CSE/ISE 300 Writing  F08

• Time: Tue 12:50-1:45PM
• Location: Room 154  Light Engineering
• Required Books: The Elements of Style, 4th edition (2000), Authors: Strunk and White $10 (or $4 2007 reprint by Coyote)
• Online Technical Writing, Author: David A. McMurrey http://www.io.com/~hcexres/textbook/
• Instructor: Professor Larry Wittie
• Office: CS Building, Room 1308
• Phone: 631-632-8750 (not 2-8456)
• Email: lw@ic.sunysb.edu
• Office Hours: 2:00-3:30PM Tue & Thu or by appointment
• Course Homepage: http://www.cs.sunysb.edu/~cse300

• First in-class writing assignment today - one-page My Favorite Gadget
• (Wikipedia: A gadget is a small technological object (such as a device or an appliance) that has a particular function …)
CSE/ISE 300
Common Errors in 5-Page 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 to number your pages (also if you resubmit).
CSE/ISE 300
Common Errors: Purpose of the Paper Is Unclear

The first page 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 last page of a paper must give the reader a 1- or 2-paragraph reminder saying what are the important topics and discoveries 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 150+ lines for a 5-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 150-lines/5-pages.

Some writers start sentences with redundant connectors.
I delete Also, And, Or, But, So, Thus, Therefore, Then, ...
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.
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 Gadget

In class, now, start writing a one-page (30+ lines when typed) paper entitled ‘‘My Favorite Gadget’’. Put your name and email address on the paper when you start. You will hand this first version of the paper in at the end of class today. I will return your writing in class next Tuesday. A printed version of your complete paper is due Tuesday 9/23. It should be 1 page (30+ lines) to 1.3 pages (~40 lines) in length and spaced 1.5 lines, with at least 6 inches of text per line, about 15 words per line, using font 12 or larger. The title, your name, and blank lines do not count in the required 30+ lines.

What kind of device is your gadget? What about it is most important to you? How often do you use it? What memories do you have of times when you bought or used it? Will you ever replace this gadget? With what?