

To students considering taking EE460N this Fall semester:

First, welcome back to UT. I hope you enjoyed the semester break, and are doing what we all need to do to stay safe and end this nightmare we are all going through.

If you are considering taking EE460N this semester, I want you to have my perspective, plans, and hopes for the course.

There is no question I strongly prefer teaching in person. I believe it is a much better vehicle for explaining difficult concepts since among other things I can more easily tell when students are not getting it and can adjust my explanations accordingly. Unfortunately, with 60+ students already enrolled in 460N this semester, the risk of serious illness is just too great if we tried to do this on campus. So, like we did in the Fall, we will be using Zoom.

A few things I hope will help. First, all lectures will be recorded and made available to you, so if you need to, you can replay any part of any of my lectures. Hopefully that will help. Second, For the first time in my 54+ years of teaching, I prepared a set of powerpoint slides for each 460N lecture. Normally, I do not like powerpoint at all, but given all the distractions of this on-line mode of teaching, I decided it might be useful during the last ten minutes of each class period to quickly go over a powerpoint presentation of the material. My plan is to spend most of the class teaching with the white board, and the last few minutes reviewing what we have talked about in class via powerpoint. The set of powerpoint lectures from last semester are available on the course website.

In addition, I will have two kinds of office hours. Right after class each Monday and Wednesday, I will stay on Zoom to answer your questions. If you have no questions, you are still welcome to stay connected and just listen to other students' questions and my answers. No way I could do that in my office in EER. 60 students won't fit! But with Zoom, you are free to join or not as you find useful.

Some of you may want to meet privately with me, or if you are in a study group, your study group may want to meet with me as a group. I will try to make myself available as much as possible to do that over Zoom. If you send me an email, I will try to schedule a time that is convenient for us. Please do not hesitate if you find it useful. Taking 460N on-line may be stressful at times, and I want to talk to you if you need to before the stress gets too great ...if that is possible.

Also, I want to encourage students even more than I have in the past to form a study group to study the material of the course, work the problems in the problem sets together. I have found over the years that doing so benefits all students in the study group.

Finally, because we are using Zoom, we are somewhat at the mercy of the internet. Outages may happen, and we will have to deal with them if they do. If you run into any such problems, please contact me or one of my TAs. We will do our best to be accommodating.

So, if you choose to take 460N this spring, I welcome you to my course. I wish we were doing this in person, but it is far beyond my control. I will do my best to help you master the concepts of 460N this semester.

Good luck, and stay safe.

Yale Patt