Practice Exam 2 CS161, Fall 2025

Instructions that will appear on the real exam

• DO NOT OPEN THE EXAM UNTIL YOU ARE INSTRUCTED TO. (But of course you can do what you want with this practice exam :)

- Answer all of the questions as well as you can. You have **one hour.**
- The exam is **non-collaborative**; you must complete it on your own. If you have any clarification questions, please ask the course staff. We cannot provide any hints or help.
- This exam is **closed-book**, except for **up to two double-sided sheets of paper** that you have prepared ahead of time. You can have anything you want written on these sheets of paper.
- Please DO NOT separate pages of your exam. The course staff is not responsible for finding lost pages, and you may not get credit for a problem if it goes missing.
- There are a few pages of extra paper at the back of the exam in case you run out of room on any problem. If you use them, please clearly indicate on the relevant problem page that you have used them, and please clearly label any work on the extra pages.
- Please make sure to sign out of the roster when handing in your completed exam to the teaching team.
- Please do not discuss the exam until after solutions are posted! (Practice exam note: Of course feel free to discuss the practice exam solutions with us any time!)

General Advice

- If you get stuck on a question or a part, move on and come back to it later. The questions on this exam have a wide range of difficulty, and you can do well on the exam even if you don't get a few questions.
- Pay attention to the point values. Don't spend too much time on questions that are not worth a lot of points.
- There are 100 total points on this exam. There are three problems across ten pages.

Name and SUNet ID (please print clearly):

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Honor Code (this will appear on the real exam)

The Honor Code is an undertaking of the Stanford academic community, individually and collectively. Its purpose is to uphold a culture of academic honesty. Students will support this culture of academic honesty by neither giving nor accepting unpermitted academic aid on this examination.

This course is participating in the proctoring pilot overseen by the Academic Integrity Working Group (AIWG), therefore proctors will be present in the exam room. The purpose of this pilot is to determine the efficacy of proctoring and develop effective practices for proctoring in-person exams at Stanford.

Unpermitted Aid on this exam includes but is not limited to the following: collaboration with anyone else; reference materials other than your cheat-sheet (see below); and internet access. (Of course you can do whatever you want on this practice exam; we suggest that you take it in as close to a test environment as you can though.)

Permitted aid on this exam includes a "cheat-sheet:" two double-sided sheets of paper with anything written on them, which you have prepared yourself ahead of time.

_	l acknowledge ar	nd attest tha	t I will abide	by the Honor	Code:	
	[signed]					

Exam Break Sign-out

I pledge that during my exam break:

- I will not bring any paper, electronic devices (phone, smart watch, smart glasses, etc), or aid (permitted or unpermitted) out of or into the exam room.
- I will not communicate with anyone other than the course instructional staff about the content of the exam.

Signature Confirming Honor Code Pledge	Exit Time	Return Time	Proctor Initial	Length (min)

If you are feeling unwell and are not able to complete the exam, please connect with the proctor to discuss options.

Good Luck!

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1. (48 pt.) [Multiple Choice!] For each of the parts below, clearly fill in all of the answers that are true.			
Grading note: In each part below, each of the answers other than "None of the above" are worth points separately. The "None of the above" option on its own is not worth any points, it is there so you can indicate that you intentionally didn't fill in anything. If you fill in both "None of the above" and any other answer, we will ignore your "None of the above". If you don't fill in anything and also don't fill in "None of the above", we will assume you did not complete the problem and you will get a zero. Ambiguously filled-in answers will be marked as incorrect.			
[We are expecting: For each part, clearly fill in answers like this: \blacksquare , or leave them blank like this: \square . No justification is required or will be considered when grading.]			
(a) (12 pt.) Which of the following are true?			
\Box (A) A Red-Black tree storing n items supports INSERT/SEARCH/DELETE in worst-case time $O(\log n).$			
\square (B) A Red-Black tree storing n items is always <i>perfectly</i> balanced (meaning that the height is at most $\lceil \log n \rceil$).			
\square (C) Suppose you build a hash table using a universal hash family, to sto n items with n buckets. If you insert an item x multiple times, it may e up in different buckets each time due to the randomness in the hash family			
\square (D) Let \mathcal{H} be a universal hash family, consisting of functions that maturity a universe \mathcal{U} of size $M > n^2$ down to n buckets. Then for all $h \in \mathcal{H}$, there some $x \in \mathcal{U}$ that collides with $\Omega(n)$ things under h (that is, there are Ω (values of $y \in \mathcal{U}$ with $h(x) = h(y)$).			
☐ (E) None of the above			
(b) (12 pt.) Which of the following always take time $O(n)$?			
\square (A) Using RadixSort to sort n integers between 1 and 2^n with base n .			
☐ (B) Running DFS on an arbitrary graph.			
\square (C) Running BFS on a graph with degree at most 7.			
\square (D) Running in-order traversal on a Binary Search Tree to output the elements in sorted order.			
☐ (E) None of the above.			

(c) (12 pt.) Let $G = (V, E)$ be a directed acyclic graph, and suppose that u , so that there is a directed edge from u to v . Which of the following must be		
	the graph is	w, when we say "run DFS" or "run BFS," we mean on the whole graph. That is, if s disconnected or not strongly connected, and there is nowhere for BFS/DFS to go wen't yet explored all the vertices, start again at an arbitrary vertex until you have am all.
		A) If we were to run DFS on G , the finish time of u must be larger than nish time for v .
		B) Any run of BFS on G must visit u before visiting v .
		C) u and v must be in the same strongly connected component of G .
		(D) If we were to run DFS on G , then v must be a descendant of u in FS tree.
		E) None of the above.
(d) (12 pt.) Which of the following properties are associated with an problem being wicked?		
	\Box (lem.	A) There is not one obvious way to mathematically formalize the prob-
		B) The problem is NP-hard.
☐ (C) When testing your problem to see if it impact real people.		C) When testing your problem to see if it will work well, that test will et real people.
		(D) The problem does not have a "correct" answer, only "better" or se" answers, depending on who you ask.
		E) None of the above.

2. (18 pt.) [True or False and Why?] For each of the parts below, decide whether the statement is true or false. If it is true, give a short explanation (it doesn't need to be a formal proof). If it is false, give a counter-example.

[We are expecting: For each part, your answer (T or F), and either an explanation or a counter-example.]

(a) (9 pt.) Let G = (V, E) be an undirected, unweighted graph. Say we run BFS on G, starting from a node s. Let $t \in V$ so that $t \neq s$.

True or false: Every shortest path from s to t in G appears as a path in the BFS tree.

(b) (9 pt.) Let G = (V, E) be a directed, unweighted graph. Suppose that we run DFS on G, to obtain a DFS tree T. We say that an edge $(u, v) \in E$ is a back edge if u is a descendant of v in T.

True or false: G has a directed cycle if and only if any DFS tree has a back edge.

Practice Exam Note: This question might involve a bit more writing than we'd ask for on the real exam, but we hope that the conceptual difficulty is representative.

3. (34 pt.) [How would you do it? (Short Answers)] For each of the tasks below, say *briefly* how you would accomplish them. You may (and, hint, probably should) use any algorithm we have seen in class. If you slightly modify an algorithm we have seen in class, *very clearly* indicate what the modification would be.

Below, all graphs have n vertices and m edges.

[We are expecting: For each of the tasks below, a short English description clearly describing an algorithm. Your description should be clear enough that a CS161 student who has been keeping up with the course (and the grader) can unambiguously understand your solution. You do not need to write pseudo-code, although you may if you want to. You do not need to justify correctness or the running time.]

(a) (10 pt.) Suppose that G = (V, E) is an unweighted connected graph. Give an algorithm that takes as input G and vertices $s, t, u \in V$, and outputs the fastest way to travel from s to t in the graph, stopping at u along the way. Your algorithm should run in time O(n+m).

- (b) (10 pt.) Design a data structure that can hold n items and supports the following operations, each in time $O(\log n)$:
 - INSERT, SEARCH, and DELETE, as discussed in class
 - FINDMIN: Find the item in the array with the minimum key

(c) (4 pt.) [Practice Exam Note: we'd possibly leave this part off a real exam to keep the length down, but it's a good practice problem.] The same as the previous part (3b), but instead of FINDMIN, your data structure should support SELECT(k) in time $O(\log n)$. Here, SELECT(k) should return the item with the k'th smallest key.

Hint: In case it matters, to maintain the Red-Black tree property (the details of which we didn't cover in class), you only have to do rotations and some other local pointer manipulations. In particular, if you want to modify a RBTree so that each node keeps track of information like its depth (how far it is from the root); height (how far it is from the deepest leaf under it); or size (how many nodes live in the subtree under it), you can claim this without proof.

(d) (10 pt.) Let G = (V, E) be an unweighted, undirected, connected graph. Say that $v \in V$ is disconnecting if removing v (and all the edges that touch it) would disconnect G.

Suppose that your friend ran DFS on G, starting from v, and gave you a pointer to the root of the resulting DFS tree. In time O(1), decide if v is disconnecting. Note that you have access to this DFS tree (including any meta-information left over from the DFS run), but not to G itself.

This is the end of the exam! You can use this page for extra work on any problem. Keep this page attached to the exam packet (whether or not you use it), and if you want extra work on this page to be graded, clearly label which question your extra work is for, and make a note on the problem page itself.

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