

MTH 103A- College Algebra I -Course Syllabus

Spring 2026, Section 4

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For email, please include "MTH 103A-004" in your subject line. Instructors will strive to respond to emails within one to two business days, but may not respond if

- they already addressed or are planning on addressing the question/issue in class to everyone.
- the answer is available on the syllabus or in D2L.

Equipment:

- Desire2Learn (D2L)-organizes the course
- Gradescope (gradescope.com) – There is no fee associated with Gradescope. You should receive an email with instructions for registering. Be SURE TO REGISTER USING YOUR MSU EMAIL.
- WebWork-online homework
 - <http://www.math.msu.edu/webwork>
 - For information on cost, payment due date, etc. please visit <https://apps.math.msu.edu/Student/>.
- Calculator-We recommend TI-83+ or TI-84 or Class Calc App. Other equivalent calculators (Sharp, Casio, HP) may be used with permission from the instructor. Calculators with symbolic manipulation (TI-89, TI-92, etc.) or communication capabilities may not be used. Unless Class Calc -in Test mode-is being used on your phone, the tablet/laptop/phone may not be used as a calculator on graded assessments. Students are responsible to develop adequate proficiency with their graphing calculator.

PLEASE NOTE: The calculator should be brought to every class meeting, and it will be required for the quizzes and exams. If you are using your cell phone for Class Calc, make sure the cell phone is fully charged. Any use of texts, notes, 'crib sheets', lists of information concealed in calculators, etc. as an aid in writing quizzes or exams is specifically prohibited in this course.

- Printer (Suggested)-Fill in the blank PDFs will be provided for our class notes. Many students find it useful to print these out prior to attending class.
- Internet and Webcam-For any part of this class that is online, you will need a decent internet connection and a webcam on your laptop/desktop computer.

Attendance: Two instructional periods are scheduled for each week.

Students are expected to attend all lectures. The University has a policy for non-attendance. It states "Students who fail to attend the first four class sessions or class by the fifth day of the semester, whichever occurs first, may be dropped from the course."

Attendance will be taken. You are responsible for all the material covered. **Any changes in this syllabus or scheduling of class material will be announced during class meetings and/or D2L.** For those occasions when you are unable to attend class, it is expected that you will use the materials posted in D2L to get caught up in the course.

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Assessments and Grades:

- This course will be using “standards-based” grading. For 103A, there are 16 learning objectives (A1-B7) that students should mastery throughout the course. Objectives will always be assessed using a 4 point scale.

Grade	Meaning	Formal Meaning
4	I own this stuff. I could teach it!	Mastery - exceptional conceptual understanding, able to explain reasoning.
3	I know how to do this and can do the problems, but I am not quite sure why it works.	Proficient - solid understanding, can do complex problems without help
2	I'm starting to get it, but I made a couple of mistakes.	Developing - basic understanding, can do simple but not complex problems without help
1	I have to look at examples to finish this problem	Novice - minimal understanding, cannot do simple problems without help
0	I have no idea what you are talking about!	No evidence of learning demonstrated

- You will typically be given 3 opportunities to demonstrate mastery – quiz, unit exam and final exam.

Homework and Attendance

Homework and attendance are not used to calculate your grade however, it is extremely unlikely that a student will master the objectives without completing the homework and actively participating in class.

Quizzes

There are 14 quizzes throughout the semester. Quizzes serve as your first opportunity to demonstrate mastery of an objective.

Eight of the quizzes are traditional paper and pencil quizzes. Each of these quizzes will cover 1 or 2 objectives and will be scored using the rubric in the overview.

Six of the quizzes are on WeBWorK. These are taken outside of class and each covers a single objective. To access or “unlock” these quizzes, you must complete more than 40% of the associated WeBWorK assignment. Because they are not proctored and do not include a “Level 4” explanation component, the maximum score on these quizzes is 3.

Unit Exams

There are three evening unit exams in this class: **Thursday, February 5, Thursday, March 12, and Thursday, April 9** from **7:30pm - 9:00pm**. Put these in your calendar. But seriously, put these in your calendar now! It is bad if you have to miss an exam. Please see below for the strict rules for a make-up exam. To be safe... put these in your calendar and let your instructor know immediately if you have a conflict!

The unit exam is the second opportunity to improve your mastery score on each objective. For each objective:

- If your exam score is higher than your quiz score, the exam score will become your new mastery grade for that objective.
- If your exam score is lower than your quiz score, the average of your quiz and exam scores will become your mastery grade for that objective.

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Final Exam

The final exam is on **Tuesday, April 28th from 10:00AM-12:00PM**. **Your final exam will include all objectives for which your mastery score is less than 2.0**. In addition, you may choose to include any objectives if you would like the opportunity to raise your mastery score. Like the Unit Exams, for each objective on the Final:

- If your final exam score is higher than your previous mastery score, the final exam score will become your new mastery grade for that objective.
- If your final exam score is lower than your previous mastery score, the average of your final exam and previous mastery scores will become your mastery grade for that objective.

IF YOU HAVE ANY OBJECTIVE MASTERY SCORES LESS THAN 2.0 (1.99 OR LESS) FOR OBJECTIVES A1-B7, YOU ARE REQUIRED TO TAKE THE FINAL EXAM. IF YOU ARE REQUIRED TO TAKE THE FINAL EXAM, YOU WILL FAIL THE COURSE IF YOU DO NOT TAKE THE EXAM.

Engagement/Participation

You are awarded some course credit for participation; so, it is important that you attend the live class sessions.

There will be **up to 14 randomly collected classwork samples**. These will be submitted to Gradescope using the Gradescope App or a “picture to pdf” app such as CamScanner or the Notes App on an iPhone. (There are many free apps available.) The two lowest participation scores will be dropped. The classwork samples will be scored as follows:

Gradebook Score	Calculation Score	Description
2	1	Sample shows an appropriate level of engagement with the class activities.
1	0	Sample was submitted but little evidence that student participated in class.
0	-1	Sample was not submitted, or student was not in class.

Important notes about scanning and uploading:

- All submissions must be **PDFs**.
- Make sure that your scanned pages are of a high enough quality that your work is **clearly visible**.
- Be careful that you are uploading the **correct document** for each assignment.
- If your work is **not readable** on the page or you upload the **wrong document**, your grade for that assignment will be 0.

Course Grade Calculation

Your final grade in this class will be calculated as follows:

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*Final grade = Average of Mastery Scores * Engagement Multiplier,
where Engagement Multiplier = $1 + .04 * \text{Average of Participation Scores}$*

This class uses MSU's [Pass-No Grade \(P-N\) System](#). **To receive a P (pass) in MTH 103A, your final grade must be 2.5 or higher.** There is no extra credit and no rounding. It is highly recommended that your goal should be an overall average of 3.0 with no single objective grade less than 2.0.

If your final grade is less than 2.5, you will receive an N, which will prevent you from continuing into MTH 103B.

Keep in mind that your mastery grades for ALL the objectives in both MTH 103A and MTH 103B will be used to calculate your numerical grade for MTH 103B.

To assist in your decision making, the grading scale for MTH 103B is shown below:

Average of all MTH 103A and MTH 103B Objective Mastery Grades with Engagement Multiplier	MTH 103B grade reported to registrar
3.6 – 4.0000	4.0
3.3 – 3.5999	3.5
2.9 – 3.2999	3.0
2.4 – 2.8999	2.5
2.0 – 2.3999	2.0
1.5 – 1.9999	1.5
1.0 – 1.4999	1.0
0.0 – 0.9999	0.0

Make-up policy:

- Typically a missed quiz/exam will receive a score of "0" for each objective covered.
- Make up quizzes and exams are only allowed with:
 - A university excused absence (such as a religious holiday, military obligation, participation in MSU faculty-sponsored field trips, rehearsals, performances, or participation athletic competition) as described on the ombudsperson's website.
 - For exams only (not quizzes), an approved documented medical excuse (described on the ombudsperson's website) which includes a note from a physician specifically stating that you were unable to attend the class on that date. Your instructor must be notified prior to the time of the exam, or, in the case of extreme emergencies (at the discretion of the course supervisor), immediately after the exam.
- Students must look at this syllabus carefully and plan well ahead. Advance travel schedules (business or personal) are NOT valid excuses.

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Grade-change policy:

- If you have any questions regarding the grading of any quizzes/exams, you must submit a **regrade request through Gradescope**. Your request must include a specific description of the suspected grading error, or it will not be considered. This must be done on the day that the instructor hands back the material in class, or within 24 hours of the scores being published, otherwise no grading changes will be made.
- Grades can be viewed on the **math department Gradebook** about one week after each exam. It is your responsibility to check the accuracy of these scores and report any discrepancies to your ULA or instructor within 24 hours of grades being published, otherwise no scoring changes will be made.

Integrity of Scholarship and Grades

All students are expected to adhere to the University's policy concerning academic integrity. According to this policy, "... no student shall claim or submit the work of another as one's own." For more information visit:

<https://ombud.msu.edu/university-policies-guidelines>.

Check out these additional policies at the following link: [Additional Policies](#) and [Additional University Policies](#).

Important Dates

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Monday, January 12

First Day of Classes

Friday, January 16

Online Open Add for Spring full-time classes ends at 11:59 p.m.

Monday, January 19

Martin Luther King Jr. Day. University closed.

Tuesday, January 20-Friday, January 23

Students go to C212 WH for Mathematics enrollment changes (late adds, section changes, dropping back to a lower course).

Thursday, February 5

Last day to drop with no record of course on transcript.
End of tuition refund period.

Friday, February 13

Classes Cancelled.

Saturday, February 28-Sunday, March 8

Spring Break. Classes Cancelled.

Monday, March 9

Middle of semester. Last day to drop a course with no grade reported.

Tuesday, April 28

Final Exam, 10:00 a.m. – 12:00 noon, Location TBA.

The **uniform comprehensive final exam** will be held on Tuesday, April 28, from 10:00 AM to 12:00 noon.
The room location -according to section number- will be announced.

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Tentative Schedule: A tentative schedule is posted in [D2L](#) under “Content” in the “Course Overview” section. Again, this schedule is tentative. Your instructor will make any announcements about schedule changes during class or via email.

The course objectives for MTH 103A/B are maintained on a separate document and posted in in [D2L](#) under “Content” in the “Course Overview” section.

Resource Center for Persons with Disabilities (RCPD): Please visit RCPD if you need accommodations in this class:

<https://www.rcpd.msu.edu/>

FAQ: Additional FAQs are posted in [D2L](#) under “Content” in the “Course Overview” section.

Student conduct code.

- After absences it is the student's responsibility to obtain missed material from classmates and D2L.
- Students must produce carefully written documents. All writing must be in complete sentences employing English and mathematical symbols. Writing must be legible and neat.
- Office hours are not private lectures. Go to office hours with prepared questions and/or in-depth examples of your attempts at the material. All discourse is to be civil and mutually respectful. Learning Assistants are also available through the [Math Learning Center](#) to provide help with concepts.
- Study groups are encouraged. However, all work not designated as group work must be substantially the student's own work.
- **D2L is the primary resource for this course. Study each section carefully. Not all points from a lesson may be mentioned during lecture.**

Last Important Note:

We believe that every one of you can be successful in this course, but it certainly takes work.

We expect you to give this class your all. Make a routine and stick to it. We typically find that students need to spend on average 10-12 hours per week but more if it's been a while since your last math class. You should plan on a breakdown such as 3 hours of class, 6 hours of homework, 1-2 hours of studying

College math classes can be difficult but if you put in the time and effort we will do our best to help you succeed. We expect you to ask questions whenever anything is unclear.