

Course Policies for MATH1260—Math for Games Fall 2009

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Text: *Math for Games—Class Notes*, available from Gnomon Copy Center 325 Huntington Avenue (across from the YMCA).

About this course

This course was designed primarily with an eye on a student from the interdisciplinary programs on game design and interdisciplinary media. You need not be in one of those programs to take the course, but it will address a number of issues as though you are. The course also meets the Core 1 mathematics requirement of the University.

It presents a body of mathematics considered by graphics experts to be the thing they wish they had known when they started out. It cuts across several different branches of mathematics, and presents material usually scattered through two, three, or even four different courses.

It is to be expected that students in the class will come from a wide spectrum of backgrounds. To some, certain parts of the course may be very familiar, whereas to others it may all be a bit alien. A challenge for us will therefore be to learn what each individual needs to learn and to adapt the course to the needs of each. However, in the end we should aim to have everyone in possession of a roughly equivalent body of mathematical knowledge.

The text for the course is a set of Notes available from Gnomon Copy (see above). The Notes are a source of information, but are not a course in themselves. The pedagogy of the course will emerge from what we choose to do with this material.

As it happens, our class is small, so it should be possible to individualize instruction to some extent. This will require discussion between teacher and students and among students themselves. It also makes the writing of a rigid syllabus not only difficult, but undesirable, if by “syllabus” is meant a schedule of topic covered. Our aim should be to cover the material in the Notes, but how we do this will require flexibility and your cooperation as I try to learn more about each of you, your mathematical background, and abilities.

On the other hand, you deserve to know the rules by which the course will be graded. Thus we will have homework, a series of quizzes, a midterm hour exam, and a two hour final exam.

These will count as follows:

Homework	5%
Quizzes	35%
Midterm	20%
Final exam	40%

Because of the importance of each student's contribution to the class, there is an attendance policy: every missed class results in the loss of 1% from your final grade. This does not sound like much now. It will sound like more at the end of the semester when you begin to worry about every percentage point.

The result of all this is a numerical grade (NG) on a scale of 0 to 100 which will be converted to a letter grade as follows:

For $NG \geq$	$93\frac{1}{3}$	90	$86\frac{2}{3}$	$83\frac{1}{3}$	80		
and $NG <$	∞	$93\frac{1}{3}$	90	$86\frac{2}{3}$	$83\frac{1}{3}$		
letter grade is	A	A^-	B^+	B	B^-		

For $NG \geq$	$76\frac{2}{3}$	$73\frac{1}{3}$	70	$66\frac{2}{3}$	$63\frac{1}{3}$	60	0
and $NG <$	80	$76\frac{2}{3}$	$73\frac{1}{3}$	70	$66\frac{2}{3}$	$63\frac{1}{3}$	60
letter grade is	C^+	C	C^-	D^+	D	D^-	F

At every point in the course you are urged to think, ask questions, and participate in class discussion. If you think you see a mistake in the *Notes* or any other written material I give you, quietly tell me. If I agree and you are the first person to do so, you get a homework credit (i.e., as though you had done an extra homework assignment.) I will then point it out to the rest of the class. My message to you is: look critically at what you are told. Try to find the flaw in it. The real point of doing this is that it is a great way to learn and to develop a critical facility.

I will post specific office hours after polling the class regarding times that will work. Until then, if you have questions, please talk with me on an individual basis about when we could get together. Once conference hours have been established, you may come to them without making an appointment, but you can also still make an appointment to meet outside of conference hours. You can also communicate with me and other students via email and Blackboard. Check Blackboard regularly for course announcements.

Complaints and appeals

I have a self-image of being open to criticism, complaints, etc., so you can appeal to that if you want to argue a point. But if for any reason you feel you cannot resolve your concern by talking about it with me, there are further steps you can take. One possibility would be to discuss the matter with Dean Richard Rasala, who shares credit for the creation of this course.