

Math 151A Details

Calculus is a very old, very rich subject and it is the foundation upon which much of science is built. It can be a beautiful tool to help you understand the world around you, and it contains ideas which are beautiful in themselves. I hope that you learn not only how to deal with the sorts of problems we'll encounter in this class, but also that you learn to have fun doing it.

In my opinion and experience, the single best shift you can make in yourself with regards to your school experience is to take your focus off of your grades and put it onto truly understanding the material. Naturally when you really understand the material, the good grades follow, but the converse is not always true. When you leave the university, your grades will go with you for a short time, but what you learn will be the foundation you build upon for the rest of your life! It is my hope that by taking this course and using this opportunity well, you can begin to make this shift and use what you learn through this experience throughout your college career.

Lectures

First and foremost, I will expect that you have already read the material for the upcoming lecture in the book. We will move fast, and the lectures will be a place for you to see the ideas presented in a concise manner. Secondly, I expect you to ask questions in lecture. This is the time for the concepts to become clearer for you, and often for this to happen you need to have your questions addressed. In order for you to even have questions, you need to have already thought about the material, so do yourself a huge favor and read!

Office Hours

Please do not hesitate to visit all of us during our office hours. We are here to help, and it is much better to come in early than to wait until you are in over your head. No one ever said you are supposed to do this entirely on your own.

This is the best time to have your individual homework questions addressed. So, if you find yourself with a problem you can't work out, don't skip over it and hope it's not on the test (see paragraph about focusing on understanding rather than grades). Come to us and sort it out - you'll be glad you did!

Keep in mind, however, that you won't be able to do every problem you encounter on your first attempt; problems in this class are designed to make you think and rethink before arriving at a solution. Don't give up on a problem until you have really battled with it. We are here to help.

Recitations

This will be the most unique feature of this course. Recitations in the "A" sequence are *not* homework question and answer sessions. They are designed to actually let you further investigate and use the concepts of the class, applying them to new situations. One important component will be group work. Discussing mathematics with others is a great way to enhance your understanding and comfort with the material, and the group assignments will allow you to do this.

Your TA will determine your recitation score (out of 40 possible points) and will give you details during your first recitation. You should expect your score to depend on your regular attendance and participation in recitation, along with group assignments and homework.

Please let me know if you have questions or concerns at any time during the quarter.