

Dear Math 461 students,

Welcome to Math 461! Please read this letter carefully and save it for future reference. It contains important information about your course.

Your course is taught in a format that uses Mathematica software. Some of our class meetings will be in a classroom while others will be in a computer lab. Most of your homework assignments will be in the Mathematica format.

I will be absent for the first week of classes, but would still like to have you start on your course. To do so, you will need to do the following:

- 1) Obtain the courseware for this course. It is the textbook for our course. You may download it for \$25 from the Webstore at: <http://go.illinois.edu/NetMath461Courseware>
  
- 2) You will only be able to open and evaluate these lessons by using Mathematica. Mathematica is available in many of the computer labs in the Engineering labs, dorms and in the 239 Altgeld Hall computer lab. I recommend obtaining your own copy to use on your own computer. You may obtain this from the Webstore for \$25. Mathematica Software (Student Version) <http://go.illinois.edu/MathematicaStudentOffer>
  
- 3) To start, I would like for you to get familiar with Mathematica. Please take some time to look at the following videos: <http://netmath.illinois.edu/help> In particular, first look at the “Hands on Start to Mathematica” at the bottom of that page and then at “Completing a Lesson” just above it.
  
- 4) On the Courseware download you did, there are some files called “The Feel of Mathematica.” Take some time to work through some of that so you get used to how the software works.
  
- 5) Read through and interact with the Basics and Tutorial files for

lesson Prob.01 in your courseware download. Keep what you learn there in mind as you begin your first assignment for the course. The first problems you will work on are G.1 – G.5 in Prob.01. These are in the file called “Give it a Try”. To start, put your name at the top of the file and delete all of the problems that are not assigned. “Save-as” the file to something descriptive with your name and the assignment number. If you know another student in the class, work together with that person on the assignment and put BOTH names at the top of the file. If you do this, you will only turn in one file with both names.

- 6) When you do any work that is your own, be sure to change the background color of the work to be “Light grey.” You may do this by selecting the cell bracket (on the right hand side) going to the “Format” menu and changing the background color to “Light Grey.”

Get started on these items and when we meet on Monday, August 29<sup>th</sup>, it will be in room 245 Altgeld hall. Be prepared to discuss the content of what you learned in that session.

If you need help with any of this, you may ask our class assistant, Jimmy Shan [shan15@illinois.edu](mailto:shan15@illinois.edu). If you want to work in the 239 Altgeld lab on any of this, you may do so at any of the following times during the week:

Monday 10-11

Tuesday 10-11, 2-3

Wednesday 10-11

Thursday 10-11, 2-3

Friday 8-11, 12-1, or 3-4

There is a tutor working at the front desk of the room who can answer questions about Mathematica if you like. On Monday, Wednesday and Friday of the first week, from 3-4, we will have someone available to circulate the room to help you with any questions you have on the

material or Mathematica.