

A Thesis Presented to
The Faculty of Alfred University



by

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In Partial Fulfillment of
the Requirements for
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Under the Supervision of:

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Background

At Lahdur, we believe that peer communication and collaboration are paramount to navigating the many challenges presented by higher education.

This honors thesis is a website that was cooperatively developed by myself (Eric) and a buddy (Kyle). The idea spawned as we were walking to the gym one day. Kyle and I had been brainstorming ideas for websites/applications we could create that were not only useful but would be adopted by the masses. We eventually reached the subject of homework help. As far as we know, when a student is stuck on a problem or filled with confusion there are the following options:

1) Read the textbook/notes

The source of all class material; has all the answers but makes no effort to help you.

2) Ask your professor

This is what many students do, however it involves navigating around a schedule and thinking in terms of someone who is much smarter than you. Sometimes it helps to learn from someone that thinks in the same language you do.

3) Ask a peer/TA/SI

Peers are instrumental in supporting and guiding each other. Numerous professors preach to us on the importance of homework groups and utilizing supplemental instruction/teachers' assistants.

4) Consult the internet

Search engines are a student's best friend. Within seconds, we can find the answers to almost anything.

Without a doubt, the internet has fundamentally changed the way students learn. Limitless resources online allow us to now teach ourselves. Used as intended, textbook solution manuals are important in allowing us to check our work. However, the plentiful amount of answers scattered online creates a prevalent tendency for students to simply copy them down. We sometimes get sluggish and sacrifice learning the material for completing our assignments faster. In college, this is not prohibited but ends up hurting the student in the long run.

Rather than using the internet to do the work for us, we believe that the knowledge needed to understand course material lies right here on campus. As a primary means of reinforced learning, our peers play a pivotal role. From personal experience, the average cooperative homework group consists of less than five people, yet there are multiples more who are also in the class or have taken it before. With the existence of an organized virtual environment that allows for questions and input from students, students of our school can be a click away from the most valuable resource of all, each other.

The product

The purpose of Lahdur is to allow students to tutor/mentor one another. This is accomplished by asking and answering questions about classwork or posting reviews/opinions on completed classes.

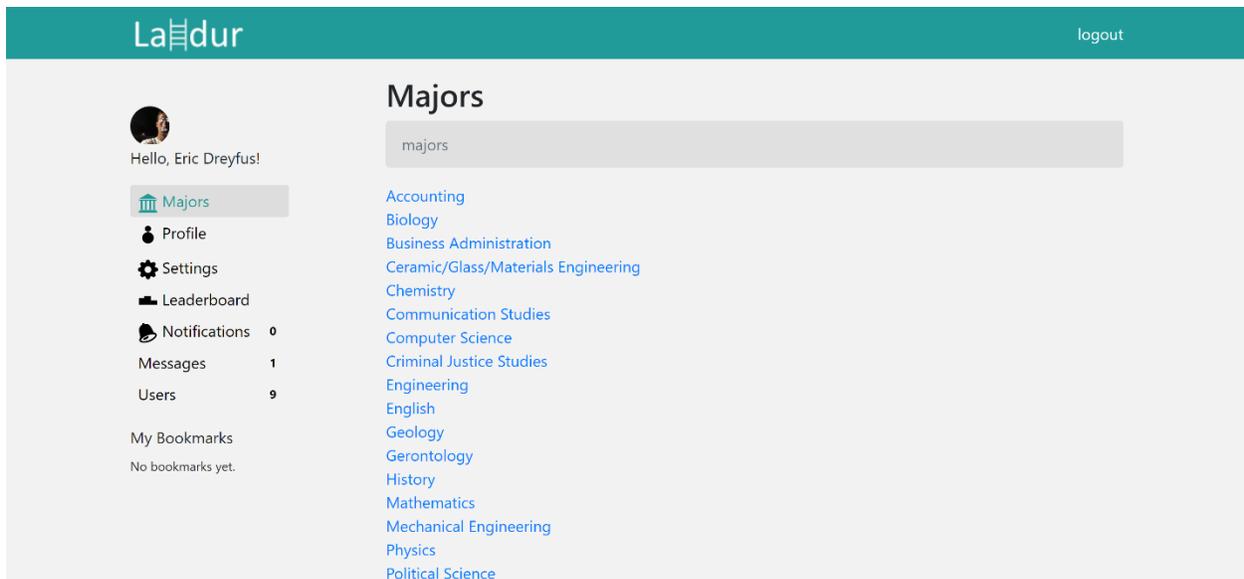
We the creators hope this website is not only useful to the population but everlasting in online presence. Whether it be used as a forum or a question and answer board, Lahdur exists to encourage communication and constructive collaboration among peers. Below is a screen shot of the homepage.



Since the nature of this project does not yield any research to discuss, the rest of this summary will be a brief walkthrough with snapshots of Lahdur, which is also mentioned as points in the FAQ section of the website. At this point, we highly recommend visiting Lahdur yourself and come back here later.

Upon navigating to URL, the user will be greeted by nothing other than a big ladder. To access any more content within the website, they will be required to create an account, or login if already registered. We the creators originally implemented a condition that required the user to have an @alfred.edu email address but have since opened access to anyone who wants to sign up. From a site administrator's point of view, all active accounts are listed on a dedicated page for control purposes. This may raise questions about privacy, which we have addressed. By law, all websites that collect information are required to create a privacy policy. In terms of information, one only needs a name and email address to register.

Once logged in, you will see a navigation pane on the left side of the page, and a list of majors in the center.



2: Landing page with all majors offered

We tried to make the final product as user friendly as possible, with the main functionality consisting of three progressively specific layers that are sequentially navigated by the user. From top to bottom, the user picks a major then class that the post/question will appear under. This method places each post in a package that allows others to readily access it.

LaHdur logout



Hello, Eric Dreyfus!

-  Majors
-  Profile
-  Settings
-  Leaderboard
-  Notifications 0
-  Messages 1
-  Users 9
-
-  My Bookmarks
- No bookmarks yet.

Mathematics

[majors](#) / Mathematics

- [MATH 101 - Communicating with Numbers](#)
- [MATH 102 - Mathematics for Teachers: Grades K-6](#)
- [MATH 104 - Quantitative Methods for Business](#)
- [MATH 151 - Calculus I](#)
- [MATH 152 - Calculus II](#)
- [MATH 200 - Topics in Mathematics](#)
- [MATH 250 - Independent Study](#)
- [MATH 253 - Calculus III](#)
- [MATH 271 - Differential Equations](#)
- [MATH 281 - Foundations of Higher Mathematics](#)
- [MATH 331 - Mathematics from a Historical Perspective](#)
- [MATH 351 - Introduction to Operations Research](#)
- [MATH 371 - Linear Algebra](#)
- [MATH 381 - Mathematical Statistics](#)
- [MATH 382 - Actuarial Exam Preparation](#)
- [MATH 391 - Statistical Methods](#)
- [MATH 400 - Topics in Mathematics](#)

3: Each major contains a list of all classes offered

LaHdur logout



Hello, Eric Dreyfus!

-  Majors
-  Profile
-  Settings
-  Leaderboard
-  Notifications 0
-  Messages 1
-  Users 9
-
-  My Bookmarks
- No bookmarks yet.

Calculus III

[majors](#) / [Mathematics](#) / MATH 253

1
1 - 1 of 1 results



[ericdreyfus](#)
just now

Status: [Info](#)



You get the joke??

 0
  0
  0
  1

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4: Posting on a class page

Once posted, the question or statement will be displayed on the page for others to respond to or comment on. You can post pictures, but not respond with them. If there are any responses to the user, they will get a notification on the homepage.

As a method of moderating posting, a point system has been integrated that also has a leaderboard component. New posts and comments award the user one point each, with upvotes adding three. At the very least this will help other users decide whether a post is honest or accurate. The leaderboard shows the top three users on the website according to how many points they have. We have also added a flagging feature that allows users to help administrators monitor and delete unwanted content.

Hello, Eric Dreyfus!

- Majors
- Profile
- Settings
- Leaderboard
- Notifications 0
- Messages 1
- Users 9

My Bookmarks
No bookmarks yet.

Leaderboard

- maddison
points: 10
- kylemccullen
points: 4
- sarhuzyk8
points: 4

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5: Leaderboard

Moving to the bottom of the navigation pane, there is an area for bookmarks that allows the user to add class pages that are frequently visited. This can be compared to a favorites bar. There is also a link to settings, where you can change your profile picture along with other options, and a link to view your profile.

In Conclusion

We the creators think Lahdur has potential within Alfred. The name is not the sleekest, but it does have practicality, and we have yet to discover another website with the same level organization and categorizing. In our opinion, the best part of software development are the infinite amount of possibilities and opportunity to improve. If you are reading this years into the future, check out Lahdur! It may look nothing like version 1.1.1.