department of Computer engineering

wrap-up session

Spring 2012

Course: CR246 / ECE406 Course name: Digital Design II / Advanced Digital Design

Instructor: James Cavallo

High points of the course (“successes”):

Pedagogy employed: The first half of the course was an overview of VHDL and was taught in a standard lecture format. The second half of the course covered advanced digital design concepts, which were reinforced with a series of projects.

Homework: During the first half of the course, students were given weekly assignments which typically included four or five problems. The problems involved writing VHDL code, building block diagrams based on given VHDL code, and sketching waveforms. For the second half of the course, the students formed groups and completed weekly projects. The projects involved coding, verifying, and implementing circuits based on a block diagram and instructions provided.

Exams and Projects: The students were given a mid-term exam and a final project which included a final paper. The grades on the mid-term exam were very high, perhaps the exam was a bit too easy. Each group did a good job on the final project, one group did poorly on the accompanying paper.

Student Attendance and Performance: One student had attendance problems throughout the semester and did poorly overall. Otherwise, there were very few attendance exceptions and the grades were good.

Other: All course material including the all in class examples, completed homework assignments, solutions, and notes were made available on the Yahoo! group page, which students seemed to appreciate.

Problems encountered:

Textbook: The textbook was a good reference, but I did not like the examples or homework problems the textbook provided and did not use them. I plan to choose another textbook next term.

Assignments: Some students often turned in code with syntax errors, meaning that they likely did not bother to compile it. I addressed the issue part way through the course.

Instruction method: No significant problems relating to my teaching method.

Course prerequisites: The course prerequisites were sufficient.

Student feedback: The student feedback was very positive.

Student Performance: The majority of the students did well, and I was particularly impressed with the final projects. One student did poorly, mostly due to poor attendance.

Grade distribution: The grades were evenly distributed between A and B-, with the exception of one student who received a D.

Action steps

Course Portfolio: No changes recommended.

Change course prerequisites? No changes recommended.

Change course content? I covered more of the VHDL language than necessary, and did not provide sufficient depth in certain VHDL concepts. Will restructure next term.

Change course objectives and/or outcomes? No changes recommended.

Recommendations for further improvement: None.

instructional environment

Please comment on any problems that were encountered because of inadequacies in the classroom environment, lack of supplies, or inadequate service from staff:

No major problems were encountered.

Were the problems brought to the attention of the Dean’s office? N/A

Were the problems corrected in a timely fashion? N/A