

MEMO TO: ECE 4175 students

September 19, 2007

FROM: David Bauer

SUBJECT: Hints on doing well in ECE 4175

General Hints

1. Go to class and take notes
 - Besides explaining theory, John often explains exactly what to do for pieces of the labs, including giving snippets of code.
2. Work with your lab partner
 - I suggest team programming where one person sits at the keyboard and the other partner watches and gives instructions. Switch which person is sitting at the keyboard every lab or every other lab, at least. (Make sure both people have done coding before the first test.) This requires finding a partner who can be in lab at the same time as you.
 - Teams in which one partner writes the code alone tend to have more trouble.
3. Around the second or third lab, go through the template code, making sure that you understand what all the code is doing. Don't worry about the "Configuration Selections" section. It is setting up hardware options for the chip (which QwikBug ignores, anyway).
4. Read the whole project description and check-off sheet before you begin the lab.
 - Usually, there will be a "Reference" section at the top of the project description giving chapters, sections, or even exact figures from the book to look at.
5. Learn how to debug. The first lab is pretty much all about how to use QwikBug – use it!

Reasons to comment code:

1. It gives you an easier way to understand your code after it has been written (for example, when adapting it to a test question or another project).
2. It gives you a separate, logical description of what the program is doing.
3. It can help to highlight simple mistakes, when code doesn't do what the comments say it should.
4. It helps others to understand your code.