

ME 72a, 2010-2011

Grading

The course work will consist almost entirely of a final project. There is no midterm or final exam in the traditional sense. However, the work of the final project will be broken down into a series of tasks that involve milestones and intermediate deliverables, mockups, system analyses, simulations, drawings, and documentation—in addition to the actual physical construction of the project. The various activities and their timing are aimed to keep everyone on track to effectively compete on contest day—March 8, 2010. Additionally, each student must keep a “design notebook” throughout the two quarters. These notebooks will be checked at regular intervals, and a final grade will be assigned to the notebook at the end of each quarter.

The final grade for the first quarter will be computed as:

- 90% for the deliverables related to the final project. This year’s final project deliverables, and their weighting in the overall grading, are as follows (the due dates are tentative, and subject to change):
 - 10%: Problem Definition Assignment (objectives, functions, and constraints)—Friday, Oct. 22
 - 30%: Preliminary Design Review (PDR), including device mock-up built using laser cutter, and development of critical objectives, functions, and design constraints—Friday, Oct. 29
 - 10%: Status reports between PDR and Mobility Demo
 - 40%: Mobility Demonstration: you must demonstrate a working vehicle—Friday, Dec. 3
- 10% for the quality of the design notebook—Friday, Dec. 10

You will receive separate instructions, with more detailed guidelines and grading information, for each of these deliverables. Note that all of the projects are done in teams. The grade assigned to the team on each team-based deliverable is the grade received by all team members. However, the course notebook and some of the intermediate deliverables will come from individual efforts. Thus, there is some room for individual effort to affect the final grade.

The grading scheme during the second quarter will be similar, though there will be a component of the grade that relates directly to your performance in the final contest. However, only about 20% of the final grade in the second quarter will be related to your contest entry's actual performance. The rest of the grade will be based on the quality and creativity of your design process (as evidenced by the various design artifacts that you create throughout the quarter), and the quality of your final project's fabrication and operation.

Grading of design projects is often subjective. We will attempt to be as fair as possible and lay out the grading procedure for each deliverable in a handout which describes the details that make up each deliverable. Students are encouraged to ask questions when the grading procedure is not clear.

Course collaboration policy. We encourage students to discuss the competition and the intermediate milestones with other students and with the class instructors and T.A.s. Group projects by their nature involve collaboration. On individual homework or deliverables, while discussions with other class participants is encouraged, the submitted work should entirely reflect the effort of the individual.