

Math 231 Policy Information

Fall 2002

Instructor

Dr. Laura Taalman, Burruss 115, 568-3355 (office), 442-8800 (home), taal@math.jmu.edu.

Office Hours

11:00–12:20 and 1:10–2:30 Mondays and Wednesdays, Burruss 115. Also available by appointment.

Class Times

Section 01 meets MWF 10:10–11:00 in Burruss 130 and Thursdays from 11:00–12:15 in Burruss 034. Section 02 meets MWF 12:20–1:10 in Burruss 034 and Thursdays from 2:00–3:15 in Burruss 032.

Class Website

www.math.jmu.edu/~taal/231_2002.html. Keys to quizzes and tests will be posted on Fridays. Feel free to look at my 231 website from last year (change 2002 to 2001 in the address) if you like; however, be warned that I will *not* use the same quizzes and tests, and that we may cover slightly different material in a slightly different order in this class.

What is Math 231?

The Math 231–232 sequence covers all of the material in Math 235 as well as precalculus and algebra material, and some material from the beginning of Math 236. This course is for those people that feel they need more precalculus or algebra preparation while learning calculus. You should not necessarily take this course simply because you have not had calculus before (many people in 235 have not taken calculus). You should not take this course because you think it will be “easier” or “less work” than Math 235. In fact, most 231–232 students feel that this course is *harder* and *more work* than Math 235, but that this course gives them a better understanding of the material and enables them to successfully learn calculus while improving their algebra and precalculus skills.

Grades

There will be two tests (100 points each), eleven quizzes (10 points each), one final exam (200 points), approximately seven collected homeworks (10 points each) and ten attendance quizzes (2 points each), and a few very small opportunities for extra credit. Homework collection and attendance quizzes will occur based on the random roll of a die and according to my whims. I will drop your lowest quiz score and your lowest homework score. At the end of the semester I will use the following formula to determine your numerical score:

$$\text{numerical score} = \frac{\text{earned}(T + Q + H + F + A + E)}{\text{possible}(T + Q + H + F)}$$

I will use statistics to give you a letter grade for the course based on this numerical score. (However, I do *not* use a predetermined scale such as 90=A, 80=B, etc.) I reserve the right to decide borderline grades based on class participation, effort, and whether your performance improved or declined over the course of the semester.

Attendance

If you must miss class on a Monday, Wednesday, or Friday you do not have to tell me about it. However, you should give your homework to a classmate so they can hand it in for you if it is collected that day. **You may not make up missed homework collections or attendance quizzes.** On the other hand, I must know of any Thursday absences *in advance*. At my discretion, I may excuse you from a Thursday quiz or a test if you ask me in advance. **If you miss a quiz or a test without first being excused, you will not be allowed to make it up.** However, if you have a problem or emergency and could not speak to me in advance, you should still come to me and explain your situation. My sympathy with your plight will be determined by how quickly you speak with me.

Homework

Collected homeworks will be graded for completeness and sometimes for accuracy on selected problems. I am well aware that partial answers are in the back of the book for many of the assigned problems; simply copying down those answers will not be considered sufficient. A careful reading of the text is

considered part of the homework, and should be reflected in the summary you make at the beginning of each assignment (see “Problem 0” in any section). The single most important predictor of your grade in this class will be how much homework you do.

Quizzes and Tests

Thursday quizzes will consist *entirely* of homework problems (possibly with minor changes). The syllabus lists what material is fair game for each quiz. Tests will cover all material covered since the previous test, and will consist *mostly* of homework problems. The final exam will be cumulative, but will include many problems from the class days following the last test.

Calculators

A graphing calculator is required for this course (I recommend the TI-83). However, there will be quizzes and exams on which the use of calculators is not permitted, so don't use your calculator as a crutch! If your only calculator is a TI-89 or a TI-92 please see me as soon as possible, since I will ban those two calculators from *every* quiz and test.

Getting Help

Please feel free to ask me for help! You can call me at my home number (see above) anytime before midnight, including on weekends. Feel free to stop by my office anytime, even outside of my office hours. If you can find me I will be happy to help you. You can also get help at the Math and Science Learning Center (Wilson 104) most days of the week. The Math Department also keeps a list of private tutors that you can hire for an hourly fee, but talking to me or going to the Learning Center is absolutely free!

A Random Smattering of Advice

- Read each section in the book before starting the exercises, and make a summary that will help you when it's time to study for an exam.
- Do all the homework problems as soon as possible after they are assigned; don't wait until the night before the homework is due.
- Don't fall behind; seek help quickly if there is something you don't understand.
- Come to class and participate while you're there! If you miss class make sure that you get notes from a classmate as quickly as possible.
- Math takes time to learn; don't assume that you can learn material a few days before an exam.
- Worry more about learning the material than about your grade or your GPA.
- Math is about *understanding*, not memorizing; if you are memorizing a lot of things you may be studying the wrong way.
- If you get a bad grade on a test or quiz, don't panic; instead, come see me for help and take the time to learn what you missed.
- To prepare for a test or a quiz, be sure you know concepts as well as calculations.
- Know what material you will be expected to know for a quiz or a test.
- Try explaining the material out loud to a classmate or your roommate.
- Make up test problems and see if you can answer them, or have a classmate make up problems for you to answer.
- Work in groups and talk about math as much as possible outside of class.
- Hang out in the Math and Science Learning Center and find people to work with.
- Stay in touch with me; let me know if you are having problems in or out of class.
- Come to my office hours, send me email, or call me in my office or at home.