

Class policies and grading system

Your grade in this course will be based on attendance, 3 hour tests, a final exam, hand-in homework, quizzes and a grade on your Monday labs. Attendance will be taken in each class and affects your grade as explained below. Each hour test contributes $13\frac{1}{3}\%$ to the point total of your course grade. Your quiz and homework grades will be weighted at the end of the semester and count for $16\frac{2}{3}\%$ of your course point total. The final exam is three hours long and counts for $26\frac{2}{3}\%$. The Monday lab grade counts for $16\frac{2}{3}\%$.

More than 6 absences will affect your grade adversely, each additional unexcused absence counting for one-twelfth of the difference between two grades (A and B+, B+ and B, etc.) but one grade drop is the maximum penalty for absences. Fewer than 6 absences will pull up your grade in borderline cases, with perfect attendance counting for one-sixth of a letter grade.

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 in Wednesday recitation section. They will be very similar to problems (often just one problem) from homework, either graded or ungraded; or from problems worked in class. There may also be one or two “pop quizzes” in the TTh lecture session during the semester.

If you have a privacy concern about your grades on quizzes, tests, or homework, fold the papers lengthwise and put your name on the outside, and they will be handed back to you in the same way with your scores on the inside.

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 table at the front of the class 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.

Reduced credit will be given for any homework handed in late. Once graded homework has been returned to the class, later homework will not be accepted.

Only non-programmable calculators (those which typically cost less than \$20) 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 or graphing calculators are not permitted for quizzes, hour tests, or the final exam.**

Years of experience have taught your instructor 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 we were to grant them, we would merely be moving to another imperfect system, usually inferior to the one described below.

We 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.)

We will drop the lowest quiz grade, but no more. The only exception is for people who will **frequently** be absent on Wednesdays for legitimate reasons (varsity sport, etc.). In that case we will ignore zeroes due to absences for these reasons. If you fall into this category, let one of us know at the beginning of the semester. We 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.

We are 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 we expect the homework you hand in to be your own work and not simply copied from someone else’s homework. Penalties will be assessed in case of clear violations.

Extra credit is to be handed in to Prof. Nyikos, not the TA. Prof. Nyikos is also the only person to ask for help on extra credit. This means, in particular, that you are not to bother tutoring lab students or your SI with extra credit problems.

Since the grading scales on tests, etc. 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.