

Spring Final Exam Part 1: Take Home Essay

A Year in Review...



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Per. 3 Mechatronics

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Mechatronics is more than just some advanced engineering class. It's a class that is unlike any other class I've ever had. It has taught me more than just designing and building, it has taught me patience, time management, the meaning of deadlines and other important skills necessary on becoming an engineer. The class and Intro to Engineering has inspired me to become an engineer, more specifically a computer software engineer. Two years ago I had no idea what an engineer did or the slightest idea what the term engineer meant. Now I can tell my friends what it means, although they are not as interested as I am. Everything I learned, designed, discovered, and built contributes to my life.

I find this class to be useful to me because sometimes the topics and lessons are also discussed in my other classes. In the beginning of the year we discussed the types of thinking, later on in my AVID class we discussed lateral and creative thinking as well. While the rest of my class had to read the handout and actually pay attention to the class, I didn't have to. The handout explained the thinking styles and what they were unfortunately it didn't talk about the thinking hats. I felt like a genius. I also remember that some of my classmates were being tutored on how to convert units in Chemistry. They needed help in an area that I understood (not Chemistry though) thanks to the conversion lesson given in class. This was really helpful because that classmate thinks he's the smartest in the class, I however told him, "That's a piece of cake." He was defeated but too proud to ask for any of my help.

While building the hot air balloon, I discovered that if you want to finish on time you need to have better time management of time and self control. It was fun yet stressful. I think the part I enjoyed the most has to be letting the balloon rise in the cold morning air (last year was much colder). The part I despised was building it because there was so much stress that it wouldn't be finished in time. I also think that this project taught me how to manage my stress because when I get stressed I don't feel like last year. I had done the project last year and I knew better what to do.



Working on the Cosmic Ray project was fun. Before the CRMD project, I barely knew what a pion, muon or cosmic ray, was (the words are still new that my word processor thinks it's a misspelled word) and it grabbed my attention. Publishing our findings on the internet was cool. Other people can look at our experiments. My team and I actually conducted an experiment just like the professionals. We created a hypothesis, tested it and got results. I was amazed with this project.

One project that I didn't enjoy had to be the Straw Bridge. I enjoy building with Legos but building a bridge is a bit different. I think I don't like building bridges because it takes a long time build and to see it destroyed is a horrible feeling. Maybe there's another reason behind my fear for building bridges that I haven't discovered yet. I also remember building them last year and the only part I enjoyed was eating the marshmallows the Cal Poly students had brought as building supplies. At least I know what kind of engineer *not* to become, a civil engineer.

The robotics project was interesting. It was fun building it but I have to say that my favorite part had to be giving the presentations. I actually don't mind talking in front of the class, I'm taking Speech class and it has been pretty helpful. So when I went up in front of the class, I was relaxed and ready to get an "A."

All these projects are very useful because they teach a bunch of little lessons. These lessons include time management, organization, stress management, patience, and meeting deadlines. Time management is very important for me because I'm a procrastinator and procrastinators aren't fans of deadlines and time management. This then contributes to me learning how to manage my



stress. I learn a bit more year by year how to keep track of time. I also have to manage my stress because I know that it can feel like you're being eating alive. The feeling is terrible but I'm getting better at making my stress go away. Organization is also useful when it comes to deadlines. If you aren't organized then you might not be able to meet a deadline. Patience is also important because if things don't work out then you need to try again but be calm. I still need to practice when it comes to patience. I have to admit I'm much better than last year. Another important lesson is to take a break when necessary because if you are starting to get angry and tired you can't really work at all. My parents have always told me to stop what I'm doing and take a break. The projects can get people angry because of a deadline that's not being met or a project not turning out right but we need our breaks. Another lesson is to not give up because in the end any project will turn out to be amazing.

I'm also glad that I took this class. Ever since I took Intro to Engineering in my freshman year I was convinced that I wanted to become an engineer. This year in Mechatronics I am still sure that I took it. The class gave me the feel on what it would be like to be an engineer. I know what an engineer does and what is expected from one. I think I can handle being an engineer, a computer software engineer. . It was hard, frustrating, and stressful but it was also very exciting. We had lots of deadlines, there is lots of stress but being able to meet them is wonderful. I like the feeling of accomplishment and that all of the work did pay off and that it wasn't for nothing. I do realize that if this was in real life, as in college or work, it would have cost my team a lot of money or a job which isn't a good thing.

I really enjoyed the challenges in Mechatronics. The challenges were challenging but fun and exciting. In the beginning of the year I thought it was going to be hard for me to understand, the prerequisite was to pass Geometry with a C and I'm barely in Geometry. I know that I complained about many of the homework assignments but they were kind of fun. Throughout this year I learned how to regain my patience, and more about meeting deadlines. I learned that it's okay to ask for help because other people in the class well also need it. I was taught not to give up. I loved being in this

class. Next year I want to still be part of the Endeavour Academy, because I enjoyed constructing the hot air balloon with my team and so much more. I will take the valuable knowledge I learned this year with me when I go to college and become an engineer myself.