

Contemporary Precalculus : MATH 108

Syllabus

Fall 2019

About the course (lectures)

Name : MATH 108 (Section 39403) or Precalculus
Place : KAP 156
Time : MWF 9:00-9:50 AM
Book : Hungerford and Shaw, Contemporary Precalculus: A Graphing Approach (5th Ed.)
Site : <https://blackboard.usc.edu/webapps/login>

About me

Name : Nivedita Bhaskhar or N, whichever you prefer
Email ¹ : bhaskhar AT usc DOT edu
Office : KAP 464B
Hours : (Tentative) Mon 5-7 PM & Wed 12:15 -1:15 PM

About the discussion session and TA

Discussion sections : 9-9:50/10-10:50 on T & Th GFS 212 (check which one you are in!)
TA : Jinting Liu
Email : jintingl AT usc DOT edu
Office : KAP 446
Hours : Check <https://dornsife.usc.edu/mathcenter/consulting-hours/>

What this course is about

You will be introduced to equations and inequalities; functions; graphs; polynomial and rational functions; exponential, logarithmic, and trigonometric functions; analytic geometry. This course will also serve as a gateway into the world of calculus waiting for you!

But before you start ...

You need to have completed Math 040 or the math placement exams. You should be comfortable with general arithmetic and algebraic manipulation, like the rules of exponents, factoring, and dealing with fractions. You should be able to solve simple linear and quadratic equations for an unknown variable. You should know the Quadratic Formula and how to use it. If any of these scare you, please let me know early on so that we can work through the weak links and stabilize ourselves before we get going.

¹Please send short emails and not essays. Emails generally get a fast response on MWF. Emails sent on T,Th & weekends will probably get a delayed response.

Tentative schedule

We will broadly follow the recommended schedule which is up at <https://dornsife.usc.edu/mathematics/math-108-prec calculus/>. However this is liable to change depending on the pace at which our class proceeds.

More resources

The [Math Center](#) is located in 263 KAP and is open on Monday-Friday from 8am to 7pm on most days. It is primarily run by math graduate students here at USC. The office hours of your TA will also be held in the Math Center, although you can go to the Math Center at any time it is open to ask for help.

Students with disabilities

Students with disabilities, please register with Disability Services and Programs (DSP) immediately. Their website is at <https://dsp.usc.edu>. A letter of verification for approved accommodations should be obtained from DSP. Please be sure the letter is delivered to me as early in the semester as possible so that we can ensure that any academic accommodations requested are met smoothly.

A, B, C, D, E or F

There will be about weekly homework sets, weekly quizzes, 2 midterms and a final examination. The final will be cumulative, but with more emphasis on the material taught in the later part of the quarter. You will each be awarded a numerical score based on the higher of the following two schemes:

	Scheme I	Scheme II
Homework	15%	15%
Quizzes	10%	10%
Midterm I & II	20% each	25% (best of two)
Final	35%	50%

For record-keeping during the semester and to get a rough sense of what letter grades the numerical scores might translate to, the standard 10-point interval scheme² will be used. At the end of the course, it is possible that final letter grades may be adjusted to reflect the final distribution of the scores in the class. Such a curve would always be in your favor, else the standard 10-point interval would apply. However, no one will know if such a curve is necessary, or what the curve would be, until all grades are in and all drops are made. Please note that quizzes and exams are not curved individually. There are strictly no extra credit options.

All scores will be recorded in Blackboard, which you are asked to check periodically to ensure there are no oversights.

Exam dates

Midterm I	Oct 4	9:00 A.M-9:50 A.M
Midterm II	Nov 6	9:00 A.M-9:50 A.M
Final	Dec 16	11 A.M-1 P.M.

²90 - 100 = As, 80 - 89.99 = Bs, 70 - 79.99 = Cs, 60 - 69.99 = Ds, < 60 = F

There will be no make-up exams offered unless under extraordinary circumstances. The alternative grading scheme is offered instead as a buffer. Attendance is mandatory for the final exam. It is university policy that no student may take the final exam early or be allowed to skip it, so plan your holiday travel appropriately!!

More about the homework

A homework set will be assigned to you each Wednesday at the beginning of class which will be collected one week later in your Thursday discussion session. It will consist of practice problems (which will not count towards the grade) and mandatory problems (which will count towards the grade). Amongst the mandatory problems, selected problems chosen by the instructor will be graded and will be returned to you the following Tuesday in your discussion session.

Late submissions (or photos of homework sent via email etc) will NOT be accepted and you will get a score of zero for such work. However the lowest two homework scores will be dropped while calculating your grade.

Your name must be clearly displayed in the top right corner and be stapled if there are multiple pages. If your TA has difficulty in reading your answers, he/she will give you a score of zero, so please ensure you write legibly and neatly. You can work together (in groups of three or less), but please write up the solutions on your own. Also indicate the members in your homework group.

More about the quizzes

There will be weekly quizzes, given during your Thursday discussion sections (with problems similar to those on the homework due that week/historic class finals). There will be no make-ups on quizzes for any reason, but your lowest two quiz scores will be dropped.

Grading disputes

If you feel that a mistake was made in grading your homework/quizzes/exams or that these scores have been incorrectly recorded in Blackboard, bring it to my *within 10 days of the due date of the homework/quiz/exam*. Any complaints received later will not be considered. Be aware that a re-grade means that your work will be graded from scratch, and it is entirely possible that you will receive a lower score than originally given, if I decide that the original grade was too high.

Calculator Policy

For quizzes and exams you may use any standard scientific calculator that has no wireless capabilities. You may not use graphing calculators. Furthermore, you are prohibited from having any wireless device (phone, smart watch, etc.) on your person (wrist, pockets, etc.) during any quiz or exam.

No cheating. 'Nuff said!

Academic dishonesty will be taken very seriously. Any suspicious activity will be noted and reported. So please don't cheat. If you have questions about what constitutes "cheating", or what will happen if you are caught, please review the [Trojan Integrity Guide](#), the [Undergraduate Guide for Avoiding Plagiarism](#) and [general USC Policies](#).

Unchangeables

1. Exam dates CANNOT and WILL NOT be changed. There will be NO make up exams either.
2. Homework due dates will NOT be altered. Late/illegible submissions will get a score of zero. The lowest two homework scores will be dropped for grade calculations.
3. There will be no make up quizzes. The lowest two quiz scores will be dropped for grade calculations.
4. Grading disputes and complaints about test scores will NOT be considered after 10 days of the exam/quiz/due date of homework in question.
5. Absenting yourself for an exam/quiz/late submission of homework gets you a zero score for it.
6. Attendance is mandatory for the final exam. If you are absent, you will fail the course.

What to do, what not to do

1. During exams, no phones, textbooks or notes allowed.
2. Your answer papers must be neat, and your handwriting legible.
3. Be present (physically and mentally!) in all classes. More importantly, be on time. If you do miss any material that is covered, it is your responsibility to look it up.
4. Ringing phones in class is NOT a good thing. Turn them off before class starts.
5. No cheating. 'Nuff said.
6. Homeworks will be posted on Blackboard. Please check it regularly.
7. Office hours are there for a reason. Use them, and NOT just a day before exams! Also the Math Center is located in 263 KAP and is open on Monday-Friday from 8am to 7pm on most days.

