# WELCOME TO THE CS 115 LAB

## LAB WEIGHTS

- The lab makes up 20% of your final CS115 grade
  - 5% for punctual attendance
  - 15% for oral exams

## LAB FORMAT

- You are expected to learn the lab material **before coming to lab** by watching the instructional videos created by Shelby. **The first lab is an exception** and will include an introduction and guidance on how the labs will run.

- Lab time will be used **only for evaluation**, through a **one-on-one oral exam** with your TA.

- The lab session is **not a teaching period**, so questions cannot be asked during the lab itself.

- If you have questions about the lab content, send an email to Nova (scheidtn@uregina.ca) before your scheduled lab.

- **Attendance will be taken at the beginning of the lab.** Once the attendance list has been read, any students arriving afterward will be considered **late** and will **not receive the punctual attendance mark** for that lab.

- Due to the **large number of students**, we are **unable to accommodate attendance in alternate lab sections**. Your assigned lab time is the one you are expected to attend for the entire semester, so please plan your work and extracurricular commitments around your scheduled lab.

## ORAL EXAM DETAILS

- Oral exam questions may cover **UNIX commands**, **theory**, **finding errors in weekly solutions**, and/or **modifying/writing code**.

- Some oral exam questions will be based on the **entire lab exercise or Shelby's videos**. If the lab is not fully completed, you may be at a disadvantage during your oral exam.

- There will be **five oral exams** in total. The final oral exam on **Linked Lists is mandatory**.

- Your final grade will be based on the **best three of the first four oral exams**, plus the **Linked Lists oral exam**.

- The oral exam will be held in a **room near the lab** and will be a **closed-book exam**.

## HOW TO PREPARE FOR THE ORAL EXAM

To do well on the oral exam, we strongly recommend that you:

- Follow Shelby's instructions carefully when completing the code.

- Take your own notes as you work through the material to help you think through the concepts.

- Practice explaining the ideas out loud — to a classmate, a friend, or even to yourself — so you're comfortable talking through your understanding

## Learn to Code—Don't Just Copy Code

Although generative AI tools such as ChatGPT are widely available, they should be used with caution in CS115. Relying on ChatGPT to generate code—especially by copying and pasting solutions—can significantly hinder your learning. Programming is a hands-on skill that can only be developed by writing, testing, debugging, and improving your own code. If you allow AI to do most of the thinking, you may complete an assignment, but you are unlikely to develop the problem-solving skills needed for quizzes, exams, and future programming courses.

Think about learning a second language. Reading or hearing someone else speak it can be helpful, but you only become fluent by practicing it yourself. Programming works the same way. Writing your own code, making mistakes, and fixing them is an important part of the learning process.

Instead of asking ChatGPT to solve the entire problem for you, try using it as a tutor. For example, you could use a prompt like this:

*"Could you act as a tutor for a CS115 class? I want to practice C++ coding without you writing the code for me. Please ask me one step at a time until I get the answer correct. Coach me on what I am doing wrong without giving me the answer. Here are the steps of the program that I need to write: ..."*

Using ChatGPT in this way encourages you to think through the problem, develop your problem-solving skills, and gain the experience you need to become a successful programmer.