

Welcome to Section ES31 of MATH-0950 (Beginning Algebra) at Southeast Community College in the Summer term of 2018.

Contact information

Instructor: Toby Bartels.

Web page (for course policies and assignments): <http://TobyBartels.name/MATH-0950/2018SU/>.

Moodle page (for grades): <http://online.southeast.mrooms3.net/course/view.php?id=68449>.

Email: TBartels@Southeast.edu.

Voice mail: 1-402-323-3452.

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Class hours: Tuesdays and Thursdays from 2:00 PM to 3:55 PM in ESQ 100D.

Office hours: Mondays and Wednesdays from 12:30 to 1:30 PM, Tuesdays and Thursdays from 12:00 to 1:30 PM, and by appointment, in ESQ 112.

Assignments

This will be a mostly flipped classroom; that is, I'll assign you readings to do outside of class, and you'll spend most of the time in class working on problems together. So for each assignment, I'll assign some readings (from the textbook if nothing else, but also often some notes of my own, videos of examples, etc). I'll also assign a few basic problems due in class for each day. You will need to complete all of the daily assignments before you can take all of the exams. Every two weeks, I'll assign more problems from the textbook (and maybe some problems of my own), which you'll work on together in class, with my help when you need it. Finally, you can take the problems home if you need to finish up.

As you work on problems, whether before, during, or after class, you can use your textbook and any notes that you took during your reading. I encourage you to talk to the other students for problems in class; you're supposed to be working on them together! You can also use calculators (unless explicitly forbidden). Finally, you can ask me for help if necessary, and I'll be coming around the room to see who needs help.

There will also be biweekly exams, taken individually and closely based on the problem sets that you were working on. Before taking each exam, you must complete the daily homework assignments corresponding to the same material; since these are all due at least one class day before the exam, this will hopefully already be done. When taking the exams, you may use calculators (but not communication devices such as cell phones) and any notes that you wrote yourself (including the problem sets that you did), but *not* your textbook or anything else not written by you.

There will be a comprehensive final exam on September 20 Thursday. To speed up grading at the end of the term, the exam will be multiple choice and filling in blanks, with no partial credit (except possibly on extra-credit problems). For the final exam, you may use one sheet of notes that you wrote yourself. However, you may not use your book or anything else not written by you. I will have a mock exam ready at least two weeks before the actual exam.

Grading

You can see your grade, as far as I have it calculated at any given time, by logging in to the Moodle site.

Here are the assignments that contribute to your grade, with their frequencies and percentage of the final grade:

- Daily reading homework, graded for correctness: 20% total;
- Biweekly problem sets, graded for completeness: 20% total;
- Biweekly exams, graded for correctness: 40% total;
- A comprehensive final exam (September 20 Thursday): 20%.

Nothing else directly affects your grade. However, there will be extra-credit problems on the problem sets, which I will grade for correctness.

Strictly speaking, there is no curve, so you are not competing against your fellow students. In fact, you'll be working on a lot of your assignments together! However, if grades don't turn out as I expect, then I'll consider whether an assignment was more difficult than I intended and adjust the grades accordingly (usually by making a hard problem extra credit).

Sometimes you will be required to show some of your work; make sure that you read and follow the instructions! To get as much credit as possible, it's good to explain your answers as clearly as you can, even when the instructions don't specifically ask you to. If you can convince me that you know what you're doing, then you'll get some credit. But if it looks as if you just pulled an answer out of thin air (or the back of the book), then you won't get credit.

I also suggest that you cross out (and *not* erase) any significant amount of work that you decide is incorrect, in case you later want to look at it after all; this also makes it easier to read the paper later. Along the same lines, I'd appreciate it if your papers are cleanly detached (not torn out of a spiral notebook) and of a normal size (not scraps or notecards). Finally, if you have several sheets that aren't properly fastened together, then make sure that you have your name on each sheet.

Attendance

I need to take attendance every day for purposes of financial aid; if you fail the class, then I must report your last date of attendance. If this is too early, then this can affect your financial aid. If you don't show up at all during the first week or so, then you'll be automatically dropped from the class at the worst possible time (when you'll still have to pay for it but almost certainly won't get financial aid for it). On the other hand, if you decide to drop the class after you show up, then you'll need to fill out a withdrawal form to do that. But check with the financial aid office before you drop; in fact, sometimes it's best not to drop at all if you're going to take the class again and pass it.

I will normally use your turned-in work to take attendance, so make sure that you sign the attendance sheet if you don't turn anything in. (On the first day of class, I'll pass around an attendance sheet.) If you expect to be absent, then tell me ahead of time! That way, we can arrange for you to ask any questions that you need and to make up work. If you can't contact me ahead of time, then contact me as soon as possible. Once I grade an assignment for correctness, you won't be able to make it up, but I can delay grading it or arrange an exception if you're in touch with me. You can turn in problem sets for completeness at any time through the last day of the term (September 20 Thursday), but they'll be easiest if you're in class to do them.

I'm not concerned with the reasons for your absence or tardiness; what's important is that you communicate with me about it. On the other hand, if you want a late Withdrawal or an Incomplete, then you will need a good reason with unusual circumstances, such as a serious administrative error by the college or a major disruption out of your control.

Schedule

The first day of class (July 12 Thursday), I'll discuss the administrative aspects of the course and give a brief introduction to the basic ideas of Algebra. If you miss this day, then you shouldn't suffer too much for it, but you'll want to get the administrative information. The next day (July 17 Tuesday), the class will begin in earnest.

The official textbook is *Elementary Algebra* written by Marecek & Anthony-Smith and published by OpenStax.

For the (possibly updated) schedule of specific dates for each reading, check the homework assignments online. Exams are about once every other week, usually on a Monday; all of the dates are listed online. There is also a comprehensive final exam on September 20 Thursday.

The last day to drop the course with a full refund is July 19 Thursday; the last day to drop at all is September 4 Tuesday. There is no school on September 3 Monday. On WebAdvisor, your midterm grade estimates should be available by August 16 Thursday, and your final grades by September 22 Saturday.