Math 267 Course Description, Course Policy
Introduction to Differential Equations
Spring 2003

Professor: Scott Hansen, 494 Carver, 294-8171
Office Hours: TBA or by appt.

General Information

The main emphasis of the course is the material from chapters 1, 2, 4 and 5 of the text. Specific sections in chapters 3, 7 may also be included as time permits. The exact sections and suggested practice problems will be handed out in advance.

Exams

We will have 4 in-class exams and a comprehensive final exam. Each exam is worth 100 points and the final is worth 150 pts. The test dates (subject to revision) are:

Fri. Jan 31, Fri. Feb 28, Thr. Mar. 27, Fri. Apr 18

If you are able to take all 4 in-class exams, at the end of the semester I will drop your worst one, and only use your 3 best ones in the semester average.

Homework, quizzes

In addition to the practice problems (mentioned above) there will be regular quizzes and homework assignments through the course of the semester. Occasionally extra credit problems may also be assigned which will add on to the homework grade. The homework and quiz grade is worth 100 pts total. Most of the quiz problems will be like the practice problems on suggested problem list. Many of the test problems will resemble these types of problems also. Homework problems will usually be over more analytical material that is not appropriate for a quiz or in-class exam. To encourage students to work hard on the homework problems I’ll occasionally give extra credit for good work on the more difficult problems. This makes it possible for an average test-taker to get nearly 100 percent on this part of the grade (with enough hard work!)

Grading system

A straight percentage is calculated based upon your homework and quiz grade (100 pts), the in-class exams (300 pts) and the final (150 pts). The semester grade is based upon this percentage.

Tests will be curved based upon my opinion of the difficulty and how well the class does. In past semesters the final scale has been approximately a 87-75-62-50 % scale. (Some of the exams will have lower curves, but the homework and quiz score will be higher.) “Plus” and “minus” grades will be approximately the top and bottom two-three percent in each grade bracket.

Attendance, Late Homework, Missed Quizzes

Attendance is highly recommended but will not contribute directly towards your grade. However, I do regard the homework and quizzes partly as a class participation grade and will accept only one excuse from any one person during the semester regarding late homework or missed quizzes.
Missed Exams

There will be no make–up exams for people who miss an exam without a valid reason. A valid reason must be supported by some official document or note of explanation, such as a note from a physician. Lacking this, your semester grade percentage will be calculated using the scores available. (I.e., if you only take 3 test I will not drop the lowest score.)

If you know in advance that for legitimate reasons you will be unable to take an exam, please discuss this with me BEFORE THE TEST- with as much advance notice as is possible.

A missed Final Exam will count as a zero- the above applies only to midterm exams.

Alternate Final Exam

In case you have three exams on the day of our final exam, you will need to talk to the professor of the class which has the least number of students in it, and have him or her set up an alternate test time for you.

Miscellaneous Coments, Pet Peeves

Cell Phones are disruptive. Please turn them off when the lecture begins. Some students slip out during the lecture to talk. Don’t make this a habit.

My email is shansen@iastate.edu. A few people overuse email to ask questions - it is difficult to answer math questions on email, so try to call or see me in person if you want to know how to do a problem.

With regard to correction of partial credit on homework and exam problems, it is always a good idea to check the grading. Occasionally I do miss something and will be happy to correct the oversight. However, on purely judgemental calls, like whether to give 6 our of 10 or 4 out of 10 on some problem, I usually don't change the score. If you think you deserve more partial credit on one of the problems, I will look at the whole exam and decide based on the whole test whether or not to give more credit.

With regard to posting lecture material, I will NOT usually post information given in class on the web. I will post turn-in homework assignments, things I didn’t think of in class, corrections, etc., but if I mention that there will be a quiz in the next class period, that will probably NOT be posted. I like to reward those that go to class.

Along the same lines, don’t call to ask if there is “anything important in class today” so you can decide whether to stay home. The syllabus and approximate schedule are already written down. If you must miss a class it is up to YOU to read the material you missed and get classnotes from a classmate. I will be more willing to help people in office hours that go to class than those that get behind because of missed lectures.

And finally, for a lot of you, this will be a very demanding class. If you are one that struggles with this material, try to not get discouraged, do not fall behind, use the office hours when you need help. If you think you might want a tutor, look into this right away since there are not enough to go around. Finally, feel free to come discuss with me any problems you are having with the course.

Good luck!