Seminar Configurable Systems

Configurable Systems is a seminar for senior students in computer science. It covers scientific literature for software build tools and embedded languages. The main difference to most computer science seminars at Saarland University is the way the seminar is run: instead of giving each student one topic to prepare, we are going to read and to discuss several papers together.

Organization

1. The seminar is taught by Christian Lindig. Email: `lindig@cs.uni-sb.de`, office: 307, building 45. Office hours will be on Monday afternoon and Tuesday morning.

2. Meetings are weekly on Wednesday, 2 pm-4 pm, room 328, building 45. Participation in meetings is mandatory.

3. The seminar is limited to 12 students; seats are given to qualifying students on a first-come, first-serve basis. I have received already email from 20 students showing a general interest in the course. However, typically some students end up not taking the course so there may be hope.

4. Participants will receive 9 credit points for successful participation, plus a grade.

5. The seminar is intended to run for the entire semester, but not beyond.

6. All literature will be in English—no exceptions. Discussions are most likely to be held in German. Individual assignments may be completed in English or German.

7. There are no formal requirements to take the course, however, students are expected to bring the following skills:

   - Having taken a "Proseminar".
   - English reading and basic scientific writing skills in English or German.
   - Practical programming experience with functional and imperative languages.
   - Interest in tools and languages and the willingness to learn new tools and languages.

   If there are more people interested than seats available, I'll use these criteria to make a selection.

How the course is run

The goal of the seminar is twofold: to learn about the technical fields presented in the seminar, and to learn how to read, understand, and criticize scientific literature. What does this mean in practical terms?

1. We will discuss one or two papers per week. I'll hand out the papers at the end of a meeting and expect you to be prepared for the next meeting.

2. For at least one paper per week I expect you to write a one-page summary which is due on Tuesday at noon and will be graded. I also expect you to have questions about the paper.

3. During a meeting I'll ask you to answer specific questions about a paper. To answer these questions you will be working in a group of about 4 to 5 students. We will present and discuss our results at each meeting.

4. Towards the end of the semester, after we have read a number of papers, I like you to try out one of the techniques that we have discussed in a little project. You will present your results in a short talk (20 minutes) and a short final paper (6 pages).

5. The seminar will end with a conference-like presentation of all projects.

How much work is it?

Nine credit points translate into about 10 hours of work per week on average, where two hours are covered by the meeting. I am trying to keep the work load as even as possible but there will be a slight peak towards the end when you are working on your own project. There is also the option to delay the due date of the final paper until past the semester to avoid conflicts with other courses and their tests. However, I strongly advise you not to take more than two more other courses in addition to this course.