The Graduate Program
2015 Orientation

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Agenda

- Objective
  - Get you started on course selection and planning for your graduate program

- Topics
  - Online materials
  - MS and PhD program highlights
  - Graduate program administration
  - Course selection
  - Advising and advice
Graduate Program Materials

• Online at
  Department Home → Academics → Graduate Programs

• What’s there
  ♦ Requirements and rules
  ♦ Student progress forms
  ♦ CS course listings (current and historical offerings by semester)
  ♦ Course home pages
  ♦ PRP registration system

... and lots more
MS and PhD programs

- Entering students are enrolled in either the MS or the PhD program
  - little practical significance to this initial classification
  - both degrees possible from either starting point

- To proceed to a PhD requires formal admission to the PhD program
Curriculum Goals

- Accommodate diverse backgrounds

- Focus on research experiences
  - Both for MS and PhD

- Flexibility
  - Enable different specializations and degrees
Graduate Programs Highlights

- Course requirements
- Background requirements
- Admission to PhD program

Department rules are not absolute! You may petition for exemptions.
Course Requirements

M.S. Degree

- Research Topic Courses (6 hrs recommended)
- Background Courses (0 – 6 hrs)
- Breadth Courses (9 hrs)
- Other CS Courses (9 hrs)
  - Background, electives
  - Up to 6 hrs transferred from previous grad work
- Other courses (≤ 12 hrs)
  - Research topic courses
  - Courses outside dept

Total: 30 credit hours

Ph.D. Degree

- Breadth Courses (up to 18 hrs)
- Primary Concentration (9-12 hrs)
  - can use courses taken elsewhere
  - no fixed credit hour requirement

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COMP 991/992: Research Topics

• Independent study with a faculty member

• For PhD intending
  ♦ Show your research potential
  ♦ Explore a research area with or without a research assistantship

• For MS students
  ♦ Explore areas of interest in depth
  ♦ Get research experience
  ♦ COMP 992 (Masters project) gives full time status
COMP 991 and Research Assistantships

• Talk to faculty about available positions and COMP 991 topics
  ♦ You can also propose COMP 991 topics yourself

• Research fair
  ♦ This afternoon
  ♦ Faculty present available RA positions and pitch research topics/areas for COMP 991

• COMP 991 and RA simultaneously
  ♦ Individual objectives for each
Background Requirements

• Background requirements worksheet
  ♦ determine missing background
    • two missing courses is typical
  ♦ make a plan with your adviser

• Ways to make up missing background
  ♦ Complete the missing course
  ♦ complete a more advanced course that subsumes the missing content
  ♦ arrange an independent study (if you are missing a small amount of the content)
    • With credit: variable credit graduate module course
    • Without credit – at the discretion of your adviser / course instructor
Breadth Requirement*

**Category**

- Formal Systems
- Applications

**M.S.**

- one from each

**3 Total**

**Ph.D.**

- at least one from each

**6 Total**

External to CS

You may use grad courses taken elsewhere*

* There are additional rules. Read them!

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Expectation for admission to PhD Program

• During the first two years, students should
  ♦ Get started on research
  ♦ Find a research adviser
  ♦ Demonstrate ability to conduct independent research (e.g. literature survey, analytical & formal thinking, creativity, integration of concepts, etc)
  ♦ Demonstrate writing and oral presentation skills
Demonstrating Research Skills

- Research paper and public presentation
  - Preliminary research presentation (PRP) in the department
    - Evaluated by panel of 3 faculty members
    - May be attempted twice (3rd and 4th semester)
      - forfeit does not count as a failure

OR

- Published paper with external review and public presentation
  - Supervised by a department faculty member
Admission to PhD program

- By vote of full faculty based on consideration of
  - PRP or waiver
  - Research potential and accomplishments in research topic course(s)
    - Adviser testimonial
  - Course grades
    - overall average closer to “H” rather than “P” expected but not required
  - Performance on assistantships and COMP 991 topics
Graduate Program Administration

- **Student Services Manager**
  - Jodie Turnbull
  - your friend and connection to the graduate school

- **Your adviser**
  - Academic adviser initially
  - Research-area adviser or PhD adviser later

- **Graduate Studies Committee**
  - Director of Graduate Studies (me) + 5 faculty members
  - Review individual programs of study

- **Department Registrar**
  - Jodie Turnbull
Course Selection

• Register online
  ♦ [http://connectcarolina.unc.edu](http://connectcarolina.unc.edu)
  ♦ Login with your onyen

• Keep in mind
  ♦ Research focus / research experience
  ♦ Course requirements

• Get advice
  ♦ Academic adviser
  ♦ Fellow students: incoming and returning students
  ♦ Course syllabi and web pages
  ♦ Director of graduate studies: [prins@cs.unc.edu](mailto:prins@cs.unc.edu)
Course selection deadlines!

• Initial registration  
  ♦ By Monday Aug 17 5pm  
    • If you miss this deadline, there is a late fee

• Adding courses  
  ♦ By Monday Aug 24 5pm  
    ♦ You cannot add classes after this date!

• Dropping courses  
  ♦ By Monday Aug 31 with tuition adjustment  
  ♦ By Wednesday Nov 18 without tuition adjustment
Constraints

• Full-time registration
  ♦ 9 hours (typically 3 courses)
  ♦ Required for RA/TA appointees
  ♦ Required for those holding student visas
  ♦ Serious complications if required but not met
Further Description of Graduate Programs

• There are other requirements
  ✷ We’ve just covered a few to keep in mind right now

• More detailed overview of requirements on department website
  ✷ Home → Academics → Graduate Programs

  1. **Condensed description of requirements**
     Graduate Program Requirements 2015

  2. **Verbose description of requirements**
     Master of Science Official Degree Requirements
     Doctor of Philosophy Official Degree Requirements
Announcements

• Graduate students blog at
  http://unc-cs-gradannouncements.blogspot.com/

• Also jobs blog at
  http://unc-cs-gradjobs.blogspot.com/
Advice

• Familiarize yourself with the program requirements and deadlines
  ♦ Pencil in your plans on forms CS-01 (background) and either CS-03 (MS) or CS-06 (PhD) (in “student progress forms” on academics section of department pages)

• Take responsibility for tailoring the program to your interests and goals
  ♦ Start research courses early

• Course selection
  ♦ If unsure, register for >3 classes, attend some lectures, and drop back to final course selection

• Seek out and talk with your colleagues: fellow students, faculty, and staff of the program
Advising

• Meet with your adviser as soon as possible

• Tricky questions, second opinions, adviser unavailable, etc.
  ♦ meet with DGS (me)
    • email prins@cs.unc.edu for meeting time Thu or Fri morning
Questions?
Best wishes for your journey through the program!