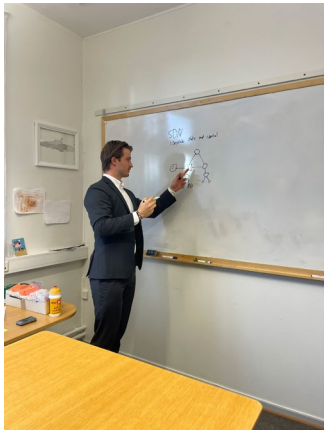
About the Oral Exam

Grading

- Oral exam: letter grade; 60% of the total grade → will dominate your final grade



Petter, Martin and William during the exam

Oral Examination

- Examination will take physically:
  - A263 – my office. Close to the lab rooms
  - Please come to the room 5 minutes earlier
  - Chairs will be available
  - Additional censor will be part of the examination (Trond/Urooj)
  - Duration: (max) 25 minutes
  - Usage of whiteboard possible!

- Course of events
  - (up to) 10 minutes own summary of the course
    - No slides!
    - Balance between broadness and deepness
  - (at least) 15 minutes discussions about the presented summary and other topics

Oral Exams: Tips & Guides

Tips & Guides - Oral Exams - Hamilton College

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GIVE IT YOUR BEST DELIVERY

- DON'T PANIC
- The professor is on your side:
  - They want to give you an A+
  - Just give them an excuse to do it!
- Don't be nervous: A solid structure and plenty of practice go a long way in building your confidence.
- Create rapport with your professor.
  - Visit during office hours with questions and concerns.
  - Become a familiar face rather than just a name on a list of names.
  - Also, knowing your professor may help you gear your answers toward his or her preferences — Professors REALLY love that!

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Mock Exam

- Examinee: Thomas
- Examiner:
- Co-Sensor:

- Course of events
  - Own summary of the course: 10 minutes (5 minutes today)
  - Brief feedback regarding the summary
  - Questions about the summary and beyond: 15 minutes (5-10 minutes today)

RUBIC

NTNU | Norwegian University of Science and Technology

About this Rubic

- This is the first time I’m using a detailed rubric for this oral exam.
- The goal is to help you understand what the exam looks like and how you’ll be assessed.
- The rubric shows the main lines / typical expectations — individual questions and follow-ups may vary.

Exam Format

- Total: ~25 min (varies)
- 10 min student summary on the whiteboard: You present a structured overview of the course topics and key ideas.

- Discussion / probing questions: We go deeper into your summary and also ask about relevant topics you didn’t mention.

- Sources: readings, slides, and lab exercises.

What we assess (a strong performance)

- Structure & prioritization (especially in the summary)
  - You organize your overview clearly (e.g., by layers, by end-to-end flow, or by big ideas).
  - You prioritize important concepts rather than listing details randomly.
  - Your whiteboard is used to make structure visible (stack diagrams, flows, bottlenecks).
- Breadth + depth (across both parts)
  - You can give a broad overview and zoom into details when asked.
  - You can explain mechanisms (not just name them).
- Reasoning & trade-offs (“why/how”)
  - You can answer why a protocol/mechanism exists and what problem it solves.
  - You can discuss trade-offs (e.g., performance vs reliability, overhead vs latency).
- Integration across layers (not siloed)
  - You connect concepts across topics (application ↔ transport ↔ network ↔ link ↔ security) .
  - You can relate symptoms to causes (e.g., “page load slow” → RTT/loss/TCP behavior/DNS).
- Evidence from labs/examples
  - You can support explanations using labs, Wireshark traces, tools, or concrete examples.
  - You can interpret simple observations (e.g., sequence numbers, RTT effects, retransmissions).

Minimum pass requirement (core understanding)

To pass, you must show a coherent understanding and avoid major misconceptions in most of these core areas:

- Application (3 lecture units)
- Transport (3 lecture units)
- Network (3 lecture units / control and data plane)
- Link (1 lecture unit)
- Security (2 lecture units)

- You don’t need perfect recall, but you should not have a fundamentally wrong model of the above.

Grade anchors

- A (Excellent)
  - Summary: clear, well-prioritized, course-wide overview.
  - Discussion: accurate depth under probing in multiple areas.
  - Integration: regularly connects layers/topics (not isolated answers).
  - Reasoning: explains why/how and trade-offs.
  - Small detail gaps (1–2) are OK if overall mastery is strong.
- B (Very good) — one consistent limitation: Strong overall, but one recurring limitation, for example:
  - Depth: you often know the big idea but blank on details under probing, or
  - Integration: answers are correct but mostly separate ("topic-by-topic" without connections).
  - No major misconceptions.
- C (Good) — one major weakness, compensated by strength elsewhere
  - One part is clearly below expected (either summary or probing depth),
  - but the other part is strong enough to demonstrate solid overall understanding.
  - Integration/reasoning may be inconsistent, but core ideas are mostly correct.
- D (Sufficient / pass) — noticeable weaknesses across both parts
  - Weaknesses in structure, accuracy, depth, or reasoning appear in both summary and discussion.
  - Limited integration; you often need guidance to reach correct explanations.
  - Some confusion is OK if you can recover with prompts and fix misunderstandings.
- E (Minimum pass) — fragile understanding
  - You can demonstrate some genuine understanding, but it is incomplete.
  - Mostly high-level; relies heavily on prompting.
  - Limited ability to explain mechanisms or answer follow-up "why/how" questions.
- F (Fail)
  - No coherent understanding of core course ideas.
  - Major misconceptions persist and you cannot repair reasoning even with guidance.