Math 221 Section CD1/Math 199 Syllabus

Section Information

Time: Wed & Fri 9:00-10:50am
Location: 173 Altgeld Hall
Teaching Assistant: Nigel Pynn-Coates
Office: 178 Altgeld Hall
Office Hour: Mon 2:30-3:30pm in 173 Altgeld Hall
E-mail: pynncoa2@illinois.edu
Webpage: https://faculty.math.illinois.edu/~pynncoa2/221F17.html

Note: This syllabus pertains only to our discussion section and your Math 199 grade. Please consult the syllabus for your lecture section on the main 221 homepage for all other information.

Merit Discussion Session Grades

Each student may earn up to 10 points for their performance in each Merit session. The points will be assigned on the basis of Attendance, Preparation and Participation.

Attendance: Attendance is required and will be recorded according to the following policy:
- 0 to 5 minutes late: at most 10 points can be earned for that session;
- 6 to 15 minutes late: at most 7 points can be earned for that session;
- 16 to 45 minutes late: at most 5 points can be earned for that session;
- more than 46 minutes late or absent: 0 points are earned for that session.

Absences may be excused at my discretion. If you know you will be absent, please e-mail me with all available documentation as early as possible. If there is an emergency, please e-mail me within 24 hours of the end of the missed discussion section.

Preparation: Before each class, you are expected to review your notes from lecture and be familiar with the corresponding sections of the textbook, and to complete any homework assignments due that day (either assigned by Mr. Murphy or me). By studying the material ahead of time, you will be ready to discuss the material in more depth and have specific questions to ask about material that may be giving you difficulty.

Participation: You are expected to participate in group worksheets or other activities by introducing ideas and insights, asking and answering questions, and explaining answers to others. I will endeavour to foster a welcoming and collaborative environment so you feel comfortable participating; please join me in doing so.

Note: You must earn a grade of “B” or higher in Math 199 and a grade of “C” or higher in Math 221 to continue in the mathematics Merit Workshop Program.
Extra Resources

In addition to lecture, discussion section, and the textbook (which has many examples and problems to work on), there is a tutoring room for Math 221 staffed by the course TAs. It is open Monday–Thursday from 5–9pm in 143 Altgeld Hall starting September 5. (The hours are subject to change during Fall Break and test weeks; see the tutoring page on the main 221 webpage for updated information.) Take advantage of my office hour and those of Mr. Murphy. For extra help, you may consider hiring a private tutor; the math department maintains a list of graduate students that tutor privately. There are also many resources available on the internet covering the material in this course.

The Merit Philosophy

Merit discussions provide a great opportunity for you to attain a high level of understanding of the course material and to learn to think critically about math in general. The Merit section is not a review session or a tutoring session. We will incorporate aspects of lecture material into the questions that we consider, but this is not meant to be a repeat of lecture nor is it intended to take the place of time you should be studying outside of class. During this time (where you will be receiving Math 199 credit), you will learn to think critically about complex problems and work with others in small groups to solve them. You will learn new ways to tackle problems, feel more comfortable about sharing your ideas, make new friends, and realize what you do and don’t understand in a comfortable, supportive environment. You are encouraged to share your opinions in class, but please be aware and respectful that others may have different opinions. You don’t have to agree, but must learn to attack ideas, not people. You will benefit most from Merit if you come to class already familiar with the material and prepared to discuss it, hear new ideas from peers, and apply their understanding to novel situations. But the format is not a traditional one with an instructor giving information that you are to learn and reproduce. I will be a “non-traditional” instructor for much of the time. I will often not answer questions directly, but will ask you to consider them further in your groups or to find the information on your own. We will all need to think in new ways about our roles in this class. While there is the possibility for frustration inherent in this, I’m confident that we can work together to make this a remarkably valuable experience.

Disclaimer: I reserve the right to modify this syllabus at any time. In that case, I will notify you promptly.

With all that said, have a great semester! Let’s learn some math!