Math 241 AD1/ Math 199

Teaching Assistant: Derrek Yager
Discussion Time: TR 11:00AM - 12:50PM
Discussion Location: 173 Altgeld Hall
TA’s Office: 155 Altgeld Hall
TA Office Hour: M 3-4 in 155 Altgeld
TA’s Website: https://faculty.math.illinois.edu/~yager2/18FA_241/index.html
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Merit Discussion Section Grades

Your Math 199 grade is separate from your Math 241 grade and will be based on Attendance, Preparation, and Participation.

You will earn your grade by meeting the following expectations:

- You arrive to class on time.
- You arrive to class prepared. This means that you have attended lecture, taken notes, reviewed your notes before class, and brought your notes to class with you.
- You participate in class by working with your group, asking questions when stuck, helping your peers when you understand, presenting work when asked, etc.

Each student can earn up to 10 points for their performance in each Merit session. These points will be distributed according to how well you meet the above expectations by using the following policy:

- 10 points: You met all of my expectations.
- 8-9 points: You failed to meet my expectations in a small way. For example, you arrived to class slightly late (less than 5 minutes) or I had to ask you once to change your behavior.
- 6-7 points: You arrived to class late enough to be a distraction to your group (5-15 minutes), you failed to meet multiple expectations, or you came to class unprepared.
- 5 points or fewer: You arrived to class significantly late (more than 15 minutes) or I had to repeatedly ask you to change your behavior.

These tardiness policies will also apply to students who return late from break or do not work until the very end of class. If you know that you will be absent or late, then you must notify me in advance. If you are sick or there is an emergency, you must notify me within 24 hours of the missed class. You are allowed one unexcused absence.

Sometimes, I will administer a short preparation quiz at the beginning and use the results of it to determine how prepared you are for the Merit workshop. By studying the material before each class 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. This will help you immensely during your time in the Merit sessions.
Help
There are many resources available to you aimed at helping you understand the material better. The book has many examples and problems with solutions. You should ask questions in class and office hours. You are encouraged to work together outside of class as well. The tutoring room will be offered Monday through Thursday from 4-8 PM in 341 Altgeld starting Wednesday, August 29. The class has a Piazza page for questions which is moderated daily by TAs I have my separate office hours. You can hire a tutor (usually for around $40/hr), and a list of tutors is available from the math department. And it is currently the year 2018, there is this thing called “the internet.” I hear that it can be used for things other than cat videos and status updates.

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 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. The biggest benefit of Merit will be gained by students who 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
Finally, I reserve the right to alter any part of the syllabus. If I do so, I will try to notify you in a timely manner. Now, let’s get started!