ITCS 5145 Parallel Computing
Spring 2016 - On-line

Welcome to the on-line version of ITCS 5145 Parallel Computing. As an on-line class, there are no formal lectures. All materials will be posted on Moodle. There is no required textbook. A recommended textbook covers some of the materials. In each week, learning materials will be posted, generally:

- Study guide
- Powerpoint slides of the lectures and sample quiz questions
- One or two videos of the lectures from Fall 2014 NCREN class
- Mini-Quiz
- Assignment instructions (if an assignment that week)
- Saba meeting event

Materials relevant across more than one week are posted at the top of the course page on Moodle.

The *Study Guide* outlines the materials for that week and important things to note and do.

The *Powerpoint Slides* and *Videos* are of the ITCS 4/5145 class taught in Fall 2014 on the NCREN televideo network across North Carolina. There may be very slight differences in the Fall 2015 course, for example actual assignments and updated materials. The videos can be viewed directly from Moodle but the quality is significantly reduced so a direct link to the videos held on a server is also provided. (You will need a fast connection as the files download. A streaming sever is not used.)

In most weeks, there is a short multiple-choice *Mini-Quiz* to take by 11:55 pm Sunday of that week (four questions, time limit 8 minutes). The mini-quizzes are practice and are used to gauge how the class is getting on with the materials, and for attendance to the course. Sample quizzes are posted as Powerpoint sldies. If you do not try a quiz, it is assumed you are not attending that week. There is an attendance policy. The course outline gives full details (see Week 1 Outline Powerpoint slides).

Apart from the short weekly quizzes, there will be two more comprehensive quizzes, each consisting of 40 multiple-choice questions, set in Week 6 and in Week 13. The final, scheduled in the exam week, will be online with both multiple choice questions and questions that require typed answers.

Software and Assignments. This course is a programming course. There are several relatively short programming assignments. You are expected to have your own computer - Windows, Mac, or Linux, desktop or laptop. Much of the programming is done on your computer. Some programming will also be done on a cluster dedicated to parallel programming. The software for doing the assignments on your computer is provided as a VirtualBox Ubuntu virtual machine. VirtualBox will install on Windows, Mac, or Linux although you may use a native Linux installation if you wish. Full installation instructions are provided as a "pre-assignment". The assignments themselves are all individual assignments and you have one or two weeks to complete each one. Very details instructions are provided on each assignment. They are usually due on a Sunday to allow the weekend to complete, but *DO NOT leave the assignments to the day they are due. Rather start them as soon as you can*. If you have software issues with any assignment, first check "Assignment FAQs" to make sure it is not a known issue before contacting the instructor or TA. Also watch for announcements. It is extremely important that you complete the learning tasks each week to progress through the course

Although we will not meet as a group in class, I will hold formal office hours on Wednesday 2 pm to 4 pm, and also each week there will be a Saba meeting, which is Skype-like but operates within Moodle and you do not need an additional account. Please take advantage of the Saba meetings. The time will be given each week and will change to accommodate different student schedules. The Moodle News Forum and email will be used for important time-critical information. Also the Moodle Discussion Forum will be activated to enable everyone to discuss issues.

I look forward to meeting. I very much hope you find the course interesting and learn useful new skills.

Barry Wilkinson

January 4, 2016