

# Term Paper Outline

Professor Hossein Saiedian

Due: Sixth Week of the Semester

To prepare an outline, be sure to study the organization of two papers closely related to the topic of your term paper. Set your standards very high and obtain and study papers from highly respected publications (e.g., *IEEE Computer* for introductory papers, *IEEE Transactions on Software Engineering* for more advanced papers). Summarize the paper organization used by the authors of these two papers. This should give you an idea how to organize your term paper and what kind of contents your term paper should include.

Provide a reasonably comprehensive outline of your term paper. Note that this requires and implies that you have read plenty of materials related to the term paper topic and you have spent some time thinking about how to organize your term paper.

Your outline should include the major sections, subsections, and possibly sub-subsections of your term paper. For each of these, briefly describe its objective and how it relates to the previous and the next unit. You should also decide tentatively what figures and tables you will be including and in what section or subsection.

## References, references, references ...

By now you should also have at least 10-15 research papers as definite references for your paper. These should be the papers that you have already read, or you plan to read, and cite in your paper. Include these with your outline. Be sure to follow the *Guidelines for Writing a Term Paper* for formatting requirements. **PLEASE NOTE:** I will not evaluate your proposal if you do not follow the guidelines. Do not underestimate the importance of having appropriate references and properly formatting them. Very often, your references are the only basis for someone to decide if they should even consider your paper. The references will tell how thoroughly you have researched the related area.

## Software Engineering Analogies

While the earlier milestone very much represented the “requirements engineering” phase of preparing your term paper, the outline represents the “architectural engineering” phase. When developing software, if your architecture is sound, stable, cohesive and possesses “conceptual integrity,” the corresponding product will be a good one (easy to implement, changeable, reusable, etc). If the architecture is not good, the corresponding software will be chaotic and very unstable. The same is true in writing your term paper: if you would like to have an easy time “implementing” it (i.e., writing it), make sure you put enough time and efforts into the outline.

If your outline is detailed and shows considerable thinking, it will allow me to provide you with feedback. If it is shallow, very brief, too general, I won't be able to provide useful feedback.