

CDA5155/CDA4150 - Spring 2026
Assignment 1
Writing a Paper about a Computer Architecture Survey Topic

Objectives: Learn how to use various tools to develop a paper, including how to create a table, create a figure using a picture editor, capture and display a screen image within a figure, how to create citations, and how to create a list of references at the end of the paper. Also learn how to organize and write a paper.

Your assignment is to write a paper about a computer architecture survey topic. The typical survey topic will describe a particular architectural feature and some of the research about or implementations of that architectural feature. You should write the paper in your own words. The paper must be at least 5 pages in length, have one inch margins, and the left and right margins should be aligned. You should upload a *tar* file that comprising your *tex*, *fig*, *bib*, *image*, and *pdf* files in Canvas before class on April 21. You can create a *tar* file using the command:

```
tar cvf paper.tar <list of files to place in tar file>
```

You should get permission from me that the survey topic is acceptable before you start working on the paper. You will do this by e-mailing me a sentence describing your computer architecture survey topic and a proposed outline of your paper. Note that each student will be required to have a distinct paper topic. Your paper should include the following sections: title, author, abstract, introduction section, conclusions section, bibliography (list of references at the end of the paper), as well as any other sections needed to complete a coherent paper.

Your paper is required to have items that include at least one table, one figure created from the picture editor *xfig*, one figure captured from a screen image, and multiple citations that will appear in a bibliography at the end of the paper. The tables and figures should have captions with numbers and each should be referenced at least once in the text of the paper. Your citations should be for conference papers, journal papers, and/or books. Utilizing these features in your paper will give you appropriate experience that will be useful if you write a MS project, MS thesis, or PhD dissertation. The font size for the text in the paper should be 11. Note that this document should be written as a coherent paper, not just a collection of items that are forced together to meet the requirements.

I have created a link to a slide set in the CDA5155 course web page that goes over how to create a document using *latex* (text formatter), *bibtex* (create references), *xfig* (picture editor), and *import* (screen image capture). For this paper you are **required** to use *latex*, *bibtex*, and *xfig*, but you may use other tools that are comparable to *import*.

I have also made available to you an example of a short paper that I wrote where I used *latex*, *bibtex*, *xfig*, and *import* that are described in the slide set. This example is in the `~whalley/tex` directory. You must use a similar style as shown in the paper in this directory. You can invoke these tools on the *shell.cs.fsu.edu* server.

Your paper will be graded on (1) having the required sections, (2) having the required items, (3) the correctness of the grammar, and (4) the coherency of the writing.

This assignment is not required for CDA4150 students. However, CDA4150 students can receive extra credit if they complete this assignment.

Below are some intermediate deadlines that I will require that you meet that will force you to make progress on your paper throughout the semester. If you do not meet one or more of these deadlines, then there will be a late penalty assessed on the grade of your assignment for each missed deadline.

- (1) February 26: Submit through e-mail a proposed topic for your paper along with a proposed outline of your paper.
- (2) March 24: Submit through e-mail an attachment of a pdf file that contains a portion of your paper that must include the title and author, as well as an initial abstract and introduction. This preliminary version of your paper must be properly formatted with the appropriate margins.
- (3) April 9: Submit through e-mail an attachment of a pdf file that contains all of the March 24 items as well as at least one figure created from a picture editor, one figure created from a screen image, one table, one citation, and at least one reference in the bibliography at the end of the paper. Again, this preliminary version of your paper must be properly formatted with the appropriate margins.