

# Preparing for the Career Fair

## Part 2: Interview Skills

CS1000 - Explorations in Computer Science

Nilufer Onder  
Department of Computer Science  
Michigan Technological University

# Outline

Overview

Types of Interviews

Before, during, and after the interview

# Overview

- ▶ "The interview gets you the job!"
- ▶ There are three crucial things you should to be successful (listed in no particular order):
  1. Prepare
  2. Prepare
  3. Prepare
- ▶ How can you prepare?
  - ▶ Know what to expect
  - ▶ Know what recruiters expect
  - ▶ Know what to do

# Behavioral Interviews

- ▶ A conversational style interview where questions about professional, academic, and personal experiences are asked
- ▶ Example: Describe a time you had a conflict with a teammate on a project. What did you do? What was the outcome?
- ▶ Use the “STAR” method to cover every aspect the interviewer wants to know

**S**ituation

**T**ask

**A**ction

**R**esult

- ▶ See the example on page 31 of the Career Manual from the University of Michigan  
(<http://career.engin.umich.edu/careermanual.pdf>)

# Technical Interviews

- ▶ Interviewers assess your technical skills through a demonstration of how you solve problems, reach conclusions and whether you incorporate novel thinking into your approach.
- ▶ Please explain the concept of polymorphism in object oriented development
- ▶ After the first year, the following core CS classes provide the essential knowledge
  - Data Structures (CS 2321)
  - Discrete Structures (CS 2311) and Formal Models (CS 3311)
  - Concurrent Programming (CS 3331)
  - Algorithms (CS 4321)

## Before the interview

- ▶ Make sure you are ready from a technical perspective but don't put a lot of emphasis on "studying"  
pay attention to your classes
- ▶ Assess your existing online identity
- ▶ Research the institution thoroughly
- ▶ Prepare questions to ask the interviewer
- ▶ Arrive 15 minutes early to relax and overcome anxiety

# Communication during the interview

- ▶ Be savvy about speaking
  - ▶ Speak clearly at a pace comfortable to understand not too fast, not with long pauses
  - ▶ Avoid the use of filler words, e.g., “um”, “ah”, “like”, “you know”, “I think”
  - ▶ keep your sense of humor but be very careful about cracking jokes
- ▶ Be savvy about nonverbal communication
  - ▶ stand tall
  - ▶ sit up straight
  - ▶ use a firm handshake
  - ▶ keep eye contact
  - ▶ smile

## After the interview

- ▶ If you don't hear back at the specified time frame, follow up
- ▶ Deal with rejection effectively
  - ▶ Don't take it as a personal failure, you'll fall into a loop of negative reinforcement
  - ▶ Take it as a learning experience and find ways to improve
- ▶ When you get an offer
  - ▶ Congratulations!
  - ▶ Explore the pros and cons of accepting the offer  
salary, benefits, vacation time, other offers you might have



## Sources for the slides (website last access: September 13, 2015)

- ▶ 2015 C2C (College to Career) Guidebook  
Career Services ([www.mtu.edu/career/](http://www.mtu.edu/career/))  
Michigan Technological University,  
<http://www.mtu.edu/career/students/guidebook.pdf> ‘
- ▶ 2015-2016 Career Manual,  
Engineering Career Resource Center ([career.engin.umich.edu](http://career.engin.umich.edu)),  
University of Michigan,  
<http://career.engin.umich.edu/careermanual.pdf>.