

Project Guidelines

Each project can be completed alone or in groups of two students. The project topic can be chosen from a list presented during the introduction lecture or it can be proposed by a group. If you decide to propose your own topic, please check with Prof. Kaps if the project is feasible and appropriate for this class.

Project Timeline

- 02/07 Draft Project Specifications Due
- 02/21 Project Specifications Due
- 03/20 – 03/24 Progress Report
- 04/25 Project Paper Draft Due
- 05/02 Project Paper Reviews Due
- 05/05 Project Presentations
- 05/09 Final Project Paper Due

Reference Requirement

Every student must perform a literature search using the INSPEC database and at least one more resource such as IEEE or ACM. These databases can be accessed from home through the GMU library web page. The search should result in a maximum of 10 references to the chosen topic, of which at least one should be a journal paper and one a conference paper.

The purpose of this requirement is twofold: First, every student should be exposed to the use of an extensive on-line data base. Second, one has to get familiar with the research being done in the area of one's project. Both tasks are extremely powerful tools when doing research, but also for design projects in industry.

The reference list should contain references of up to 10 papers (journal articles, conference articles, books, etc.). Grading is not based on the number of references / articles found but on their quality and relevance to your project. Also, please use the formatting guidelines for references recommended by the Bibliography Files for the preparation of papers for IEEE Transactions and Journals. Links to this and other resources can be found on the project page of the class web page.

Project Specifications

The project specification should be an outline of your project. It should provide an introduction and motivation and place the problem in the broader research area. You have to describe in detail the problems/hypotheses you are planning to investigate and list the questions you will be seeking an answer to. The specification should further include a time schedule, including intermediate goals to be achieved by the dates of progress reports. Also, think about possible areas, where

the specification can change depending on the progress of the project. Please include a tentative table of contents of your final report, an updated list of references, and anything else you consider important.

Project Report

Always remember that a good project must go along with a good report. The **final report draft** should not be longer than 15 pages using Times New Roman, Computer Modern or similar font at 11 pt size with reasonable margins not including title page, bibliography and appendix. The report must contain a title page with title, authors, and abstract. Figures have to be included in the text.

The **final report** should follow the IEEE style guidelines. Links to these guidelines and to style files for Microsoft Word and L^AT_EX can be found on the project page of the class web page. Please limit your report to a maximum of 10 pages, two column format, and 10 point font. Submit the report in PDF format via *mymason*.

Here are some hints for the project report:

- The report should begin with the motivation and a clear description of the tasks performed.
- If you use material from articles and other sources e.g. results, formulae, hypothesis, always reference the source.
- Don't cite excessively. The report should be your work and not a collection of citations.
- A suggestion: For reports that contain many mathematical expression and formulae, using L^AT_EX is a good idea. It is installed on all lab machines and freely available for your PC. (Using L^AT_EX is not a requirement.)

Project Reviews

After you submit your project report draft, it will be given to at least two students from this class who are not in your group for review. Each student is required to review two reports. The review is anonymous and follows the procedure established by conferences like Cryptographic Hardware and Embedded Systems (CHES) or IEEE Transactions on Computers. The review form will be available on the project page of the class web page. Please submit the reviews via e-mail to the instructor.

After the reviews are due, they will be forwarded to the members of the respective groups. The names of the reviewers will be erased for anonymity. Once you receive the reviews for your own report you should read them carefully and use the comments to improve your paper. The final grade for the project will not be based on the reviews but on the quality of the final report. However, the reviews will be graded!

Project Presentation

An important part of the project is the presentation. The goal is to present the chosen topic in a way that is understandable to the rest of the class and the instructor. Therefore, in most cases it

is not possible to have the same level of detail in the presentation that you have in the report. The presentation can start out in a tutorial style but must go beyond a top level introduction.

The presentations will be held in conference style sessions with refreshment breaks. You are required to present your paper and attend all sessions. The presentations will be open to the general public.

The time is limited to 15 minutes including time for questions and answers. Please rehearse your presentation at least twice to make sure that you can present within these time constraints.

Project Grading

- Project Specifications (6 points)
- Project Report (20 points)
- Project Reviews (4 points)
- Project Presentation (10 points)