In order to complement the lecture slides with more thorough lecture notes, we have created a set of lecture notes scribed by students taking the class over the past few years and edited by the staff. We have accordingly reduced the number of problem sets and created a scribing requirement, which will also help you understand a topic of your choice in greater depth. As some lecture notes are already mature, while other lectures are new this year, grading will focus on improved quality of the notes (see below).

Each student taking the course for credit must scribe one lecture. Given the size of the class, two or more students may end up scribing for some lectures, in which case you should collaborate to submit one set of scribe notes. Scribe notes should be submitted electronically to via the Stellar website. Please sign up at the course wiki: http://6047.wikispaces.com/Scribing or simply e-mail your preferences to 6047-tas@mit.edu.

Guidelines for scribe notes

Aims: Together, the lecture slides and scribe notes should provide a self-contained narrative of each lecture. This means that the scribe notes can cite, copy, reuse or modify the slides as needed, and are encouraged to include key figures in the scribe notes themselves. They should also pay particular attention to issues that the slides don’t convey well on their own. For example: What is the background and motivation for the problem we are studying? How does each idea presented in the slides relate to the next? Is there an intuitive explanation for the complicated equation on the slide? Are there particular caveats, assumptions or exceptions to a statement? What were some particularly insightful questions and answers that we discussed? Were there any common misunderstandings or points of confusion? Did we stumble upon any good ideas for a final project? Of course, the course staff will be available to discuss or clarify each point. For scribe notes that are already in good shape, think of at least one theoretical problem and one practical (programming/analysis) problem that can apply to the material in each section. Look for recent papers that are relevant in the area, and list them as additional reading for the section.

Resources available: There is already a set of scribe notes you can build upon, which you can find under “2009 Scribe Notes” on the Materials page at http://stellar.mit.edu/S/course/6/fa10/6.047/. Because of the important resource that lectures from last year provide, we expect you to further improve on the lecture notes you’re scribing, if they have already been scribed the previous year. You should read the slides and notes from last year in advance of lecture, and find places that were unclear or lacked detail. The staff may also provide a set of some specific topics that they feel need additional emphasis or detail. You can expand on previous notes based on the information from this year and you can also complete them with additional examples that may be given in class, and work towards a more complete set that can help everyone in the class when studying for the midterm, and serve as a resource when taking on final projects. (Just like you can benefit from the course notes in previous years, the ones you produce will benefit the students in future years of the course.)

Timeline

- By 8PM, the night before the lecture: download the scribe notes and lecture slides from last year and familiarize yourself with the lecture.
- By 2PM, day of lecture: the lecture slides will be posted on the course web site.
- By 8PM, the day after the lecture: a rough draft of your scribe notes is due only if no previous version of the notes exists (that is, the topic is new this year).
- By 8PM, six days after the lecture: final version due (Mon. for Tue. lectures; Wed. for Thu. lectures).

If either of the above deadlines falls on the same day another assignment is due, then you receive an automatic two-day extension on the scribe notes deadline.

First draft: First drafts are required only for new topics this year. For previously-covered topics, we expect that the prior versions of the notes will serve as your first draft. Given the time constraint of slightly over 24 hours, you should use the first draft to remind yourself and others in attendance of the salient points above, noting what will be expanded upon later. While we do not expect the first draft to be highly polished, its usefulness will be taken into account in your scribing grade. We will post the draft immediately so that other students can use it for review, and later send you feedback promptly with suggested enhancements.

Final draft: The final draft should present the lecture material in essay format, which can be used (in conjunction with the slides) as a mostly self-contained reference by you and your classmates for the midterm, final project, and future research.