EE 476 Student Feedback

Presented by the members of the ECE Student Advisory Council

BE BOUNDLESS

Selected Feedback

Collected from student run EE 476 Discord server

- **“I feel like this class should have EE280 as a prerequisite. I’m really surprised it’s only EE215 and 271…feels very disingenuous to say they only need those 2 to be set up for success.”**
- **“There needs to be a better base for transistor logic in 271 if that is going to be the only prerequisite.”**
- **Most students asked echoed similar statements.**

Selected Feedback (cont.)

- “I really wish there had been some sort of tutorial for the labs. I understand learning through trial and error is an effective learning style, but the learning curve is seriously steep.”
- “I wish there was more of a connection to the labs in class lectures but that’s a common issue and I suppose I’ve seen worse.”

Selected Feedback (cont.)

- "Deadlines should be posted beginning of quarter in syllabus, subject to change of course."
- "...we should have a rubric available for each CAD or at least the CADs overall."
- "TAs need to be trained well. I don't think they really know what to do and communication is poor..."

Selected Feedback (cont.)

- “I really like having someone from industry teach this class that can tell us how things are outside of school.”
- “Really love the content of the class and appreciate the professor’s experience and perspective.”
- “You can tell he really cares and is very open to talk.”

Overheard/Hearsay

Heard from students in the class, not from feedback collection

- **“I don’t think these guys realize how many people want to do VLSI.”**
- **“45 spots still doesn’t seem enough for a class that’s offered only once a year.”**
- **“It would be helpful to explain what a full custom designer does.”**

Overheard/Hearsay

- “They gotta split this class into lecture and lab.”
- “They should just make lab based class.”
- “…brutal workload and hspice being very frustrating since we have no good documentation and not enough resources and help with the tasks they give us.”

Proposed Improvements

- **Grading rubric and deadline transparency**
  - Point breakdown per question as well as amount of points carried for formatting and submission guidelines.
- **Update prerequisites to at least EE 280 or EE 331**
  - Knowing about P-N junctions is needed for the class, strong recommendation to have done transistor circuit analysis .
  - Otherwise, change class content to match prerequisites
    - Better base for transistor logic in 271 if only prerequisite.
- **Hspice in-class walkthroughs for new measurements**
  - First time many students are using this tool and documentation and resources for it are not abundant
  - New measurements are very difficult and time consuming to figure out on our own

Additional Suggestions

- **Separate graduate level spots for the class, similar to EE 477/525 and 478/526.**
  - VLSI classes tend to have a lot of graduate students and making a separate version for them can reduce competitiveness for spots.
  - Also allows grad students to receive 500 level credit for the class.
- **More accessible help from professor, TAs and other students.**
  - Discussion boards (such as Piazza or Ed, not Slack or Teams).
  - Accessible office hours (currently when many students have class).
- **Lecture about the role of full custom IC designers in today's industry and how the concepts we are learning apply to it.**

Final Thoughts

- **Improved transparency from TAs and professor on CAD rubric**
- **Change class content to better match prerequisites.**
  - Less prerequisites allows for greater accessibility, but current content does not match expectations.
- **Assistance offered at times that work for a majority of students.**
- **Use of current industry tools for easier entrance into workforce.**
- **Opportunity to hear about current and trending IC design jobs in industry.**
- **Greater accessibility for students interested in VLSI.**
  - EE477 was full before Nov. 6th.