

MATH 534, Section 001 (MWF 11:15 - 12:05)

Instructor:

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Textbook: *Introduction to Topology*, by Crump W. Baker, supplemented by numerous handouts that will be used in class discussion and some extra credit problems. The syllabus includes the first three chapters; Sections 4.1 and 4.4; Sections 5.1 and 5.2; Chapter 6; Sections 8.1 and 8.3; and excerpts from sections 4.2, 5.3, 8.2, 8.4, and from all four sections of Chapter 7, as time permits.

Tentative Office Hours: 9 - 11 Monday and 1-3 WF. Exceptions announced in advance when possible and posted on office door. From time to time I will also be in on Tuesday or Thursday, with advance notice whenever possible. Other times by appointment (or you could try dropping by if you are close by anyway).

For many of you, this will be the first course in which you are asked to come up with proofs on your own. This will be done in the homework, very sparingly at first, beginning with very simple proofs and only gradually working up to more challenging ones—but most of the homework problems in any one assignment are routine and most do not require the working of proofs. You will not be required to come up with proofs on tests, but only on homework; some memorization of proofs is expected, and you will be tested only for (some of the) proofs that have been gone over in class with plenty of opportunity for asking of questions.

This gradual acclimatization to proofs makes this course a good preparation not only for Math 554 (for which the course content is also very relevant) but also for any higher-level course like Math 546 which emphasizes proofs.

Homework will be collected at the beginning of the class on which it is due. If you come in late, please leave your homework on the desk as you come in. If you know you will be absent ahead of time on a day homework is due, put the homework in my mailbox before the time it is due. There will be a penalty for late homework, especially if it is too late for it to be graded along with the other papers. Once graded homework has been returned to the class, later homework will not be accepted.

Hand in extra credit separately from regular homework. I grade the extra credit myself, and will accept and give partial credit for preliminary versions, and keep adding to your score as you improve your work on it.

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

Adjustments to grade can be made based on class attendance and participation, up to one “letter grade,” in the sense that a grade of B could be raised to a B+ or lowered to a C+, etc. Absences in excess of 5 incur a penalty (up to one “letter grade” in extreme cases) while perfect attendance is good for one-third of a letter grade.

I will try to schedule tests at a time convenient for everyone, so I hope the following two paragraphs will not have to come into play. . . .

Years of experience have taught me that there is no perfect way to handle absences for tests 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 on the other side.

I will not “drop the lowest test grade”, nor give make-up tests. If you are absent for a test, please give me 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 not “drop the lowest n (> 0) homework grades”. To allow for absences, etc., I will be giving out lots of extra credit problems, and the grading scale for homework will be at least this lenient:

170 and up A
 155 - 169 B+
 140 - 154 B
 125 - 139 C+
 110 - 124 C
 95 - 109 D+
 80 - 94 D

Grading scales on the tests will be somewhat closer to a “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 tests.

Since the grading scales on tests, exam, and weighted homework 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, including two illustrative performances similar to two students’ records in an earlier course, illustrates the method:

Cutoff Scores					
Test 1	Test 2	Homework	Final exam	Total	Course grade
90 A	89 A	170 A	175 A	524	A
85 B+	84 B+	155 B+	160 B+	484	B+
80 B	78 B	140 B	145 B	443	B
75 C+	74 C+	125 C+	130 C+	404	C+
70 C	68 C	110 C	115 C	363	C
65 D+	64 D+	95 D+	100 D+	324	D+
58 D	56 D	80 D	85 D	279	D
Student 1					
97 A	81 B	179 A	136 C+	493	B+
Student 2					
70 C	62 D	76 F	119 C	327	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, 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.