

Class policies

Only simple calculators (in other words, those that may be used in taking SAT tests) are needed for this course, and they will be needed only a small fraction of the time, outside of class. Neither the quizzes, nor the hour tests, nor the final exam will require their use, although they will save some time on a few problems. **Programmable calculators are not permitted for quizzes, hour tests, or the final exam.**

There will be 3 hour tests in the course. Each hour test is worth 100 points. Grades for quizzes and homework will be weighted at the end of the semester on a scale of 0 to 100. The final exam is three hours long and is worth 200 points.

Homework will be of two kinds, graded and ungraded. Homework to be graded will be taken up on days prescribed in advance. Quizzes will be given once a week, with a few exceptions. They will be very similar to problems (often just one problem) from homework, either graded or ungraded; or from problems worked in class. They are generally announced in advance, but there may also be one or two “pop quizzes” in the during the semester.

Quizzes and homework will also be used in counting absences, so if you are present, hand something in, even if it is a sheet of paper that is blank except for your name.

To get full credit for homework, you must hand it in at or before the beginning of the class for which it is due. If you are late for class, put the homework on the desk in front of the room right after you come in. If you are absent for that class, you must either arrange to have the homework handed in by someone else for you, or you must hand it in yourself (for example, by putting it in one of our mailboxes) prior to the time it is due.

Partial credit will be given for any homework handed in late, but not later than the time the homework is returned to the rest of the class after it is graded. Once graded homework has been returned to the class, later homework will not be accepted.

Years of experience have taught me that there is no perfect way to handle absences for tests and quizzes and homework. The following system seems to be as good as any. **Please do not ask for exceptions from it!** If I were to grant them, I would merely be moving to another imperfect system, usually inferior to the one described below.

I will not “drop the lowest test grade”, nor give make-up tests. If you are absent for a test, please give one of us a note explaining why, and **for you the questions on the final exam that correspond to the material covered by the test you missed will be used to compute your grade for that test.** (Thus these questions are counted twice, but with different point values: if the questions on the final that serve for your test grade have a total value of 50 points as far as the final is concerned, they will each count double for the test grade.)

I will drop the lowest quiz grade, but no more. The only exception is for people who will **frequently** be absent for legitimate reasons (varsity sport, etc.). In that case I will ignore zeroes due to absences for these reasons. If you fall into this category, let me know at the beginning of the semester. I will tell you far enough in advance of your scheduled absence what homework is due while you are gone, so that you will be able to have it handed in for you in time.

To allow for other kinds of absences, etc., extra credit problems will be listed from time to time, and the grading scale for the combined homework-quiz grade will be **at least** this lenient:

85 and up A
 78 - 84 B+
 70 - 77 B
 63 - 69 C+
 55 - 62 C
 48 - 54 D+
 40 - 47 D

Grading scales on the tests will be somewhat closer to the usual “90 – 100 A, etc.” scale, but will vary according to the difficulty of the tests.

I am generous with partial credit, so show all your work on homework and quizzes and tests.

It is all right for you to help each other with the regular homework, but I expect the homework you hand in to be your own work and not simply copied from someone else’s homework. On the other hand, I am the **only** person to ask for help on extra credit problems. Penalties will be assessed in case of clear violations.

Since the grading scales on tests, exam, and weighted homework-quiz scores vary, letter grades for the overall course will be determined by comparing each student’s total points with the totals at the cutoff for each letter grade. The following example, similar to two students’ records in an earlier course, illustrates the method:

Cutoff Scores						
Test 1	Test 2	Test 3	Quiz & Hw.	Final exam	Total	Course grade
90 A	89 A	91 A	85 A	175 A	530	A
85 B+	84 B+	86 B+	78 B+	160 B+	493	B+
80 B	78 B	80 B	70 B	145 B	453	B
75 C+	74 C+	76 C+	63 C+	130 C+	418	C+
70 C	68 C	70 C	55 C	115 C	378	C
65 D+	64 D+	66 D+	48 D+	100 D+	343	D+
58 D	56 D	60 D	40 D	85 D	299	D
Student 1						
97 A	81 B	76 C+	88.6 A	136 C+	478.6	B
Student 2						
70 C	62 D	68 D+	33.1 F	119 C	352.1	D+

“Cutoff scores” for A, etc. are defined to be the lowest scores one could have received and still obtained an A, etc. on that particular item (test, quiz and homework score, final exam). As you can see, cutoff scores for each letter grade are totaled up at the end, and the student totals are matched with the respective totals to arrive at the course letter grade.