Course Outline

COMP9315
DBMS Implementation
Teaching Period 2 2009

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Course Aims

This course aims to introduce students to the detailed internal structure of relational database management systems (DBMSs) such as Oracle or SQL Server. DBMSs contain a variety of interesting data structures and algorithms that are also potentially useful outside the DBMS context; knowing about them is also a useful way of extending your general programming background.

Relational DBMSs need to deal with a variety of issues: storage structures and management, implementation of relational operations, query optimisation, transactions, concurrency, recovery, security. The course will address all of these, but in varying levels of detail; some will be covered in significant detail, others will be covered relatively briefly.

Unlike some previous offerings of COMP9315, an important aim of this course is to give you a chance to undertake an in-depth exploration the implementation of a *real* DBMS: PostgreSQL. Lectures will discuss the general principles of how DBMSs are implemented, and will also illustrate them with extensive examples from PostgreSQL where possible.

Student Learning Outcomes

After completing this course, students will:

- understand the internal structure and functioning of relational DBMSs
- be able to analyse and tune the performance of data-intensive systems
- be familiar with a variety of programming techniques for large-scale data manipulation
- be familiar with techniques for implementing transactional behaviour and reliable storage
- be able to install and administer the PostgreSQL database management system

In theory, at the end of this course, you should be in a position where you could make contributions to the further development of PostgreSQL. Some of you might even be at the stage where you could build a relational database management system "from scratch".

This course contributes to the development of the following graduate attributes:

Graduate Attribute	Where Acquired
the capacity for analytical and critical thinking and for creative problem solving	Assignments
the ability to engage in independent and reflective learning	Assignments
the skills to locate, evaluate and use relevant information (Information Literacy)	Assignments

Assumed Knowledge

This course assumes that you have a solid understanding of the following topics:

- the C language and programming in C (or C++) (e.g. completed COMP9024 or COMP1927)
- developing applications on RDBMSs (SQL, relational algebra e.g. COMP9311 or COMP3311)
- file organisation/manipulation (Unix open,close,lseek,flock e.g. COMP9024 or COMP1927)

- sorting/searching techniques (quick/merge sorts, binary trees, hash tables e.g. COMP9024 or COMP1927)

If you do not have this prerequisite knowledge, you should reconsider your enrolment in the course.

Course Staff

Contact Details

Staff Name	Role	Email	Phone
John Shepherd	Course Convenor	jas at cse.unsw.edu.au	93856494

Consultations

Staff Name	Day/Time	Location
John Shepherd	Monday 1500-1800	K17-410
John Shepherd	Thursday 1500-1800	K17-410

Course Details

Course Code: COMP9315
Course Title: DBMS Implementation
Units of Credit: 6
Course WebSite: http://www.cse.unsw.edu.au/~cs9315/
Handbook Entry: http://www.handbook.unsw.edu.au/postgraduate/courses/2009/COMP9315.html

Resources for Students

The course web site will provide access to a large range of material for this course:

- all course notes, along with slides and examples from lectures
- a collection of exercises, both theoretical and practical
- PostgreSQL source code and documentation
- a collection of research/survey papers discussing aspects of the syllabus

All of the following books contain useful material for this course:

- Database System Concepts, Silberschatz, Korth, Sudarshan, 5th edition, 2005, McGraw-Hill
- Database Management Systems, Ramakrishnan and Gehrke, 3rd edition, 2003, McGraw-Hill
- Fundamentals of Database Systems, Elmasri and Navathe, 5th edition, 2006, Addison-Wesley
- Database Systems: The Complete Book, Garcia-Molina, Ullman, Widom, 1st edition, 2002, Prentice-Hall
- Database Systems: An Application-Oriented Approach Kifer, Berstein, Lewis, 2nd edition (Complete Version), 2006, Addison-Wesley

There's no need to buy any of them, but if you plan to be seriously involved with databases in the future, any of them would be a useful addition to your professional bookshelf.

If you have access to an earlier edition of any of the above books (one edition less than the stated one), it'll be fine for this course.

All of the lecture examples and assignment work will be done using the PostgreSQL relational database management system. PostgreSQL is a typical example of a full-featured DBMS, and has the added bonuses that (a) it has a powerful extensibility model, and (b) has the source code available.

An inevitable question, when it comes to open-source DBMSs is "Why aren't you using MySQL, since everyone uses it?". The primary reason for not using it is that its source code is built from a collection of disparate components gleaned from a variety of existing open-source systems, thus making its code base somewhat "haphazard". Also annoying is the fact that MySQL often flaunts SQL standards in its default behaviour. The PostgreSQL code base, on the other hand, is the result of coherent development by a relatively small team, and PostgreSQL is, IMHO, technically superior to MySQL.

Note: you will be required to *compile* your own PostgreSQL server from source code to carry out the assignment work. This is easy to do on Linux and Max OSX, but not so straightforward on Windows (as far as I know). Since I have no access to a Windows system, I will not be able to assist students who insist on trying to do their development on that system. If you are working on the assignments at UNSW, you have Linux access by default. If you want to work at home, and currently run Windows, your best option would be to add a Linux partition to your system and run it dual-boot.

PostgreSQL documentation is attached to the course web site, and also available as a downloadable tar-ball. The PostgreSQL manual is actually very good (comprehensive, well-structured) so you don't need to buy a PostgreSQL text. However, if you feel more comfortable with a book, there are references to a range of books

on the PostgreSQL web site.

A general problem with technology textbooks is that they go out-of-date very quickly. Another problem is that many of them provide a brief introduction with some examples, and then give a summary of the manual. In general, I've found that O'Reilly books tend to be better than most. However, you should consider the longevity of any technology book before outlaying the typically high cost for it.

Course Schedule

The following provides a tentative schedule for how the course will run:

No schedule is available (yet)

The assignment deadlines are firm, but I researve the right to change the lecture topics depending on your/my interest as the semester progresses.

Teaching Rationale

Since this course is about the understanding the detailed implementation of a specific technology (relational database management systems), practical experience with the technology is critical to the learning outcomes of the course. Thus, I will spend a lot of time in lectures working through exercises, to illustrate various database techniques and technologies. However, the primary learning focus in this course is the assignment work.

There are no tutorial or laboratory classes in this course, because I recognise that students already have significant demands on their time, and formal classes are not necessarily the best way to force people to learn. However, don't make the mistake of thinking that "no classes" means that you can get by with "no work". I will be providing a exercises and prac work that I expect you will do in your own time. In other words, all of the material that would have been in tutes and labs is still available, but you can interact with it when you like.

Natually, sometimes people will "get stuck" on understanding various aspects of the material, so I run a MessageBoard where you can ask questions, and where I will respond relatively promptly if I'm near a computer at the time. I also run face-to-face consultations each week where you can come if you have a problem that can't be handled easily on the MessageBoard. Many debugging problems fall into this category, because it is often much easier to show me the whole environment where the bug occurs, rather than trying to explain it to me and giving me only partial information.

If there is sufficient demand, I will book a lab and run some consultations in the lab, to assist you with practical issues in managing your PostgreSQL servers.

Teaching Strategies

There are three primary modes of learning for this course: lectures, exercises, assignments.

Lectures/Exercises

Each week there will be three hours of lectures during which theory, exercises and case-studies will be presented. There are two sources of material for lectures: Course Notes and Lecture Slides. The Course Notes are a detailed account of the various topics (although not as detailed as a textbook), and will generally be released before the topic is discussed in lectures. The Lecture Slides will contain a summary of the Course Notes, along with exercises, and I will not make them available until after the lecture, in order to keep the exercises "fresh". You will get maximum benefits from lectures if you read the relevant course notes (or textbook chapters) before attending each lecture.

There will be no tutorials or lab classes in this course, but tutorial-type questions and practical exercises will be made available. You are expected to work through these yourself. Note: none of these are assessable, but I am assuming that you will be interested enough in the topics to actually do them without the need for assessment-based incentives. It is definitely in your own best interest to keep up-to-date with the theory/prac exercises.

Given the absence of tutorials and labs, you **must** make use of (a) the WebCMS MessageBoard, (b) consultations, (c) email direct to me, in order to get your questions answered.

Assignments

In the assignments, you will implement modifications/enhancments to the PostgreSQL DBMS and perform experiments to analyse your implementation. The assignments contribute 30% of the overall mark for this course.

#	Description	Due	Marks
1	Storage Management	Thu 20 Aug (week 5)	12%
2	Query Processing	Thu 01 Oct (week 10)	18%

Assignments are important, *not* for the marks they provide, but for the understanding they give you about the details of DBMS internals. All assignments will be completed *individually*; this means that you should do them

yourself without assistance from others, except for asking advice from the lecturer in this course. As noted above, they are an important vehicle for learning the material in this course. If you don't do them, or simply copy and submit someone else's work, you have wasted a valuable learning opportunity.

Assignments are to be submitted on-line (via WebCMS) before midnight on the due date. Assessment of assignments will be based on how accurately they satisfy the requirements and how good your analysis is. Late submissions will have marks deducted from the maximum achievable mark at the rate of roughly 0.8% of the total mark per hour that they are late (this is equivalent to around 20% per day late).

Assessment

Your final mark in this course will be based on components from the assignment work and the exam. Note that the exam is a hurdle, so that if you fail the exam badly enough, you cannot pass the course. The following formula describes precisely how the mark will be computed and how the hurdle will be enforced:

```
ass1   = mark for assignment 1     (out of 12)
ass2   = mark for assignment 2     (out of 18)
exam   = mark for exam            (out of 100)
okExam = exam > 40             (after scaling)

mark   = ass1 + ass2 + 0.7*exam
grade  = HD|DN|CR|PS  if mark >= 50 && okExam
       = FL           if mark <  50 && okExam
       = UF           if !okExam
```

This semester, the Final Exam will be conducted in the CSE laboratories, and will involve some multiple-choice questions, some long-answer questions and (possibly) some small implementation questions. Satisfactory performance in is needed in order to meet the exam hurdle requirement, where "satisfactory performance" means a score of better than 40% after the exam marks have been scaled.

Academic Honesty and Plagiarism

Plagiarism is defined as "using the words or ideas of others and presenting them as your own". UNSW and CSE treat plagiarism as academic misconduct, which means that it carries penalties as severe as being excluded from further study at UNSW. There are several on-line sources to help you understand what plagiarism is and how it is dealt with at UNSW:

- Learning Centre: Plagiarism and Academic Integrity
- MyUNSW: Plagiarism and Academic Misconduct
- CSE: Addendum to UNSW Plagiarism Guidelines
- CSE: Yellow Form (whose terms you have agreed to)

Make sure that you read and understand these. Ignorance is not accepted as an excuse for plagiarism.

Course Evaluation and Development

This course is evaluated each session using the CATEI system.

In the previous offering of this course, which I did not teach, students primarily noted that (a) there was a lack of assistance in doing the assignments and (b) the DBMS used in assignments (not PostgreSQL) should have been described more in lectures.

As noted above, I provide extensive assistance with course-work via the MessageBoard and consultations, which should address point (a). Since I plan to spend considerable time discussing PostgreSQL in lectures, point (b) should also be addressed.

Other Matters

By the end of this course, we want you to have a deep understanding of how database management systems work. This should help you in a number of ways: (a) make you better database application developers, (b) able to implement non-DBMS code for manipulating large amounts of data. Some of you might also make contributions to open-source DBMS projects, or even develop your own DBMSs.

Enjoy the course! ... *John Shepherd*, July 2009