw (yesterday = past) that he had painted (before yesterday = past-perfect) the fence before I arrived (yesterday = past) home.

To fix the error: When you shift your thoughts to what you or others are doing now - long after the story time - use the present tense forms of verbs in your sentences.

I see (present tense) by your boots that you are (present tense) a cowboy.
CSE/ISE 300
First Paper - My Favorite Shoes

Your printed completed paper is due at start of class Thursday 2/9/12. Center the title, your name, and the date at the top. The paper should be 1.0 page (30+ lines) to 1.3 pages (~40 lines) in length, with lines spaced 1.5 (between single- and double-spaced), text lines at least 6 inches wide, and about 15 words per line. Use font 12 (or larger). The title, your name, the date, and blank lines do not count in the required 30+ lines. Aim for 36 lines of text to be safe.

Email a *doc copy of your paper to lw@ic.sunysb.edu with the Subject: 300 paper 1 - My Favorite Shoes.
Footsteps of Memory

In an empty closet many leagues away lies a lonely pair of boots. Although devoid of human flesh, these silent vassals know their master will one day return, for they are my favorite pair. What does it mean, however, to be one’s favorite pair of shoes? Some might say that attributes such as the physical appearance, cost, and/or comfort are the deciding factors. I, however, insist that shoes hold their power under a different spectrum; the realm of memory.

From the days of Achilles to the planets of tomorrow, great deeds have been, and will continue to be, accomplished while wearing shoes. A picture may be worth a thousand words, but a good pair of shoes can be said to be worth a lifetime. For me, my favorite pair is a set of diving boots. The perfect marriage of black and blue material yields the ultimate scuba-diving companion. Black rubber, molded to a thirteen size, makes up the sole of the shoe, which is bordered by form-fitting blue mesh. While the loose weave of the black tongue allows for easy breathing, the rigid material stands valiantly against the friction of the deep. Although they’re only mere synthetics, the memories accompanying these shoes are like no other.
CSE/ISE 300
A very good paper from 2005  2nd half

While almost any type of shoe can lead you to the Mediterranean coast, the top of a Sicilian Volcano, or to the bedroom of a beautiful woman, only these can take you to the realm of the deep sea. It is here at 100 feet below on a moonless night where I am at peace. Whether gliding through the depths of a Caribbean trench, or exploring a mysterious sunken vessel, the ocean song flows through my body, toping even Enya’s best hits.

Although shoes come and go, the experiences had while yielding these age old inventions live on. As I sit here writing this essay, I am reminded of all the places I have gone using shoes. Even though I’ve been to most all corners of the globe, and have sampled much of life’s meals, any pair of shoes that can escort you to the realm of liquid valium are indeed asymptotically hard to top.

Shoes are unquestionably an important aspect of life. Undemanding, dedicated, strong, such is the spirit of a shoe; a fact that is sadly often forgotten in the fast paced world of today. When reminiscing about our past, it’s amazing how many of our memories have been aided by simple shoes. Perhaps it would have been more fitting for Neil Armstrong to say “That’s one small step for man, one giant leap for shoe-kind”.
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CSE/ISE 300
The very good 2005 paper {corrections in blue} 2nd half

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Th26jan12

Lect02Slide 11
My favorite pair of shoes

Few days past New Year’s eve of 1996, I was on the plane to America, to start my new life. I was looking forward to this new place, and most importantly I was happy to rejoin my father after almost seven years of separation since I was six.

To adapt this new life was probably one of the hardest things happened in my life. Not be able to speak any English; had no friends to be with; was afraid of going out to the public. My family was poor, I lived with my father, who worked as a portrait artist. His low earning were only able to support the basic needs of my family. My father and I lived in a small rented room. Our only entertainment was a TV and a VCR. Life was boring and harsh back then, simply because we were poor.

My dad used to take me to where he worked in Manhattan, in crowded areas like 42nd street and Central Park, where all the tourists were. Occasionally he took me to stores like Toy R’us and Foot locker after work, just to fulfill my desire as a kid. Although I never bought anything, I was still happy.
The winter of 1996 was harsh, heavy snow covered every corner of every street. My school was about ten blocks away from my home; I had to walk to school everyday. My cheap sneaker did a pathetic job of protecting my feet against this severe cold. Many times I came back with my feet all wet. The snow also caused my father not to be able to earn any income for days. We had to save every penny to pass that brutal winter. Despite the problem I faced, I didn’t want to ask my dad for a pair of shoes, because I know we were having a harsh time financially.

My father soon found out about my problem and insisted on buying me a new pair of boots. That night, as he handed me the shoe box, I was very happy, and below the happiness I felt warmth below, the warmth of love. Not because of the shoes he had bought me, but the fact that he spent the money on my shoes and did not even buy a pair of gloves he could had used in his work. I was touched.

Later on my father was able to gain wealth from his talents, and life was never harsh from then on. Now I can all the shoes I want, but I still keep that old pair of boots in my garage to remind me of the old days, and most importantly, of my father’s love. It is my favorite pair of shoes.
First in-class writing assignment today - one-page My Favorite Shoes
One to 1.3 pages, Margins - 1.25 inch each edge
Medium line lengths – 60 characters per full line
Proper spacing - space & a half for your paper

Center the title My Favorite Shoes at the top of a page. Print your name and today’s date on your paper below the title.

List 2 to 4 phrases about ideas for your paper.
Describe your favorite pair of foot coverings. Explain why you like them.
Tell an interesting story about special times when you wore these shoes.

Write a few sentences expanding each of your ideas.

Give your draft paper directly to me up front at the end of today’s class. I will return your hand-written draft Tues 1/31/12

Bring a typed draft to hand in at the start of class Thurs 2/2/12.

Graded drafts back Tues 2/7/12. Final paper due Thurs 2/9/12.