

Math 353 Policy Information

Spring 2013

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Logistics

Class Times: MWF 11:15-12:05 in Roop 105

Office hours: Mon and Tues 2:00-3:00, Wed 3:00-4:00, and by appointment, Roop 123.

Class website: educ.jmu.edu/~taaljala/353_2013.html

Class Facebook group *Math 353 Spring 2013*: www.facebook.com/groups/189468797859367/

Textbook: *Pearls in Graph Theory*, Nora Hartsfield and Gerhard Ringel.

Exams will be on the following days: **Friday 1/25, Friday 3/15, and Friday 4/19.**

The Final Exam will be at the official exam time for our section: Mon, April 29 from 10:30-12:30.

Goals of the Course

This course covers basic graph theory from a theoretical perspective, including trees, vertex and edge colorings, circuits, cycles, counting problems, planarity, and the Four Color Theorem.

Grades

You can make a rough estimate of your grade at any time in this class by filling in the blanks below with your earned or estimated letter grades and taking the average of the letters. Each blank is worth the same weight in the course.

Exam 1 _____ Exam 2 _____ Exam 3 _____

Final Exam (worth 3 Exams so fill in three times) _____ _____ _____

Daily Quizzes _____ Participation/Other _____

Please note that to get a good estimate of your grade you should use the letter grades that you earned on each exam and not any numerical scores. I assign your letter grades based on the level of performance and understanding that you exhibit on each exam. Your letter grades do not depend on any other person in the class, but only on your own work on the exams. I do not use predetermined numerical scales because numbers are just numbers and don't mean anything inherently about grades. I reserve the right to decide borderline course grades based on factors such as participation, effort, and improvement.

Homework and Presentations

Your homework is to do read the textbook and do every problem on the Questions List handout and to be ready to present solutions to those problems during class time. We will go through the problems in order; I recommend working at least 6-8 questions ahead for each day. Quality and quantity of class presentation will be a factor in your grade. The exams and the final will be based heavily on the reading and the problems on the Questions List and your ability to make coherent logical arguments about these problems.

Groups

We may form class groups later in the semester. Start thinking about who you would like to have in your group.

Daily Quizzes

This will be an active-learning class and I will do only a minimal amount of formal lecturing. Class will have a discussion-based atmosphere, sometimes within groups and sometimes as a whole class. My goal is to help you learn how to learn mathematics yourselves and to give you as much experience as possible actually doing problems and thinking about mathematics.

There will be a daily quiz at the start of each class period that will cover some topic from the reading or the current problems on the Questions List. These quizzes help me take attendance and also tell me who is keeping up with the basic material every day.

Absences

If you miss class it is your responsibility to find out about material and/or announcements from a classmate. I do not give make-up exams, although in certain situations I may be able to 'excuse' you. If you have an emergency that causes you to miss an exam, you should contact me immediately. My sympathy with your plight will be determined by how quickly you contact me.

Facebook

There is a Facebook group for this course called *Math 353 Spring 2013*. Membership in this group is optional and it is not required to be "Facebook friends" with me or anyone in the course in order to be part of this group. The purpose of this group is to provide a forum where you can set up study groups with other students and ask questions about the course and the material.

Honor Code

I completely support and encourage working together in groups on homework assignments and presentations outside of class. I take the honor code very seriously, and so should you. Any instances of suspected cheating or academic dishonesty on exams will be referred to the JMU Honor Board for investigation.

Contacting me

I encourage you to ask me questions by instant message or email at any time, and to visit me during my office hours or by appointment. I can usually respond to email within one or two days. **I will be much faster to reply to questions posted to the Facebook group for the course, because those questions and answers will help the whole class at once.** I almost never check my office phone voicemail, but that phone number is a good tool to check if I am in my office if you are thinking of stopping by outside of my office hours. You may text me on my cell if you have an emergency or an important, time-sensitive issue.

Who am I?

I went to college at the University of Chicago, got my Ph.D. in mathematics at Duke University, and then came to JMU to work in 2000. I'm now a full tenured professor here. In my mathematical research I've studied algebraic geometry, knot theory, and the mathematics of games and puzzles such as Sudoku, Tchoukaillon, and poker. I'm married and have an 8-year-old son, and in my spare time I play Minecraft and try to figure out how to make things with 3D printers.

Who are you?

I have a problem recognizing people, especially when they are out of context (for example, if you switch seats in class, come to my office hours, or run into me at the grocery store). When you see me outside of the classroom, please remind me of your name and what class you are in. And please do not be insulted if it takes me a long time to be able to recognize you or remember your name! For more information see www.geekhaus.com/faceblind.

For official university syllabus information, please see www.jmu.edu/syllabus.