

Guidelines for work in a team-of-two in CSC-200

Jim Janossy – March 21, 2018

One of the many unique things about this class is that you can work with a friend on the unit homework assignments. There are eight of them: a USF (Unit Summary Form) and a project for each of the four learning units. Students enrolled in the class create such a team by having both proposed participants e-mail me request the arrangement. Here is how this works and the rules for it.

- 1. Working in a team-of-two is entirely optional.** Students decide for themselves if this is an arrangement they want and can work out.
- 1. I don't form teams, students do.** In order to form it, you need to know the intended team partner well—you are friends. I don't publish the names of people enrolled in the class. If you know a person well enough to work productively with them you certainly know what classes they are taking. If you don't know that, by definition you don't know them well enough for you to work in a team-of-two with them.¹
- 2. Once formed (in Unit 1) a team stays in place for the entire term.** You can't decide to work as a team on some items and individually on others.
- 3. The reflective essay and conclusions work is NOT included in the shared work.** Those assignments must be done individually with no collaboration.
- 4. The team-of-two submits one copy of each USF and project assignment, and they receive the same score on it.** The team can of course revise and resubmit the work based on the feedback I provide with the score.
- 5. The team-of-two must also submit a brief description with each submission describing how they shared the work on it so that they both received full benefit of it.** This can be as simple as a few sentences in the e-mail that conveys the work, or a brief document.
- 6. One grade listing is sent to the team-of-two during most of the term, but they are split into individual copies when full reflective essay and conclusions work scores and feedback are provided.** This is because the essay and the conclusions work must be done on an individual basis.

¹ Research has shown that working productively on a team requires a high level of trust between team members or a highly structured and authoritative manager who can direct team efforts. There is no such manager in an online class where a team is composed only of students; the students must already have a high level of trust in each other. This is why I handle teamwork in this way, and it's optional. See articles by J. Richard Hackman for more background on this aspect of teamwork.