This document lays out some basic policies we will be following throughout this semester.

1 Class

The class meets every Wednesday from 7:10pm - 9pm. We apologize for the late hour, however this is outside our control. In general each class will focus on discussing a particular topic, which we will look at through the lens of a few papers. Please read the papers before class, this is both so you can provide an appropriate summary and participate in the discussion in class.

This is my first semester as a faculty, and I expect that at times you might find that the class is either progressing too quickly or not quickly enough. You might also want discussion of other topics. In any of these cases you can of course either come to office hours or e-mail me. Beyond this you can also anonymously provide feedback about the class by filling out the form at https://goo.gl/forms/psJhfx9u368JHiIi2. Note, that while the form is restricted to people with NYU accounts, the form itself is anonymous and your username is not recorded.

2 Getting Help

You should primarily rely on Piazza (https://piazza.com/class/jhiq6whluta4aj) for questions about class. You should already have access to Piazza, please e-mail me if this is not the case. You are encouraged to both ask and answer questions on Piazza. Answering questions on Piazza will count towards class participation (see §5). In general the course staff will attempt to answer all questions in a timely manner, however currently Piazza is set up to enforce a 30 minute delay before instructors can answer questions. This is both designed to encourage you to try and research answers by yourself, and to allow other students to provide you with answers. Finally, at times (due to travel or when in an extended meeting) answers from the instructor can take up to 24 hours.

You can also come to office hours to discuss concerns about the class, labs, possible final project topics, etc.. Office hours are listed on the website, and will be held in 60 Fifth Avenue. From time to time we might move office hours or hold additional hours, information about this will be posted on Piazza. If you are unable to make the scheduled office hour times please e-mail the instructors as soon as possible – we will either try to move office hours or set up an alternate appointment for you.

3 Grading

Grades will be computed as follows. In contrast to last year, we do not plan on conducting a midterm this semester.
4 Paper Summaries

You need to read between 1 and 3 papers every week as listed on the course website. Some of the papers are long, and you are not required to work through the proofs. The main thing you need to get from the paper is what problem the paper is trying to address, what the solution looks like and any assumptions the paper relies on. Please send an e-mail to apanda@cs.nyu.edu by noon on Wednesdays with the following information:

- What problem does the paper address?
- What assumptions does the paper make?
- A sketch of the solution proposed by the paper?
- How would you extend the paper? For example what assumptions would you want to weaken, what additional problems might you consider, etc.
- Anything you had trouble understanding in the paper?

For the first four items please include a justification e.g., by referencing particular sections of the paper. For the last point the more information you provide the easier it would be for us to try and clarify problems. You might miss summaries for up to 6 papers without penalty, how you distribute this across classes is up to you.

5 Class Participation

The class meets late in the day, and participation is crucial to actually ensuring that everyone is keeping up and also for making sure that I am not going too fast. As such then we will have grades for participation, which can include both asking or answering questions in class, answering questions on Piazza and coming to office hours.

6 Quizzes

For some of the classes we will have a short (approximately 15 minute) quiz at the end of class. The quizzes might include both multiple choice questions, and questions requiring long form answers. The quizzes themselves will cover topics from the papers for that week, and might include things covered during that class and the previous class. Please e-mail the instructor before class if you will be unable to take the quiz, and we will find a way so you can make up for the missed quiz.
7 Labs

You will have to work on 2 to 4 labs (exact number to be determined), which are significant programming assignments that must be completed independently. We will be using Go for the assignments, and GRPC for communicating between nodes of the distributed systems you write. You will be running your systems using Kubernetes on a VM supplied by us. Lab 0 walks you through the steps to set everything up and get started. Note, that many of you have not used Go in the past, and as such the assignments do not make use of most of the features of Go. However, the ability to learn and use these tools is an essential skill in both industry and academia and we hope you will take this opportunity to learn these tools. We also encourage you to use tools such as \texttt{go fmt} for automatically formatting your code, \texttt{go vet} for identifying some common misuses and \texttt{golint} for linting your code. Additionally you might find it useful to install Go support for your editor, and use tools like \texttt{delve} for debugging. Beyond this GRPC implements support for OpenTracing which can allow you to analyze and understand your application behavior.

8 Project

You are expected to work on a substantial project as a part of this class. For anyone already working on a research project, it is fine to use your research project for this class as long as you can relate it to topics in class. If in doubt please e-mail me or come to office hours. If you are not already working on a project you can choose either an implementation heavy project or a project that surveys a set of papers. We will have a set of potential projects available by the second week of class.

Finally, note that a final project need not be a new research project, it is fine for you to reimplement a system described in some paper, or to extend an existing system. It is also acceptable to compare tradeoffs between multiple systems. In general we want this class to be as inclusive as possible, and will accept a wide range of projects. Please e-mail the instructor if you have trouble finding projects, among other possibilities we have simple extensions to the lab that you can use instead. However, please e-mail me well ahead of the project proposal deadline so there is sufficient time to help.

You are required to submit a proposal for your final project no later than October 17th. The proposal should be about 2–3 pages (in 10 point font, single column, single spaced) and should:

a. Motivate your problem, \textit{i.e.}, explain what problem you are trying to solve and why?

b. Sketch a possible solution you are considering?

c. Present some metrics through which you plan to evaluate your system?

We strongly recommend sending a quick e-mail about your project before you start writing the proposal. Additionally, you will be expected to turn in a final project report (of up to 12 pages) and either present your results or produce a poster (we are still working on which of these two will actually be used).

9 Late Policy

You have 3 late days that can be applied to the labs. Note that late days cannot be applied to the project. Unexcused lateness beyond 3 days will result in a 10% deduction per day. Any lab that is more than 3 days late will receive a 0. We will accommodate late submissions due to medical excuses, and in some cases due to conference travel or deadlines but please contact us sufficiently early to allow us to make a determination about this.
10 Academic Honesty

Please do not cheat in class, it is bad for you, it is bad for us and in general does not help. We reserve the right to use tools like MOSS to ensure that any code that is submitted is yours.

You must cite any external sources that you make use of for an assignment or summary. External sources include but are not limited to previously published articles, blog posts, Stackoverflow or similar sites, conversations with other people, etc. and you must provide citations for all work turned in for this class. This policy is not meant to discourage the use of external sources, instead it just codifies a standard academic practice. However, you are responsible for ensuring that you understand any code or written material you turn in for the class. We reserve the right to ask you to explain part of all of your code for any assignment, and failure to adequately explain this will result in a loss in points.

Finally, we will investigate any suspected academic misconduct, and will report it to the department as requires by GSAS policies.