Embedded System Design Syllabus

ECEN 5613 – Spring 2020

Lectures: Monday Evenings, 6:30pm-9:00pm, ECCE 1B32
Instructor: Professor McClure, Department of Electrical, Computer, and Energy Engineering
E-mail: Linden.McClure@Colorado.EDU
Instructor Office Hours: TBD, available by Skype and Zoom and Slack
Course Web Site: http://eceee.colorado.edu/~mcclure/index.html Lab: ECEE 1B28
TAs: Dominic Doty, Tanmay Chaturvedi, Vatsal Sheth
TA Office Hours: weekdays, evenings, weekends, and by appointment
Office Hour Schedule: http://eceee.colorado.edu/~mcclure/office_hours.html

Course Description

In this class, the fundamentals of embedded system hardware and firmware design will be explored.

• Processor selection
• Power delivery, decoupling
• Clocks and resets
• Assembly programming
• Embedded C programming
• Incremental development (HW, SW)
• Test equipment / instrumentation (oscopes, multimeters, logic analyzers)
• Debugging techniques
• Data sheets
• Bus cycles, transaction types, timing diagrams, timing analysis
• Memory maps, chip select logic
• Serial interfaces (RS-232, I2C, SPI)
• I/O port pin driver circuits
• In-circuit programming
• Device drivers
• Interrupts and ISR’s
• Memory mapped I/O
• Data conversion (DAC’s, ADC’s)
• Design reviews
• Design trade-offs
• Entrepreneurship
• Passive components

Topics such as embedded processor selection, glue logic, circuit design, circuit layout, circuit debugging, development tools, firmware architecture, firmware design, and firmware debugging will be discussed. The architecture and instruction sets of at least two microcontrollers will be studied, a microcontroller board with peripherals will be built and debugged by each student, and an ARM-based development board will be used for hardware interfacing and firmware development. Students will develop embedded software in C and assembly. The TI MSP432 (ARM Cortex-M4F) microcontroller will also be studied and used in lab assignments. The course will culminate with a significant final project which will extend the base microcontroller board completed earlier in the course. Learning may be supplemented with periodic guest lectures by embedded systems engineers from industry. Depending on the interests of the students, other topics may be covered. This course serves as an excellent preparatory course for the other courses in the Embedded Systems Engineering program, and provides students with key skills that are important for job interviews. This core course also counts for the Embedded Systems Certificate. See the course web site for more information.

Popular aspects of this class include:

• In-depth understanding of processor hardware and firmware fundamentals, including low level device drivers
• Experience in individually developing and debugging a hardware and firmware platform
• Development of laboratory skills, including test equipment, soldering, and prototyping
• Key knowledge and skills that are beneficial for job interviews
• Great foundation for other courses in the embedded systems engineering program
• Self-confidence building, students develop significant personal capabilities during the semester
• Professor has significant industry experience that is incorporated into the course
• Flexible final project, student can pursue a project of their interest independently or in a team
• No final exam

Required Background

Knowledge of and skills in microprocessor architecture and assembly language, microprocessor peripherals, digital design, and the C programming language is a prerequisite for this course. The corresponding CU-Boulder courses include ECEN 2120/2350, ECEN 3100/3350, and ECEN 5813. Although not listed as formal prerequisites, circuits/electronics (ECEN 3250) and computer organization (ECEN 4593) are highly recommended. An understanding of compilers, assemblers, linkers, operating systems, analog design, diodes, transistors, and electromagnetic fields and waves will be useful. Refer to the course FAQ for more information.
Course Context

Embedded systems are involved in almost every facet of modern life. Cell phones, tablets, MP3 players, virtual reality systems, energy conversion systems, answering machines, microwave ovens, televisions, VCRs/DVRs, CD/DVD players, video game consoles, GPS devices, network routers, personal assistants, cameras, music synthesizers, planes, drones/UAVs, spacecraft, boats, and cars all contain embedded processors. Late model cars may contain more than 65 embedded microprocessors, controlling such tasks as antilock braking, traction and stability control, climate control, engine control, entertainment system control, navigation, airbag deployment, etc. The Boeing 777 aircraft contains over 1,200 processors and more than 4 million lines of software! Logic analyzers and digital storage oscilloscopes utilize embedded processors to support real-time operation. Even PCs, which are designed around powerful CPUs, contain embedded systems. Storage drives (hard disk, solid state, CD-RW, DVD+RW, Blu-ray), and external peripherals such as printers, scanners, and other SCSI, SAS, SATA, USB, or IEEE 1394 devices all contain embedded processors. In recent years, microprocessor manufacturers sold on the order of 100 million processors for use as computer CPUs. In comparison, during the same time frame, microprocessor manufacturers sold more than 3 billion embedded processors, primarily consisting of 32-bit, 16-bit, 8-bit, and 4-bit devices. The tremendous number of applications for embedded computing has given rise to high demand for engineers with experience in designing and implementing embedded systems. This course will give students hands-on experience and opportunities for experimentation in this exciting field.
Course Mechanics

This course is meant to be a hands-on type course, giving students a chance to hear and read about embedded system topics, and then put those concepts to work by developing and debugging embedded system hardware and firmware. Student participation in active discussions of the course topics will be expected. Lecture periods will include a short break sometime in the middle. The course grade will be based on class attendance and participation, lab assignments, presentations, quizzes, teamwork, and an embedded system term project. Four structured individual lab assignments will be given. Lectures will be closely integrated with the lab assignments and will be organized to provide students with the information necessary to successfully complete each assignment. Students may work independently or in groups of up to three on the term project. Team members will be expected to share the workload equally. Various homework assignments will be given to guide students through the course material, but most of these will be optional. The instructor and TAs will be available to help students during office hours, by appointment, and by e-mail. Students with questions should send e-mail to the TAs and the instructor to ensure the quickest response time. All e-mail correspondence related to this class should include the text "ESDS20" and a specific subject as the subject line of the message, so that e-mail may be filtered automatically. Course information and documents will be available on the course web site, which will be updated throughout the semester.

This course requires the use of the Zoom conferencing tool which is currently not accessible to users using assistive technology. If you use assistive technology to access the course material, please contact your faculty member immediately to discuss.

Course Organization

The course has several goals. First, it will expose students to the field of embedded systems, and will provide a knowledge foundation which will enable students to pursue subsequent courses in real-time embedded systems software and computer design. Students will become familiar with the associated technical vocabulary and will learn about potential career opportunities in the field of embedded system design. Second, students will have the opportunity to develop an embedded system from the ground up, starting with electronic components and data sheets, and progressing through construction of hardware and implementation of firmware. This will provide students with an opportunity to gain a thorough understanding of the phases of embedded system development and familiarity with hardware and software development and debugging tools. Third, students will be given the opportunity to develop design skills, through well-bounded design assignments as well as open-ended design assignments. Fourth, students will have the opportunity to learn how information gained in multiple other core engineering classes comes together to be applied to real-world design. Fifth, students will be given an opportunity to experience embedded system design in order to prepare for that type of work in industry, and will gain knowledge beneficial for obtaining a job in this field.

The course will be structured around several key lab assignments and the final project. During the first part of the course, students will focus primarily on basic embedded system concepts, and will develop a basic hardware platform consisting of an 8051 microcontroller family derivative and supporting circuitry. At the same time, students will become exposed to processor instruction sets, and learn how to use a cross assembler and simulator to develop code. Students will also get exposure to the ARM architecture and gain experience with using an ARM development board to develop code. During the middle of the course, students will focus more on firmware concepts, and will develop code in C to control the basic hardware. In addition, students will add additional hardware elements to their boards, and will develop the firmware to control this new hardware. During the final weeks of the course, students will focus on significant projects (perhaps with a more advanced processor), and will proceed through design, development, documentation, and presentation of their work. Although the course is scheduled for one evening each week, lectures may not be given on all of these days during the semester; instead, one to three class periods will be used to provide students with additional time to work on their development assignments. In order to give students perspective from multiple viewpoints, class discussions on several topics will be pursued. Guest speakers may discuss embedded systems topics during the semester.
Tentative Syllabus

Note: The following syllabus is tentative, and is provided to give insight into the types of topics to be discussed. However, not all topics will be discussed in the order given or on the dates shown. Adjustments will be made as the course progresses. Lecture may be cancelled for some lab sessions.

**Week 1: January 13** *(Submit Homework #1 this week)*
- Course overview, expectations, logistics, processes, syllabus, FAQ, and prerequisite material.
- Design considerations and requirements, processor selection and tradeoffs.
- Overview of board development process, wire wrapping vs. soldering.
- Microprocessor/microcontroller architectures and instruction sets, busses.
- Lab #1 topics. Design cycle, planning a development project, derivation of requirements, tradeoffs.
- Work on software elements of Lab #1 this week.

**Week 2: January 20** *(Martin Luther King, Jr. Holiday, Finish Lab #1 Part 1 elements this week)*
- CU Holiday, no lecture on January 20th. Work on homework and Part 1 Elements of Lab #1.

**Week 3: January 27** *(Finish Lab #1 Part 2 elements this week)*
- Lab #1 & #2 topics. Board layout considerations, signal integrity (noise, crosstalk, etc.).
- PCB power delivery, voltage regulators, decoupling. Thermal considerations, heat sinks. EMI, EMC.
- Oscillators and reset circuits. Microprocessor supervisory circuits, watchdog timers. Data sheets.
- Development and debugging strategies and techniques. Logic probes, voltmeters and oscilloscopes.
- Schematics and wiring diagrams, recommended practices, CAD tools. CU Honor Code.
- Parts kits. Introduction to Embedded Systems Laboratory, equipment, and soldering.

**Week 4: February 3** *(Lab #1 Part 3 elements and submission due this week)*
- Lab #2 topics. Core component circuitry (µP, ROM, RAM).
- Interfacing different logic families, fanout, signal buffering, noise margins, pullups/pulldowns.
- Microcontroller peripherals interfacing. Timing diagrams, program read, data read, data write.
- Debugging using logic analyzers, state and timing information.
- Timing requirements, propagation delay, setup, hold, rise/fall times, timing analysis. Clock skew.
- Memory maps, decoding logic, glue logic, programmable logic. Memory technology.
- Switch debouncing in hardware and firmware, keypad decoding. Timers/counters.

**Week 5: February 10** *(Finish Lab #2 Part 1 Elements this week)*
- Lab #2 topics. Intro to Atmel AT89C51RC2. C programming review? Class eval.
- Serial communication, RS-232/485, line drivers/receivers, charge pumps, terminal emulation, USB.
- ARM overview. KiCad? Work on current topics presentations? Student/professor meetings.

**Week 6: February 17** *(Lab #2 Part 2 elements and submission due this week)*
- Lab #3 topics. Cross-assemblers, cross-compilers, SDCC, makefiles, IDEs, software development.
- C variables, bit operations, pointers. Interrupts in C. Interfacing C and assembly.

**Week 7: February 24** *(Finish Lab #3 Part 1 elements this week)*
- No lecture. Debug session. Work on Lab #3 and final project planning.

**Week 8: March 2** *(Finish Lab #3 Part 2 elements this week)*
- No lecture. Debug session. Work on Lab #3 and final project PDR preparation.

**Week 9: March 9** *(PDR presentations, Lab #3 Part 3 elements and submission due this week)*
- Final Project Design Review (PDR). Each project team presents development plan and milestones.
- Lab #4 topics. EEPROMs and synchronous serial communication (I²C, SPI, etc.). LCDs.
Week 10: March 16  (Finish Lab #4 Part 1 elements this week)
- Final Project Design Review (PDR) – remaining presentations.
- Lab #4 topics - LCDs. Work on Lab #4 and final project.
- Passive components. Designing with tolerances and margins.

Week 11: March 23  (Spring Break)
- No lecture - CU holiday, class cancelled.

Week 12: March 30  (Finish Lab #4 Part 2 elements this week)
- Analog-to-Digital Converters (ADCs), Digital-to-Analog Converters (DACs).
- Code review exercise. Firmware design, main loop/interrupt driven designs, device drivers.
- Work on final projects. Debug session?

Week 13: April 6  (Lab #4 Part 3 elements and submission due this week)
- TBD. Work on final projects. Student/professor meetings. Guest Speaker?

Week 14: April 13
- No Lecture.
- Work on final projects. Student/professor meetings.

Week 15: April 20
- Final course lecture for the semester. Work on final projects. Course evaluations (on-line FCQs).

Week 16: April 27  (Submit final project demo, report, files, tool kits, logic analyzers, IOUs)
- Final project presentations and demo.
- Last Class. Final project reports, presentations, semester wrap-up. Review of vocabulary.

Week 17: No Final Exam

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<td>Lab #1: Basic hardware, SPLD, assembly, simulator</td>
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<td>Lab #2: Decode logic, NVSRAM, timer ISRs, RS-232</td>
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<td>Lab #3: SRAM, UART, assembly, intro to embedded C</td>
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<td>PDR: PowerPoint Submission</td>
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<td>Lab #4: EEPROM, LCD, and C programming</td>
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Lab assignments will be scored per the CU grading standards. Assignments which are not completed (signatures obtained) by the Signature Due Date or which are not submitted by the Submission Due Date will be late and will receive a late penalty deduction. The final project may not be submitted late. Assignments will not be accepted after their Cutoff Date; however, incomplete work will be considered so it is in the student’s best interest to submit by the cutoff date any work they have done.

Late penalty deduction:
- Up to one day late: up to one letter grade [e.g. An ‘A-’ is reduced to a ‘B-’]
- From two days late until the cutoff date: up to two letter grades

The date that the student submits the code they use for signoffs will be the date used to establish late penalties. Signatures will be considered done as of the date the software files were submitted for signoff. However, if the software files are further updated by the student, the signature date will be updated.

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Course Requirements

- University policies on academic integrity ([http://www.colorado.edu/policies/student-honor-code-policy](http://www.colorado.edu/policies/student-honor-code-policy)) will be followed. **Students must understand the CU Honor Code.** Cheating and plagiarism will not be tolerated. Credit must be clearly given for code or hardware designs legally borrowed from others. Submission of project work performed previously or concurrently for a different course constitutes cheating, if instructor consent is not obtained prior to submission. **When in doubt, ask the instructor for clarification.** The ESE Program policy states: **“Students found responsible for any violation by our faculty and the Honor Code Office will earn a C- or F in the course.”**

- Students are expected to keep up with the course material. If you get confused or start to fall behind, attend office hours or schedule an appointment with the professor or TA as soon as possible. The goal of the course is to allow you to learn the material, and not to stress you out. However, the longer you are confused, the more material you miss, so try to stay on top of things. It is fine to ask lots of questions, as long as you are putting in the effort to learn the material.

- It is the student's responsibility to obtain materials handed out in a lecture which the student missed.

- You are responsible for any damage or missing equipment resulting from your negligence.

- Treat all lab equipment with care, as it is expensive. If the equipment is damaged, we may not be able to afford replacements. No equipment may be removed from the lab.

- All homework and reports must be legibly written or typed. Sloppy work will receive deductions.

- All programming code must be well structured/commented. Code must be robust (error handling). Code and comment quality will be evaluated as part of each assignment's grading.

- Schematics must be well drawn and should follow the guidelines to be presented in class.

- When requesting help from the TA or the instructor, students must present a complete and accurate schematic of their circuitry. Update schematics as you add or change circuitry.

- An electronic copy (and optionally a hard copy) of each final project report including schematics and source code will be submitted for grading and will become the property of the instructor.

- Students are expected to complete assignments on time. Lab assignments will be accepted late, but the grade earned on the assignment will be reduced. Since each lab depends on the results from the previous labs, students should be careful not to fall behind. Students are responsible for getting the TA or instructor to sign off on their lab work prior to the due date. Due to limited lab station availability, it is wise to plan ahead. Consider scheduling an appointment with the TA.

- Students should maintain a design engineer's notebook. This notebook should contain class notes, lab notes, designs, and references. This notebook should be legible and should be written in ink.

- Students are expected to participate in class discussions of course topics. In addition, students are expected to assist other students in understanding course material and assignments. Students who are experts in a particular area of embedded systems may choose to give a short presentation to the class as part of their class participation grade.

- In lieu of a required text, students should expect to spend some amount of money to purchase supplies for the class, including hardware, tools, integrated circuits, discrete components, and other parts for the final project.

- Students will be expected to obtain data sheets from the course web site or various manufacturers' web sites, and if necessary print them out at CU, their place of work, or at home.

- If you must miss a lecture, please let the instructor know in advance, if possible.

- **Students must regularly maintain a backup of their files (schematics, source code, reports) on a physically separate backup medium (like a networked drive, USB drive key, USB hard drive, GitHub private repository, etc.) so that access to their files is retained even if their primary computer or storage drive suffers a failure.**
Academic Integrity - Honor Code

All students enrolled in a University of Colorado Boulder course are responsible for knowing and adhering to the Honor Code. Violations of the policy may include: plagiarism, cheating, fabrication, lying, bribery, threat, unauthorized access to academic materials, clicker fraud, submitting the same or similar work in more than one course without permission from all course instructors involved, and aiding academic dishonesty. All incidents of academic misconduct will be reported to the Honor Code (honor@colorado.edu; 303-492-5550). Students who are found responsible for violating the academic integrity policy will be subject to nonacademic sanctions from the Honor Code as well as academic sanctions from the faculty member. Additional information regarding the Honor Code academic integrity policy can be found at the Honor Code Office website.

ESE PROGRAM POLICY: Any suspected violations of the Honor Code will be submitted to our Office of Student Conduct and Conflict Resolution (OSCCR). **Students found responsible by our faculty for violating the cheating policy of the Honor Code will earn an automatic F in the course.** A second such violation will result in expulsion from the ESE program and courses. Further non-academic sanctions may be rendered by the OSCCR. We take these issues seriously and have a responsibility to all students who uphold the Honor Code, and to the highest industry standards for which we are preparing students. If you have any questions whatsoever regarding what collaboration is permissible in the course, consult your instructor directly before proceeding. Sharing of knowledge between students is highly encouraged; however, each student is expected to independently create and implement their own project files, and submit original content for all assignments and exams. Students may find that they are able to leverage firmware designs from books, magazines, the internet, or their work environments; however, in these cases, students are expected and required to credit the source of the information clearly and completely. Again, by default, you are expected to turn in your own original work and cite any and all portions you did not create. All aspects of the Honor Code apply.

Academic Accommodations

If you qualify for accommodations because of a disability, please submit your accommodation letter from Disability Services to your faculty member in a timely manner so that your needs can be addressed. Disability Services determines accommodations based on documented disabilities in the academic environment. Information on requesting accommodations is located on the Disability Services website. Contact Disability Services at 303-492-8671 or dsinfo@colorado.edu for further assistance. If you have a temporary medical condition or injury, see Temporary Medical Conditions under the Students tab on the Disability Services website.

This course requires the use of the Zoom conferencing tool which is currently not accessible to users using assistive technology. If you use assistive technology to access the course material, please contact your faculty member immediately to discuss.

Religious Holidays

Every effort will be made to reasonably and fairly deal with students who have serious religious observances that conflict with mandatory lectures, scheduled exams, assignments, etc. Please notify your professor well in advance, so that there is time to make adequate arrangements. See policy details at http://www.colorado.edu/policies/observance-religious-holidays-and-absences-classes-andor-exams
**Classroom Behavior**

Students and faculty each have responsibility for maintaining an appropriate learning environment. Those who fail to adhere to such behavioral standards may be subject to discipline. Professional courtesy and sensitivity are especially important with respect to individuals and topics dealing with differences of race, color, culture, religion, creed, politics, veteran’s status, sexual orientation, gender, gender identity and gender expression, age, disability, and nationalities. Class rosters are provided to the instructor with the student's legal name. I will gladly honor your request to address you by an alternate name or gender pronoun. Please advise me of this preference early in the semester so that I may make appropriate changes to my records.


**Sexual Misconduct, Misconduct, Discrimination, Harassment, and/or Related Retaliation**

The University of Colorado Boulder (CU Boulder) is committed to fostering a positive and welcoming learning, working, and living environment. CU Boulder will not tolerate acts of sexual misconduct (including sexual assault, exploitation, harassment, dating or domestic violence, and stalking), discrimination, and harassment by members of our community. Individuals who believe they have been subject to misconduct or retaliatory actions for reporting a concern should contact the Office of Institutional Equity and Compliance (OIEC) at 303-492-2127 or cureport@colorado.edu. Information about the OIEC, university policies, anonymous reporting, and the campus resources can be found on the [OIEC website](http://www.colorado.edu/institutionalequity/).

Please know that faculty and instructors have a responsibility to inform OIEC when made aware of incidents of sexual misconduct, discrimination, harassment and/or related retaliation, to ensure that individuals impacted receive information about options for reporting and support resources.
Grading

Expectations for students will be high. Student performance in this class will be compared to student performance across ECE undergraduate and graduate classes. A grade of 'A' will be reserved for students who have delivered outstanding work and who have clearly demonstrated a superior mastery of the course material. The majority of each student's course grade will be determined by the quality of the hardware and firmware assignments and the final project completed by the student during the semester. The rough weighting of each course element is shown below:

- 15% Lab #1 and Lab #2
- 20-25% Lab #3
- 20-25% Lab #4
- 28-38% Final Project (including PDR)
- 0-10% Quizzes/Assignments, Lab Practical, Student Current Topics Presentations
- 7% Class Participation/Attendance/Punctuality, Attitude, Teamwork, Effort/Subjective

The normal CU grading standards as shown below will be applied to this class. See the following site for more information: [http://ecee.colorado.edu/~mcclure/grading.html](http://ecee.colorado.edu/~mcclure/grading.html)

- A Superior, outstanding
- A- Above average
- B+ Average, has adequately met course requirements
- B- Below average
- C+ Minimum passing grade
- C- Fail, has not met course requirements

References

The course will be taught using technical application notes, data sheets, and technical articles. For those students who desire additional references, a list is provided below. In addition, a tremendous amount of useful information can be found on the Internet. Documentation and links to useful web sites will be available on the course web site. A copy of the following books may be available in the Engineering Library on the CU-Boulder campus.