AP Calculus AB Syllabus

# Course Overview

This course offers a combination of assessment and instruction in an online environment containing but not limited to the areas of functions, functions and limits, differential calculus, and integral calculus. The course applies differential calculus to finding the slope of a curve, solving problems with related rates, calculating motion properties of moving particles, etc. It then applies integral calculus to finding the areas of irregular regions in a plane, volumes of rotation by various methods, and other scientific applications.

The purpose of this course is to provide students with a deep understanding of the concepts of calculus in order to prepare them for the AP exam and for further college and university calculus courses. Because this class is presented in an online format, the pace and schedule varies from student to student, and no additional topics are presented past the exam time.

All the instruction is provided for the student, with feedback given for every exam, where students are required to give exact mathematical answers, often in sentence form, and describe, in detail, how solutions were arrived at, and the reasoning or theorems applied in the process. The teacher is also available at least five days a week for one-on-one support and help for the students, in addition to holding online collaborative lessons and offering discussion-based assessment to students.

# Course Outline

Semester 1

* **Module One: Functions (suggested pace 3-4 weeks)**
* Determine whether a relation is a function, as well as determine its domain and range
* Use a graphing calculator to graph functions
* Perform combinations of functions arithmetically or through composition, creating new functions; perform translations, reflections, and expansions/compressions on functions, and use technology such as a graphing calculator to experiment with such effects
* Understand the properties of power functions, polynomials, rational functions, trigonometric functions; furthermore, use graphing calculators to explore the effects of changing any parameters of such functions on their corresponding graphs
* **Module Two: Limits and Continuity (suggested pace 4 weeks)**
* Evaluate the behavior of a function (in terms of limits) graphically (through sketching by hand and by using a graphing calculator), numerically, and algebraically
* Understand the connection between vertical asymptotes and (infinite) limits, and use graphing calculators to support conclusions
* Understand the connection between horizontal asymptotes and the “end behavior” of a function, and use a graphing calculator to help explore this concept
* Use limits to describe the behavior of a function; use a graphing calculator to get numerical approximations for limits
* Understand the connection between limits and continuity; use a function’s continuity to evaluate its limit at a point; be able to determine when a function is continuous (or discontinuous), and understand how a graphing calculator can explore this further, as well as its limitations in that; identify the approximate roots of a function using the Intermediate-Value Theorem
* Introduce various applications of limits, such as instantaneous and average rate of change, as well as the motion of an object or particle: displacement, distance, and velocity.
* **Module Three: Differentiation (suggested pace 4-5 weeks)**
* Understand the definition of the derivative as a local linear approximation, and what that implies, as well as differentiability and using graphs to explore tangent lines; understand the different notations for the derivative; explore the relationship between the graph of a function and its derivative; further exploring the characteristics of the graphs of *f*, *f* ', and *f*
* Be able to get derivatives of polynomial functions
* Be able to use the product/quotient rules to find derivatives
* Be able to get derivatives of trigonometric functions
* Use the chain rule (both of Newton and Leibniz’s forms) to find the derivatives of composite functions
* If possible, find the inverse of a function
* Understand the properties of exponential and logarithmic functions; furthermore, use graphing calculators to explore the effects of changing any parameters of such functions on their corresponding graphs
* Get derivatives of logarithmic functions
* Get derivatives of exponential and inverse trigonometric functions
* Use implicit differentiation to find the derivative/slope of a curve that is defined implicitly; use logarithmic differentiation to find derivatives.
* **Module Four: Applications of Derivatives (suggested pace 4-5 weeks)**
* Be able to determine the concavity of a function and discuss its implications on the shape of the curve; be able to find critical points, local extrema, and points of inflection
* Be able to determine the intervals for where a function is increasing or decreasing, both analytically, numerically and with a graphing calculator; be able to sketch the curve of a function based upon information from its first and second derivatives – and vice versa
* Be able to determine the global or absolute extrema of a function on a closed interval, using both algebraic analytical techniques (with either the 1st or 2nd derivatives (or both)), as well as with the use of a graphing calculator
* Find the optimal values (maximums or minimums) in various application problems
* Use derivatives to discuss the motion and rate of change of objects in terms of distance and displacement, velocity, speed and acceleration; use derivatives to discuss Rectilinear Motion (motion of a particle along a line)
* Use derivatives to solve related rates problems (being able to model how the rates of different quantities that depend upon the same parameter, such as time, interact)
* Be able to use the Mean Value Theorem for Derivatives to make conclusions about a function on certain intervals (and points within those intervals), and explore these results via graphical methods; evaluate limits involving indeterminate forms using L'Hôpital's rule (for example: 0/0, ∞/∞,0\*∞, ∞-∞, 1∞, 00, and ∞0)
* Understand the definition of the derivative as a local linear approximation, and what that implies, as well as differentiability, and using graphs to explore tangent lines; understand the different notations for the derivative; explore the relationship between the graph of a function and its derivative; further exploring the characteristics of the graphs of *f*, *f* ', and *f* ''
* Use local linear approximations (or differentials) to aid in approximation techniques

Semester 2

* **Module Five: Integration (suggested pace 3-4 weeks)**
* Introduce Integrals with Archimedes’ Method of Exhaustion (numerical approximation) and how it leads to the natural use of the rectangle approximation method for the area under a curve; represent the area under a curve as a limit using sigma notation
* Identify the definite integral as a limit of Riemann Sums; evaluate definite integrals by interpreting them geometrically; understand the differences or similarities, depending, between area (or “net signed area”) and the definite integral, and explore this concept using a graphing calculator; further exploring Riemann Sums and accumulated change from a Rate of Change
* Use integrals to define functions, and explore that relationship; be able to take the derivatives of integrals by the Fundamental Theorem of Calculus; use the Fundamental Theorem of Calculus to evaluate definite integrals
* Evaluate indefinite integrals to find the general antiderivatives of functions
* Evaluate indefinite integrals by use of the method of substitution; be able to evaluate definite integrals by use of the graphing calculator
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* **Module Six: Applications of Integrals (suggested pace 3-4 weeks)**
* Find the area between two curves using definite integrals, and explore this using technology
* Use the method of discs/slicing/washers to find the volume of a solid of revolution
* Explore and understand the Mean Value Theorem for Integrals; find the average value of a function; explore Rectilinear Motion with Integrals, as well as General Motion of Objects (Distance, Displacement, Velocity, Speed, and Acceleration)
* Evaluate constants of integration given an initial condition
* **Module Seven: Differential Equations and More Riemann Sums (suggested pace 3-4 weeks)**
* Evaluate constants of integration given an initial condition
* Solve separable differential equations; model various applications using separable differential equations, with particular focus on the study of the equation y'= ky and exponential growth
* Draw a slope field (or direction field) for a differential equation; be able to interpret a slope field when given it; be able to interpret the solution curve attached to an initial value
* Use numerical approximation techniques to evaluate definite integrals, where appropriate, including the area under a curve; use Riemann Sums (using left, right and midpoint evaluation points) and trapezoidal sums to approximate definite integrals of functions through algebraic, graphical, and tabular representation (table of values); discuss error implications of different methods
* **Module Eight: Supplemental Topics (suggested pace 3-4 weeks)**
* Understand the definition of the derivative as a local linear approximation, and what that implies, as well as differentiability, and using graphs to explore tangent lines; understand the different notations for the derivative; explore the relationship between the graph of a function and its derivative; further exploring the characteristics of the graphs of *f*, *f* ', and *f* ''
* Use numerical approximation techniques to evaluate definite integrals, where appropriate, including the area under a curve; use Riemann Sums (using left, right and midpoint evaluation points) and trapezoidal sums to approximate definite integrals of functions through algebraic, graphical, and tabular representation (table of values); discuss error implications of different methods
* Use integrals to define functions, and explore that relationship
* **Module Nine: Exam Preparation (suggested pace 3-4 weeks)**
* All Previous Topics

# Assessments

Students are assessed through a combination of quizzes, review assignments, module tests, teacher-student interaction, and the final exam.

* Students take an online, randomized multiple-choice quiz every lesson. These quizzes give them instant feedback as to their understanding of those lessons.
* The discussion-based assessments or collaborative lessons are such that the student receives detailed feedback about their methods, process, and understanding, and they must reach a certain level of proficiency on the assignment (through resubmitting if necessary) before being allowed to take the chapter test for that unit.
* The module test is contains two parts. The first part is a ten-question online randomized multiple-choice test, and the second part is a five-question essay exam where the students are required to show their work for each question, where they must demonstrate in detail their explanations, applications of theorems, mathematical proofs, etc, to explain exactly how they arrived at their answers. This written portion is worth significantly more marks than the actual answer itself.
* Students are required to both engage the teacher in verbal communication, both to receive any help if desired, as well as be ready to defend their quiz or test answers and explain the solutions to their problems orally if requested, as well as answer essay-level questions and be able to discuss these questions thoroughly and accurately.

# Lesson Instruction

The Online Textbook powered by StudyForge technology consists of lessons which are delivered through multimedia flash videos, with video and audio components, with interactive applets and features built in every lesson, an accompanying workbook for taking guided, detailed notes for each lesson and doing a large variety of practice questions afterwards, with access to the Detailed Solutions for every practice question. In regards to the interactive nature of each lesson, this includes use of applets (for example: the student varies the density of a slope field and moves the initial point around to a desired location, then changes the size of the solution curve through that initial value – or any combination of that. Another example would be investigating the mean value theorem for derivatives by testing the lower and upper limits on a continuous function to see whether a “c” point exists where the slope of the tangent line equals the slope of the secant line, etc.), interactive flash animations (such as rectilinear motion, or varying the cut size of a cardboard to vary the size of the box created – all happening three-dimensionally in real time, rotating a cross-section of a square-based prism by dragging the mouse around so that the cross-section can be fully visualized, etc.) as well as other features, including built-in pauses during each lesson for the students to stop and reflect on the material, work on a question themselves before viewing the answer, or rewind the video and go through a section of the lesson again. (Note that at any time the student can pause the video, rewind, and even view at half speed.)

General lessons include investigation, application, theory, helpful tips, a heavy emphasis on intuitive understanding, and a very large number of worked out examples, in detail. The lessons are very comprehensive and are hence broken down into three to four parts (typically) to aid in the learning process.

# Technology

Students are required to have a graphing calculator. The course recommends a TI-83 or a TI-84, and contains instructions for these calculators at various key points, as well as how to use the calculator under certain circumstances.

# Resources

College Calculus Workbook – Practice Questions and Detailed Solutions. Merz Learning Inc., Kelowna, British Columbia, 2011

* These college-level questions were developed by Dr. Richard Hewko (Ph D – teacher of college calculus for over 30 years) and Bruce Merz (M.Sc. (Math), M.A. (Ed – Curriculum and Instruction) – teacher of calculus at the college level and high school level (AP Calculus), for over 15 years.
* They consist of all levels of cognitive processes – simple review and basic calculations, understanding and application, problem solving, synthesis, verbal (written) explanation, graphing calculator integrated, advanced questions on pure math and applied math, proofs, etc. It is very reflective of a typical college textbook in terms of the variety and nature of the questions and answers expected, including its depth and range of questions (see next bullet point)
* There are over 800 questions, and the detailed solutions alone contain over 400 pages of highly detailed solutions, explaining the thought process, critical thinking, and steps to solutions.

Husch, Lawrence S. and University of Tennessee. Visual Calculus. Knoxville, 2001. <http://archives.math.utk.edu/visual.calculus/>