

8/18/15

Dear Computer Graphics and Computer Vision student,

As a former student of this class, I'm writing this letter to try and give you a sense of how this class works and some advice for the coming month. You might be feeling a bit anxious. It's a new place, away from home, and you got stuck in this class based on a survey you probably didn't pay much attention to in the first place (at least I know I didn't). You're probably wondering if this is the right class for you and are worried that it isn't. You might even have never coded before or even if you have coded you've probably never done this type of coding. Either way, by the end all of you students will probably end up in the same boat. And I promise you, this experience will be more than worth it.

I won't lie to you; the class starts out intense. The class begins by going in depth with mathematics involving matrices and these calculations can get confusing. If you've never coded before the beginning coding assignments are probably also going to be hard for you. You get a fair amount of homework and it can seem tiresome at times, especially when you see that the other classes have far less work than you in the beginning. The best advice I can give you for that is work together. Last year, almost everyone in the class worked on the homework together as a gigantic group; as such, we all quickly became close friends. If you students work in groups like we did, the homework will stop seeming like work and end up feeling like fun -- we still joke about Matlab, the coding language.

The classes themselves are going to be really fun and you'll quickly learn that you're doing more than just computer graphics and vision. Appreciate the breaks and pay attention to what you're learning when you don't have classic academic lectures. In my opinion, Nick is the best teacher by far, so consider yourself lucky. Additionally, the guest lectures are both extremely cool and extremely impressive so cherish them. I'm serious don't worry, have fun.

In terms of the final projects and later homework problems, they are very frustrating. Congratulations, you'll have had experience feeling how it's like to be a coder. All of you will probably be doing different things and the big group might have sectioned off into little groups to try and tackle the final project. Remember that even though the rest of the class might not be doing the same thing as you, they are still there for you. On one of the many occasions that you have a problem with your code that you can't seem to solve, I'd suggest looking for help in this order: the other students, the TA's, Nick. Most of the time you can figure out the mistake by the time the TA's are through but when you can't figure it out don't be afraid to ask Nick; he's really, super helpful. Many of you will probably be done with your final presentation ahead of time. Then you can gloat as you watch the other classes rush and panic over their final projects. The pace of this class spreads the work pretty evenly while the other classes have most of their work concentrated in the last week, so don't switch to one of the other classes just because you think it looks easier.

Lastly, really enjoy your time there. While the process can be frustrating sometimes, it is incredibly rewarding. I know that all of you will feel so proud, looking at everything you have accomplished at the end of the month. Don't get too absorbed in the material, remember to take a break every once in a while and do a chatarunga (you'll find out what that is soon enough).

With much care,
Akshina