

Coding with a Team

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CS 2340

Being assigned to a random group can be daunting at first, but you end up learning a great deal from your time and efforts throughout the semester. Apart from learning Object-Oriented Analysis and Design in 2340, you will learn A LOT about managing a group and working with a team. The skills learned will help you in future classes and in industry when you are no longer completing assignments on your own.

First things first: **Get the awkward first meeting out of the way.** It has to happen, so just do it. Email your team and choose a meeting time and place that works for everyone. At the first meeting, introduce yourselves and share a little about yourselves.

Once that's out of the way, examine everyone's schedules to determine a good meeting time (or two) to meet every week. This way, your new meeting time becomes engraved in your schedule as if it's a mandatory class. Once you start missing meetings, everything goes down. **Regular meetings are a must** if you want to succeed in a group.

Use the team contract process as a way to get your team members all on the same page. It acts as a constitution for your group and lays down the basic laws, meeting expectations, member input, etc. We didn't end up following our contract 100%, but it definitely let everyone know what we expect from one another.

Next, **set up a group-email.** We did this by creating one email address through Google that forwards to every group member. This keeps everyone in the team up to date with *everything* that is happening. It is also easier to manage just one email address than to have to send to four different addresses.

Get accustomed to Google Docs. Google Docs is a great online resource that stores your document online and is editable by every team member. The best part of this is that no attachments or uploads are necessary. For submissions to the TA, we included the Google Doc link, and therefore, he didn't need to download any documents and clutter his email and computer with files either.

2340 is comprised of CS and CM students. My group was lucky enough to be split evenly between CM and CS, however I found it frustrating when I, as a Computational Media student, couldn't offer a great deal of coding knowledge. **Split up tasks based on people's specialties.** If CM majors are better at conceptual models and write-ups, let the CM members take responsibility for that. If CS majors are expert coders, let them code the hard stuff!

When an issue arises, beat it down before it's too late. It is much easier to resolve conflicts in the beginning stages than to wait until something is due. This is

the case whether a team member isn't playing fair, or whether there are issues with your code. Basically, do not procrastinate.

Make use of the TA's and professor's office hours! They are there to help you. Also, don't be afraid to request meetings outside of posted office hours. In our case, all four team members could not meet during office hours, and we wanted to all be there to demo our project to the TA. We asked our TA if he could meet with us Friday afternoons, and although it's nice to get a head start on the weekend, our TA gladly accommodated us.