

August 25, 2008

To all instructors in MA 111:

The course will use a new book by Peter Tannenbaum. Because of this, it is not clear how much material we can reasonably cover during the semester. My own preference is to cover less in more detail, but you may have a different view. Notice that no other course depends on the material learned in MA 111, so we have a relative freedom to choose the topics. What follows will set the *minimal* content. You can (and probably should) add some topics to the minimal list to suit your personal preferences.

Roughly speaking, the course will be divided in three parts, each leading to an exam. Thus we will have three exams, two midterm exams and one final. I would like these exams to be held according to the schedule:

Part I. Required chapters 1 and 2

Exam 1: week of September 29 - October 3.

Part II. Required chapters 5 and 6

Exam 2: week of November 3-7.

Part III. Required chapters 9 and 10 and Mini-Excursion 3.

Exam 3: finals week (the final exam is not cumulative)

During the month of September (and later as needed) I will be regularly inquiring about the material you covered and about other aspects of your teaching. This way I will have a better picture of what is and what isn't realistic for this course. Also, I will

ask you to show me the exam questions before the exam. As an independent instructor, you have full control of the exam content. However, it is very important to have some level of uniformity, at least in the format and the difficulty of the exam.

Finally, I would like to have some uniformity in the grading policies in MA 111. Here is what I propose:

Exams: 20% of the final grade each

Homework and Quizzes: 35%

Attendance: 5%

Homework assignment should include odd and even numbered problems, but only even numbered problems should be graded. You can elect to grade only part of the assigned problems. Whether you want to give quizzes is up to you. I plan to give one quiz per week and split the 35% above as 25% (homework) + 10% (quizzes). I would also recommend some form of enforcement of the attendance. For example, you may decide that the students must miss no more than two classes to get the full 5% of the attendance grade - use your imagination (or experience) on this point. All the instructors in MA 111 are required to use the standard 10% scale (90% -A, 80% -B, etc). The grading policy must be clearly specified in the syllabus. Some instructors like to list all the homework problems right away. I would not do this until we have a better idea of the material to cover. The homework is the most important part of the learning process for our students, and they should spend a good deal of time on it. In particular, they should spent sufficient time reading the text. The university's rule of thumb is: the student should work outside of class 2 hours for each hour of class time. Plan your assignments accordingly.

Here are a few items to include in your syllabus:

Instructors name, and contact information

Office hours (remember that all TA's are required to schedule at least one of the office hours in the Mathskeller).

Textbook reference (there is a solution manual available for odd-numbered problems, it is not required though): Peter Tannenbaum, Excursions in Modern Mathematics with Mini-Excursions, custom edition for the University of Kentucky), 2008.

Grading Policy

Attendance Policy

Exam dates and places

Important dates:

- Last day to add: Sep 3
- Last day to drop: Sep 17
- Last day to withdraw: Nov 7
- Labor Day: Sep 1
- Election Day: Nov 4
- Thanksgiving Break: Nov 26-29
- Last day of classes: Dec 12

Warning about cheating and plagiarism. Please make it very clear whether collective work is allowed and on which kind of assignment (my own rule: if it's graded, collective work is not allowed). Indicate what happens in case of conflict (send them to me as a first step).

When you prepared your syllabus, please put a copy in my mailbox.

I hope these remarks are helpful. I am completely open to any question, suggestions on changes, additions, etc. I am now in POT 837 ([ochanine@ms.uky.edu](mailto:ochanine@ms.uky.edu)). I wish you all a wonderful semester.

Serge Ochanine

