

# Math 78 Course Policies

Welcome to Math 78! Please read through this entire document before committing to this course. By signing up for a class at Evergreen Valley College, the student enters into a contract with the college and instructor. By remaining in the course, the student agrees to abide by the policies and procedures of the college and the instructor. If you are not comfortable with my expectations and policies, please take the course in a different semester.

For questions about the course policies, refer to this document and the syllabus. If this document and the syllabus does not answer your question, ask the instructor.

## Time Commitment

As stated in the Evergreen Valley College course catalog, students are expected to spend at least two hours studying outside of class for each credit hour. That means that you should be spending at least **four hours** (on average) on each homework assignment (reviewing the notes, reading the textbook, doing the homework problems, watching videos related to the course material, etc.). If you don't think that you will be able to devote at least four hours to each homework assignment (on average), I recommend taking the course in a semester when you will have more time to do the homework.

Cramming a bunch of information the nights before the exams will not lead to success in this particular course. This tactic may work in less demanding college courses, but it is not advised.

After the semester is over, there is usually a three-week delay until students see their final grades. Students who have worked hard on every homework assignment and don't wish to wait three weeks to see their grade can request for their grades to be emailed to them. Students who have not worked hard on every homework assignment will have to wait three weeks to see their grade.

## Attendance/Tardies/Leaving Class Early

You are expected to attend all classes, arrive on time, and stay for the entire class; I take attendance every single class. Tardies and leaving class early are counted as half an absence. I reserve the right to drop/withdraw students who are absent more than **two** times during the semester. So, if you are tardy five times or if you are absent once and tardy three times, you may be dropped from the class. If you think that you are going to miss class, please send me an email before class explaining the reason.

## Homework

After the first class, homework is collected every class. For each homework assignment, a few questions will be selected at random to grade and each problem is graded on *accuracy*. I give mostly odd problems so you can check your answer with the back of the book to see if you are doing the problems correctly. (If you get the correct answer and your work doesn't support it, you will receive zero points for the problem.) If you have spent at least ten minutes working on a homework question and are still not sure how to do it, please feel free to use one of the resources mentioned below.

Again, please spend at least 10 minutes before using resources. In the past, I have had students get a homework question perfectly right, but get the exact same question on the quiz wrong. I believe that this is due to the fact that the student didn't struggle with the problem enough before seeking help.

I use the homework to determine the amount of effort each student is putting into the class. Late homework will not be accepted for grading purposes. The first twenty-six assignments are each worth 4 points. Your lowest homework assignment will be dropped. The last few homework assignments will be collected, but not graded.

Some of the exam questions will be very similar to homework questions/questions done in class so it is in your best interest to take each homework problem seriously.

## **Resources for Completing the Homework**

There are several resources available to aid you in completing the homework. If you learn best by interacting with others, please consider using the following resources: office hours, classmates, friends, and the Math and Science Resource Center. If you prefer to learn by yourself, try these resources: lecture notes, textbook, online videos (recommended by me), other online videos, and other differential equations textbooks.

I believe that with four hours of your time and the aforementioned resources, most students should be able to complete the homework. If you have grade concerns and are not working hard at every homework assignment, I will ask you to spend more time on the homework. Again, if you don't have four hours of time to commit to each assignment, please take this course at a different time.

## **Quizzes**

After the first week, there will be a quiz given right at the beginning of every single class (except for classes where there are exams). The quiz problems will be based on the lectures notes and the homework assignment. The first sixteen quizzes are each worth ten points. The remaining quizzes are ungraded. No makeup quizzes are allowed. Your lowest quiz score will be dropped.

## **Flipped Approach/Lecture**

I will be using a "flipped approach" for this course. That means that you will be expected to read the textbook, read Paul's Online Notes, and watch the videos on the course website *before* the class begins. While I am lecturing, you are expected to be respectful and not disruptive (see below for more information). You are expected to read the book before class begins to prepare for the lecture. That way, you will have an easier time following the lecture. Disrespectful/disruptive behavior (which includes cell phone use) may result in you being asked to leave the class, and/or dropped from the class, and/or reported to the Dean, any of which could result in an F for the course. There is no reason to have your cell phone out during class. If I see your cell phone, I will ask you to put it away.

## **Exams**

There will be three exams and a final exam. I don't give a review, a review sheet, a study guide, or hints before any of the exams. (In the past, these things have not been necessary for students who have been spending at least four hours on each homework assignment.) Notes and index cards will not be allowed for the exams.

In the past, time has been a major issue for many of my students (especially for the final exam). Generally speaking, the stronger the grasp you have of the material, the faster you will complete the problems. In order to solidify your understanding of the concepts, I recommend doing additional problems from the textbook and/or other textbooks (aside from those assigned on the

homework).

I am extremely ungenerous when it comes to giving partial credit. I only give partial credit for a question if there is substantial progress made toward a correct solution. Each exam is worth 100 points.

Most of the exam questions will be taken from the following sources: (a) homework, (b) Exercises in the handouts, (c) Class Exercises in the handouts, (d) examples in the textbook, (e) Paul's Online Math Notes, and (f) videos on this website:

<http://www.ocf.berkeley.edu/~parran/math78videos.html>.

## Final Exam

In the past, students have done much worse on the final than on the midterm exams (on average). I believe that the biggest reason for this is the final covers the entire semester whereas the midterms only cover a few weeks of material. Therefore, the final is much more “cram-proof” than the midterm exams. Even if you get an A on the first two midterms, you are not automatically guaranteed to get a good grade on the final. The final exam is worth 250 points.

## Required Individual Meeting

After the first exam, you are required to meet with me for five minutes to discuss how you are doing in the class. (Five minutes is a very small amount of time compared to the four hours you are expected to spend working on each homework assignment.) During the meeting, you can express suggestions for improving the class and I will offer suggestions on how you can improve for future exams.

## Grades Are On a Point System

Final grades are non-negotiable and are strictly determined by the number of points you attain on the homework, the quizzes, and the exams. I only change grades for exams or quizzes if there is a clear error on my part, such as adding up marks incorrectly or forgetting to grade a question. I will not increase grades just because someone needs a higher grade to graduate or get into some program. If you don't score enough points to pass (at least 70% of the total number of points), you don't pass.

## Grade Updates

Students are responsible for keeping track of their own grades. I will provide a grade update *once* during the quarter. The grade update will be provided a few days before the deadline to drop with a ‘W’. After the grade update, you will know whether it is still possible to pass and how many points are needed to pass. If there are any errors on the grade update or if you have concerns about any of the grades given on the grade update, please let me know **within one week** after I give the grade update.

## Grade Concerns

If you are concerned about your grade AND you have been spending at least four hours with each homework assignment, please do not hesitate to contact me to discuss your concerns. If you are concerned about your grade and you are NOT spending at least four hours with each homework assignment, please spend more time with each homework assignment.

## Evergreen Valley College Early Alert

Evergreen Valley College is committed to improving student success and believes that all students can succeed in their academic work and achieve their educational goals. Thus, it has enacted an Early Alert Program allowing instructors early in the semester to notify students who are struggling in their classes who might be at-risk of not passing the course. Once the instructor reports that a student is at risk of failing the course, the student will receive an email and a follow-up phone call encouraging the student to talk to his/her instructor, seek tutoring (if needed), and/or use other on-campus resources available to students.

## Letters of Recommendation

Every school year, ten to twenty students ask me for letters of recommendation (for jobs, transferring to a four-year school, graduate school, etc.). I am very selective when it comes to writing letters of recommendation. I only write letters of recommendation for students who turn in *high-quality* homework assignments every single class and help their classmates during class. So, even a student who receives a C in the class can receive a letter of recommendation from me (yet an A+ student might not qualify for a letter of recommendation).

## My Background

I have been teaching mathematics and statistics at the community college-level since April of 2008. I graduated from Stanford University in March of 2008 with a master's degree in statistics and graduated from UC Berkeley in May of 2006 with a bachelor's degree in **pure mathematics (with highest honors)** and statistics.

I grew up in Cupertino (which is located about twenty miles from Evergreen Valley College) and graduated from Monta Vista High School. I am only one of a number of math teachers in my family: my mother was a college mathematics instructor, my late grandmother was a high school mathematics teacher, and my late great-grandfather was a mathematics professor.

## The First Class

Make sure to bring this document and the syllabus to the first class. During the first class, we will be having a pre-test (which covers Math 72), discussing this document and the syllabus, and learning new material.