1. Great support for multiple operating systems and previous experiences of students. (I come from a Mac OS background, and work almost exclusively from the command line. I have not been forced to only use the Linux or Windows computers on campus. This has been awesome; I can work how I like to.)

2. Often we have been required to use other data, of varying sizes, to test our algorithms/ implementations. It would be great if this data were provided. I am not tested or learning how to generate random matrices, this is just busy work for me. It detracts from my learning experience because it causes me to invest time in coding projects that are secondary to my learning objective.
Midterm feedback

I really like your instruction, I have learned a lot. In addition, homework helps me a lot, but the load of the homework is a little beyond my ability, consider I have two another courses which have almost same homework load. By the way, the printed lecture handout is a little strange, the order of PPT make me feel hard to read it.
ME964 Mid-Semester Feedback

What I've liked:

The homework assignments are very good. As I work through the assignments, I feel that I am learning, as opposed to just doing busy work.

The slides already being printed out. This makes it easier to record notes that will be easy to locate later. All I have to do is look for the relevant slides.

The Forum. While a forum has existed for previous courses, this is the first time that we have been required to use it and I find it to be very helpful.

Some suggestions for improvement:

Sometimes it seems as points are excessively emphasized in class. Perhaps this is intended but I notice that we often run out of time at the end of class. Instead of repeating a concept several times, it may be more time effective to simply say: “This is the most important point I am going to make all class period” or “If you get only one thing out of today’s lecture, it should be...”

Due to the low resolution of the printed slides, sometimes it is difficult to read small code that is included in them. It is easy to read on the projector but on paper not so much.
Upload some sort of solution comment in mercurial after the assignments are graded. It doesn’t have to be actual code, just the comments for expected plots. I usually comment based on what I think happens, and I could be completely wrong. I am far too slow to pick up the memory related issues.

Some examples for grid size allocation based on arbitrary problem size would be really helpful.

Everything else is perfect.
The contents introduced through lecture are very useful and practical. I'm looking forward to learning more about MPI and OpenMP which I probably use for my research. I'm okay with the speed/pace and very appreciated for the handouts and lecture radio! The forum is also very helpful!

The homework is a little bit heavy for me (I am right now attending 2 other courses and with 45% TA appointment), but I'll try my best to keep pace because I'm really interested in parallel computing. By the way, how can we get the solutions to the homework?

Solution to HW:

SOL...
ME 964 – Mid Semester Feedback

Thinks I like:

- My first course on parallel programming.
- Challenging Assignments.
- Good Explanations.

Things I do not Like:

- **Weekly deadlines for Assignments** – Gets difficult for intermediate level programmer.
- Unevenly distributed assignments in terms of difficulty. (Hardly sufficient time for a complicated problem like 2D – convolution).
- Heavy coursework due to the weekly assignments.

Final Word:

I would recommend this course to my friends in future, but warn them that the coursework can get really difficult.
1) I think the forum is a great idea and a good way to get questions answered while providing everybody with the same information.

2) There is way too much homework being assigned. We are all graduate students in the class with research we are supposed to be working on, but I've barely been able to get any time in on my own research because of the time I've had to commit to this class every single week for these homework assignments. I don't think we need this many assignments to learn the concepts you are trying to get us to use, and I know that I'm unable to apply too many good coding practices because I'm just struggling to turn the assignment in on time. I'm just doing barely enough work to get the program working, and don't have the time to apply any of the more advanced tools we've discussed in class such as detailed profiling, or examining different memory/code structures to see what works the best.

3) I like the way you structure your lectures, with the notes at the beginning that cover what was talked about in the previous lecture, and where the lecture is going that day. But, it's a lot more helpful if you actually get through all the material you want to cover, which you've been doing much better with as of late. We may theoretically have a week for an assignment, but if you don't cover the material before the day the assignment is due then we're either stuck waiting 'til the last possible second to even be able to start or having to teach ourselves the material and then hear what we already know in the lecture.
• The overhead for this course seems excessive. I feel that I spend as much, if not more, time learning to use tools (CMake, Eclipse, Mercurial, etc.) that don't appear to be entirely necessary for code development as I spend learning high-performance computing techniques.
• The continuity between assignments is helpful. It is nice to have assignments that build on previous assignments and allow for code reuse.
• Lectures are interesting and aid in learning the material.

→ this is what's usual in industry
ME964: mid-semester feedback

- It would be nice to offer a help session early on in the semester (an evening sometime perhaps) to help students learn and practice using some of the software needed for the class. For those of us who had not ever used Mercurial and had limited experience working with Linux machines, the learning curve was steep. I know that I spent a few extra hours on each of the first assignments just trying to figure out how to use Mercurial, Cmake, etc; a hands on demonstration should help prevent that.

- It has only just been now introduced, but since this is a class focusing on high performance computing, I very much like the idea of having a “winner” for each assignment (at least once profiling has been covered). It makes it exciting and I expect people will really try to optimize their code!

- The class moves quickly, but I think that the pace is good; there’s a lot of material to cover in one semester. I think that the current components of the class: lectures, assignments, the forum, etc. all work together to help us learn. That being said, it would be nice to get a little feedback instead of just a numerical grade on each assignment. I don’t think expecting edited and marked up code is reasonable, but maybe a sentence or two each week explaining where we are losing points would be nice.
In the homework assignments, **make sure the code you give us works on euler** or if there are limitations and we need to modify it to answer the questions, tell us this beforehand. Burning hours because of unhelpful error codes from CUDA is not a productive use of our time.

Several homework assignments asked us to analyze differences in performance numbers, but the numbers were often too small to derive any conclusions from. If your objective is to get us to consider ramifications of differing implementation strategies, in addition to asking us to implement these strategies in simple/small programs, perhaps provide example programs that actually have the strategies implemented and that also produce greater differences in runtimes for us to analyze.
• **GOOD:** The pace of the course is nice. I personally think it is slow (CS/ECE), but for others I can see it going not too fast, yet at the same time not too slow.

• **BAD:** The homework is too often. Handling a new homework every week is tedious, even if the homework is trivial in nature since it often conflicts with other deadlines. It would be better to have more difficult homework less often.

• **BAD:** The nature of the homework is often vague and confusing, which often unnecessarily adds to its difficulty. Often when doing the homework, I have to ask “how exactly does the grader want this to be done”, since there are so many different ways to do it. Also, the homework seems to have so many “extra steps” in place that it takes a very long time to do a trivial task. The homework often fails to mention smaller steps required to do the homework, which although a student should definitely be aware how to do, it adds to the frustration of doing the homework.