

Math 237 Linear Algebra

Course information:	Math 237–Linear Algebra Fall 2017 Course format: Web-enhanced	Instructor:	Dr. Drew Lewis drewlewis@southalabama.edu ILB 439
Meeting times:	TR 9:30-10:45 COMM 0160	Office hours:	TBD

Course description

This course provides an introduction to linear algebra. Topics include systems of linear equations, matrices, Gaussian elimination, rank, linear independence, subspaces, basis, dimension, linear transformations, determinants, eigenvalues and eigenvectors, change of basis, diagonalization, the abstract concept of a vector space, and applications. Core Course.

Course materials

The textbook is *Linear Algebra with Applications* by Holt, second edition. An older first edition would also be fine, although some of the homework problem numbers have changed.

Learning Outcomes

At the completion of this course, students will

- 1) Be able to solve systems of linear equations.
- 2) Be able to determine whether or not a set with given operations is a vector space or a subspace of another vector space.
- 3) Be able to determine properties of sets of vectors such as whether they are linearly independent, whether they span, and whether they are a basis.
- 4) Be able to perform fundamental operations in the algebra of matrices, including multiplying and inverting matrices.
- 5) Be able to use and apply algebraic properties of a linear transformation.
- 6) Be able to determine geometric information about a linear transformation, including computing determinants, eigenvalues, and eigenvectors.

Topics

We will cover the first seven chapters of the book, although in a more intelligent order, along with some selected topics as time permits.

Attendance Policy

Attendance is required for this course, and will be tracked each day with a sign-in sheet. The attendance threshold is set at 80% to account for a small number of short term absences for any reason. Should you have excused absences for more than 5 days, come talk to me so we can make arrangements.

Team-Based Learning

This class is taught by a method called **team-based learning**. Based on your responses to a survey on the first day of class, you will be assigned to a team that you will work with on various activities in class each day. The course is divided into **6 modules**.

- Before each module begins, **you will be responsible for ensuring your own readiness for the module**. A list of learning outcomes for the readiness assurance process is available in Sakai; you should be able to do each of these things before coming to class on the first day of the module. Due to the cumulative nature of mathematics, some of these readiness assurance outcomes are topics from previous classes, and some are topics from earlier in this class.
- The first day of each module will be dedicated to the **Readiness Assurance Process**. The schedule for the readiness assurance days is

Module	Date
Systems of Linear Equations	August 22
Vector Spaces	
Structure of Vector Spaces	
Algebraic Properties of Linear Maps	October 17
Matrix Algebra	October 31
Geometric Properties of Linear Maps	November 14

On these days, you will first take an **Individual Readiness Assurance Test (iRAT)**. After submitting this, working with your teammates you will retake the same test as the **Team Readiness Assurance Test (tRAT)**. These are not “tests” in the traditional sense, but rather 10 questions designed to measure if you are prepared for the team activities on subsequent days.

- On the other class days, you will work with your teammates on a series of activities designed to guide you through discovering the course material.
- Part of your grade will be determined by the **peer evaluation** process. At midterm and at final, you will fill out a Google Forms survey evaluating your peers and providing them feedback. You will receive the anonymous feedback from your teammates, as well as a score that is the average of your teammates’ evaluation of you.

Additionally, I will give you a multiplier score based on the quality of your feedback to your peers. This number will be 100% for any student that makes a good faith effort to fairly evaluate their peers. This multiplier will be multiplied by your evaluation score as determined by your teammates.

The questions for the peer evaluation will be determined by the class on the first day.

- Your **Class Participation Score** will be determined by a weighted average of the following four items. The weights will be determined by the class on the first day

Component	Weight
iRAT	TBD
tRAT	TBD
Peer Evaluation	TBD
Attendance	TBD

This score will help determine your final grade, as detailed below.

Standards Based Grading

This course is graded by a methodology called **standards based grading**. Instead of receiving one percentage grade for an assessment, you will be assessed on whether or not you mastered individual **learning standards**. A list of these 25 standards is available in Sakai. Your grade in the course will be based on how many of these standards you demonstrate mastery of. **On each standard, you will have the opportunity to earn up to two checkmarks; the total number of checkmarks you earn will determine your grade** (see below).

Feedback

On a written assessment, you will not receive a score or a percentage. There will be a list of the standards that were covered on that assessment, and a number or symbol next to each one.

- A **M** means you successfully demonstrated **Mastery** of that standard. Great job! Check off another box on your progress sheet.
- A ***** means you have a minor mistake, unrelated to the standard being assessed. For example, if you make a single arithmetic error while row reducing a matrix but do everything else correctly, you will earn a *. If you receive a *, I won't give you any other feedback on that problem. If you can determine your mistake on your own, and come explain it to me in my office hours and finish the problem correctly, then I will modify the * into a 1. **This must be done in the week following the assessment.** After a week, the * will be treated the same as an R.
- A **R** means you are eligible to **Reassess** in my office hours. You will earn this mark if you made a good faith attempt and demonstrated partial understanding, but did not demonstrate full mastery of that standard on this assessment. You should work some more practice problems, and come by my office hours if you still do not understand. You can either wait for the next quiz, or reassess during my office hours (see "Reassessments" below).
- A **N** means there was **No Significant Evidence** of understanding, and you are **Not Eligible** for an office hours reassessment on this standard. Your next attempt must come on an in-class assessment.

Unfortunately, this grading system is far too sophisticated for Sakai's gradebook to handle. So you will periodically receive an automatic email from me detailing your current progress in the course. If you have any questions about how to interpret where you stand, come to my office hours to discuss.

Reassessment

You will have multiple opportunities to demonstrate mastery of each standard. Your first opportunity will be on one of the daily quizzes.

- 1) Each standard will show up on quizzes for four consecutive weeks, beginning the class day after it is discussed in class (except, of course, standards that we cover in late November). For example, standards that we cover on Tuesday, September 5th will appear on quizzes on the next four Thursdays, September 7, 14, 21, and 28. A detailed schedule listing when each standard appears on quizzes is posted in Sakai.
- 2) There will be a midterm in class on Tuesday, October 10, a semifinal assessment the last week of class, and the final exam.
- 3) Additionally, if you receive an R on a standard, you can come to my office to reassess the standard. There are a few caveats to office hour reassessments:
 - In order to reassess a standard in my office, you must have completed additional practice problems and **fill out a reassessment form** (blank forms are available in Sakai).
 - **Office hour reassessments are given at the discretion of the instructor, they are not guaranteed opportunities.**

- **You can only reassess one standard per day** (or perhaps two closely related standards that can be assessed by a single problem).
- If you come in for help on a standard, you should come back at a later time to reassess it after you have practiced it some more on your own. But you may certainly ask for help on one standard, and then demonstrate mastery of a different one during the same visit.
- **Reassessment opportunities may be limited by practical considerations like time limitations and fairness to your classmates, particularly towards the end of the semester.** I do my best to accommodate everyone, but this is especially difficult at the end of the semester. **Students from previous semesters say the best thing you can do is to start reassessing early in the semester.**
- You can certainly demonstrate mastery of a standard for a second time in my office hours; however, to qualify it must occur in a subsequent week after you first mastered the standard.

Assessments

Each day we will have a quiz in the last 15 minutes of class giving you opportunity to master several standards. Note that you must have participated in class that day to be eligible to take the quiz. There will also be a **midterm exam on Tuesday, October 10**, and the **final exam will be Thursday, December 7 at 10:30**.

Grading

At the end of the semester, your grade will be computed in the following manner. Note that for each grade you must meet every criteria listed.

To earn a letter grade of you should at least
A	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Obtain 45 mastery checkmarks; • Complete 10 homework reports; • Have a 90% Class Participation Score
B	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Obtain 40 mastery checkmarks; • Complete 8 homework reports; • Have a 80% Class Participation Score
C	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Obtain 35 mastery checkmarks; • Complete 6 homework reports; • Have a 70% Class Participation Score
D	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Obtain 25 mastery checkmarks; • Complete 4 homework reports; • Have a 50% Class Participation Score
F	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Not fit in the above categories.

Homework

The only way to learn mathematics is to do mathematics; for this reason, I will regularly provide you with homework problems. **These are for your own practice.** Unlike most math classes, I will not ask you to hand these in for a grade. I will instead ask you to turn in a homework report each week (blank ones are available in Sakai). In the report, you will list problems you've worked on for practice, and ones you are still having trouble with. **Homework reports are due every Thursday at the beginning of class.** Late homework reports will not be accepted.

Missed Exams and Coursework

The midterm and final exams can only be made up in the event of illness (with a doctor's note), or other emergent situation (with appropriate documentation). The definition of "emergent" is at the discretion of the instructor. Quizzes can be made up in extreme cases similar to exams, but it is often simpler to just reassess on a subsequent quiz or in my office hours. Readiness Assurance Tests will not be made up; an appropriately documented emergent situation will be handled by simply omitting an iRAT from the average, and still using the tRAT score. An unexcused absence will result in a 0 for both the iRAT and tRAT scores.

Calculator Policy

Calculators of any sort may be used on exams; a calculator that performs row reduction of matrices will be useful. You will only receive credit on standards for which you show all your work, but if you have previously demonstrated mastery of a standard (e.g. row reduction) you may do that part on a calculator.