Math 430 Policy Information   Spring 2004

Instructor:	Dr. Laura Taalman	**Home Phone:**	442-8800
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Office Hours
Mondays and Wednesdays, 2:00-3:30, or by appointment.

Class Times
MWF 12:20–1:10 in Burruss 032, Thursday 12:30–1:45 in Burruss 032.

Textbook
A First Course in Abstract Algebra, by John B. Fraleigh, Seventh Edition (Addison Wesley).

Class Website
`www.math.jmu.edu/~taal/430_2004.html`. Keys to tests and various handouts will be posted weekly.

Grades
There will be three tests (100 points each) and one final exam (200 points) in this course. According to the whims of random probability (and the roll of a die) there will be approximately nine collected homeworks (10 points each), and nine collected "Proof of the Day" assignments (10 points each). I will drop your lowest homework score, and your lowest "Proof of the Day" score. At the end of the semester I will use the following formula to determine your numerical score:

$$\text{numerical score} = \frac{\text{earned}(T + H + P + F + C)}{\text{possible}(T + H + P + F)}$$

(Note that "C" stands for class participation.) 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.

See the "Ground Rules" handout for information about collected assignments. Please note that **I will not accept late assignments.** Also, **I do not give make-up tests.** See me in advance if you think you may miss an exam. If you miss an exam and have not spoken with me in advance, you should contact me immediately.

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 or call my office anytime, even outside of my office hours. If you can find me I will be happy to help you. The Math Department keeps a list of private tutors that you can hire for an hourly fee, but talking to me is absolutely free!

Random Stuff
- Please bring your book with you to class on every "Problems" day. You do not need to bring your book to class on "Lecture" days.

- I'm bad with remembering names, so bear with me if it takes me a while to link your name to your face; remind me what your name is if I look confused!

- Do not fall behind in this class. If you do, it may be impossible for you to catch up. Do all assignments as soon as possible after class. Start reviewing for tests days or weeks before the exam day (cramming just doesn't work in upper-level mathematics).

- You can drop this course before Tuesday, January 20 without any record on your transcript. After that date you have until Friday, March 19 to withdraw and have a "W" on your transcript. After this second date you cannot withdraw from the course.

- Please participate in class! Ask lots of questions!! It makes class more interesting, forces me to slow down a bit, and helps the other students in the class. I truly believe that no question is stupid, even "huh?". The point of lecture is for me to help you learn, not for me to bore and confuse you to death.

- Be ready with questions on problem days. Try to contribute as much as possible. Problem days are when *you* are in control of the material.

- It is my job to help you learn the material any way I can. However, ultimately it is *your* job to learn the material. Take responsibility for your learning!! That means take the time to actually think about the material and seek help when you need it.

- Be sure that you know basic definitions, examples, counterexamples, and theorem statements. Such things are the heart of mathematics.

- Math is about *understanding*, not memorizing; if you are memorizing a lot of things you may be studying the wrong way.

- Work in groups and talk about math as much as possible outside of class.

- Stay in touch with me; let me know if you are having problems in or out of class. I am always happy to talk to you about any issue.

- Come to my office hours, send me email, or call me in my office or at home.