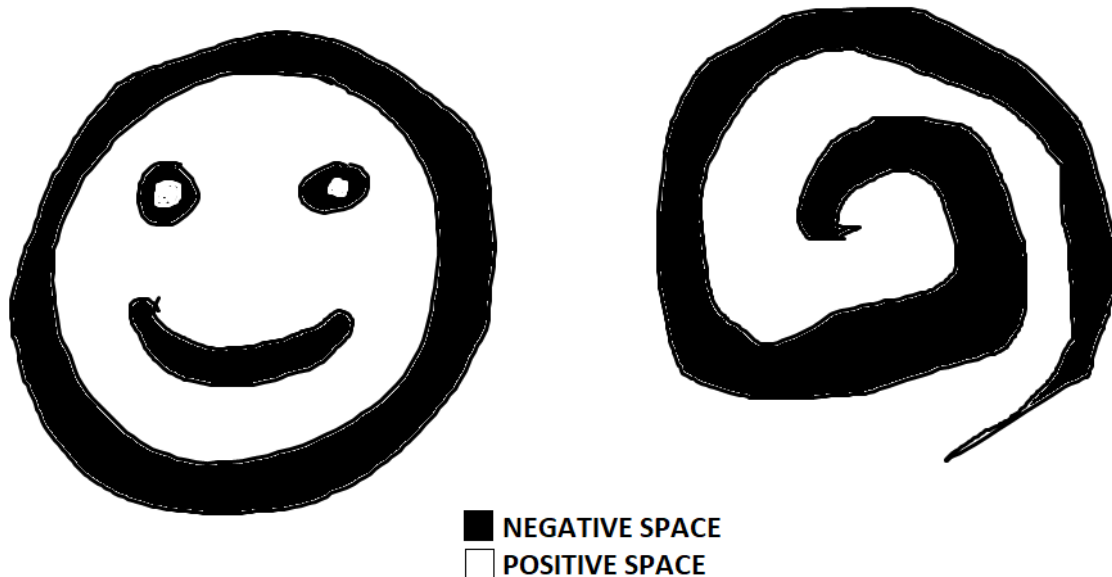Hello!

I hope you're excited for SPLASH! My name is Zachary Pitcher. I'm a sophomore at MIT studying Computer Science (Course 6-2), and I'll be your teacher for "Learn to Design and Create DIY Custom T-Shirts."

In our class, we'll be designing and making t-shirts right on the spot, so I might need you guys to do some homework before you get here in order to make it work. Don't worry, it's fun :) Since I only have an hour with each of you, we may not have time to do the entire process, so if you would like to draw your own design, you'll have to come prepared.

If you don't want a personalized design, I will have several samples for you to choose from that should work fine. If that's the case, you won't need to bring anything to class except a will to learn (and the readiness to work quickly).

If you do want to make a design, it must satisfy certain parameters in order to produce a viable stencil. We'll be painting through the stencil, so the "negative regions" of your image will be painted onto the shirt. With that in mind, you will want to make sure that the "positive regions" of your image are continuous--that is, there is no positive region completely enclosed by negative space. If that was not clear, hopefully this picture clarifies what I'm trying to say:

■ NEGATIVE SPACE
□ POSITIVE SPACE

The left symbol will make a fragmented stencil because when you cut out along the outline of the negative space, you can imagine that the positive regions will come apart into multiple pieces, which is complicated and often impossible to use as a template.

On the other hand, the figure at right is valid because when you cut along the outline of the negative space, the only thing left is a single solid positive cutout, which is your stencil. So make sure your drawing satisfies this property.

Also, I don't want to limit your creativity, but I will just say that simple designs are both easier to cut out and more likely to come out with clean lines in the final product. So be careful not to make your design overly complicated so we can get it done on time and you can have your shirt by the end of class.
Additionally, anything inappropriate will not be allowed, so if you bring a design for a t-shirt that my grandma wouldn't approve of, you'll have to choose from my sample stencils (in general, if you have to ask, you probably already know whether it's allowed). Beyond that, have fun with it :) I look forward to seeing what designs you come up with!

If you want to make sure that the design you've created is valid, you can send it to me at zackpi@mit.edu and I will let you know. Here are some sample designs that will be available for you to use if you did not prepare your own. You can also use these as inspiration for your own designs: