

# How do I...?

## Students' guide to 18.01 policies and Procedures

### Fall 2017

These are the standard policies for the class. They are guidelines, and not written in stone (unlike the MIT grading policies which are official rules). The final decision in any given case is up to the recitation instructors/Professor Speck.

## 1 Lectures and recitations

**1.1 What if I have to miss a lecture or recitation?** There is no mandatory attendance, so you don't have to notify anyone. However, you're responsible for catching up on the content that you missed (both mathematically and practically, e.g. announcements). Ask a friend to take notes and to go over them with you! The material (lecture notes) made available on the course home page (or on OCW – OpenCourseWare) is *not* designed to replace the actual lecture.

**1.2 How do I switch from one recitation section to another?** You can do it yourself via Stellar as long as the section you want to change into is not full. If that doesn't work, please talk to **Theresa Cummings** at the Undergraduate Math Office (2-110).

**1.3 What if I fell behind and don't understand any more what's going on?** Start by going to an office hour and explaining your problem. There may be alternative resources available that enable you to catch up again. Two of those are OCW (where you can watch lecture and recitation videos) and the Mathematics Learning Center (through which you can book one-on-one help; see the course homepage).

## 2 Homework

**2.1 I missed the homework deadline!** Your homework is due every Friday 15 minutes before the start of class (see 2.2 for the location). If you are late and there is no compelling reason, just let it go. *We don't accept late submissions under any circumstances.* If there are good reasons, please discuss the matter with **your recitation instructor**. Depending on the situation, he/she may ask for a supporting letter from Student Support Services (you should never have to show medical documentation to any of the math staff). The end result of the process will be *an email from your recitation instructor to you, CC'd to Professor Speck*, which states that you were excused from one/more problem sets. Eventually, you should check on Stellar to see that this is reflected in your numerical grades. *You have to make such arrangements yourself; it's not going to happen automatically* (even if you've already talked to Student Support Services).

**2.2 Can I submit my homework by email? Slide it under the instructors' office door? Have it delivered by carrier pigeon?** No. We'll just ignore it. There's only the one way to submit your homework: place it in the Pset boxes outside of room 4-174.

**2.3 What if I have religious obligations that prevent me from doing a particular pset?** Again, talk to your **recitation instructor**, and please do that in advance if you can. The end result of the process will be an email to you, etc. etc. (see 2.1).

**2.4 I don't understand how my homework was graded!** Talk to **your recitation instructor**. The focus of this discussion should be mathematics, which means to understand what the expectations were underlying a particular problem. Yes, you can get your score changed. *Any such discussion should happen as soon as possible after the homework is returned.* Under no circumstance will you be allowed to talk about your homework to the actual grader (department policy).

**2.5 What if my pset gets lost?** First, check in Stellar to see if you got a grade. If you did, presumably your pset got assigned to another section (maybe your previous section if you just switched). If you did not get a grade, talk to **your recitation instructor**, etc. (see 2.1).

**2.6 What if I joined the course late, and have missed some psets for that reason?** You have to talk to Professor Speck and your recitation instructor about this. The outcome of this discussion should be an email to you, etc. (see 2.1). *It's important that you do that as soon as possible after joining the class.* Taking such situations into account is not going to happen automatically!

## 3 Midterms

**3.1 Help, I failed the midterm!** In that case, you'll be notified and have a chance to take the makeup midterm at the scheduled time a couple of days later. You will only be able to get up to the minimum passing level in that way. Remember there are four midterms, so if that happens once it's not such a big deal grade-wise.

**3.2 What if I oversleep/go to the wrong room/etc.?** That would be an unexcused absence. You can take the makeup midterm at the scheduled time, but it will only count up to the minimum passing level (see 3.1).

**3.3 What if I was ill, or had to be away for an important reason?** That would be an excusable absence. Talk to **Professor Speck**. If you do that in advance or right after the midterm, *you will be able to take the makeup for full credit.* In any case, the outcome of the discussion with Professor Speck should be an email to you stating exactly what solution was arrived at. He may require a

supporting letter from Student Support Services. However, *you have to talk to Professor Speck yourself.*

**3.4 Can I take the midterm later during the semester?** Well, there's the makeup (with policies as explained above), but otherwise no, you can't take any exam at any time other than the scheduled ones.

**3.5 I need accommodations for the midterms (or final exam).** You should have a letter from the Student Disabilities Office. Please bring copies of that letter both to **Professor Speck** and to **Theresa Cummings** in 2-110. Theresa will be in charge of arranging accommodations.

## 4 Final exam and grade

**4.1 What if I'm ill/can't make it to the final?** You should discuss this with **Professor Speck** as soon as possible, and with Student Support Services. Usually, this results in grades of I or O (assuming you were on track to pass in the first place). Check the MIT grading policy for more details.

**4.1 How is the grade computed?** We take a weighted average of homework, midterm, and final grades. The outcome is one number, only that number is taken into consideration. Grade cutoffs are only determined after the final exam.

**4.3. If I didn't do as well as I wanted to, can I improve my grade by doing additional work after the semester?** No (MIT policy).

**4.4 What if I fail the class?** Usually, more than 90% of the students who do all the coursework, midterms and exam do pass. If you don't, you'll have to take the course again, normally in the spring. The spring class is much smaller and individual students can be given more attention, which will give you a better chance to get on top of the material.

