

Getting Started: Teaching Classes

Who Does What

- Michelle (Mikki) Klinger (310A Malott Hall) — class and exam scheduling, classrooms, textbooks, enrollments
- Heather Peterson (310 Malott Hall) — class lists, enrollments, and grades
- Maria Terrell (225 Malott Hall) — TA assignments
- Birgit Speh (435 Malott Hall) — faculty teaching assignments, policy issues; director of undergraduate studies

Teaching Assignments

Faculty teaching assignments are subject to change until just before classes begin, but TA assignments may change even after the first day of classes. Check the schedules regularly. (See Links below.)

Classrooms

See Mikki if you experience any problems with your assigned classroom. Mikki is the primary scheduler for Malott Hall classrooms and can submit requests on your behalf for classrooms in other buildings.

Course Enrollment and Class Lists

Instructors and TAs do not determine their class sizes and do not give students permission to enroll unless the course is listed in the catalog as “permission of instructor.” Most students enroll online using Student Center; however, if a student comes to you with an add/drop form or any other course enrollment form, do not sign it.

Please direct students with enrollment questions or issues to 310 Malott Hall or hko1@cornell.edu for assistance.

Class lists are available through Faculty Center (current enrollment) and Brio. (See Links below.) Brio class lists are one business day old, but Brio also provides class lists with pictures.

Homework

Students must never be instructed to turn in their homework in Malott Hall outside of class. In particular, department staff will not accept homework, and mailboxes are off limits to undergraduates.

Office Hours for Instructors and TAs

Instructors and TAs are expected to hold at least 2 office hours a week to give their students the opportunity to stop by and ask questions. Send office hours to Mikki (mmk8@cornell.edu), so she can post them.

Grades and Student Privacy

According to federal law, grades are restricted information and may be released only to the student or at the student's written request. Thus, grades earned on examinations or in courses may not be posted by name or by the student's identification number. Graded work must be returned to students in a manner that will preserve the students' privacy. Please check with Heather prior to posting any grades.

Links

- Cornell Academic Calendar — www.cornell.edu/academics/calendar/
- Class & Exam Schedules (math only) — www.math.cornell.edu/ADMIN/Teaching/schedules.html
- Faculty Center (for class lists) — www.facultycenter.cornell.edu
- Brio (for class lists with pictures) — brio.hyperion.cornell.edu/brio/
- University Faculty web site (for Academic Policies) — theuniversityfaculty.cornell.edu

Exam Scheduling and Policies

Michelle (Mikki) Klinger (310A Malott Hall) is your contact for questions regarding exam scheduling.

Prelims

- Evening prelims have been scheduled for MATH 1105, 1106, 1110, 1120, 1340, 1710, 1910, 1920, 2130, 2210, 2220, 2930, 2940, 3360, 4130, and 4310 on Tuesday and Thursday evenings at 7:30 p.m. Dates for these exams were negotiated in advance with other departments holding evening prelims.
- The department's exam conflict and extended time service provides make-up proctors on 4 or 5 nights per term when our large courses have prelims scheduled.
- Courses with no scheduled evening prelims are encouraged to consider in-class or take-home prelims to avoid taking away from students' free time. Take-home prelims are common in many upper-level courses; however, if you feel an evening exam is absolutely necessary, contact Mikki.

Final Exams

At least 80% of the final exam must consist of material that was covered in all sections of the course.

- Exams for most of our 1000- and 2000-level courses are scheduled together during an exception period. Make-ups are provided for by the department's exam conflict and extended time service. (See Links below.)
- University policy discourages more than two examinations for a student in one twenty-four hour time period and especially on any one day. Members of the faculty are urged to consider student requests for a make-up examination, particularly if their course is the largest of the three involved and thus has the strongest likelihood of offering a make-up for other valid reasons, e.g., illness, death in the family, etc.
- Any student who wishes to take the exam at the published time must be allowed to do so.
- The final due date for a take-home examination can be no earlier than the published final exam date.

Study Period

Be very careful not to abuse this time. Do not assign homework or schedule exams during the 5-day study period before final exams. Papers may be required of students during the study period if announced sufficiently far in advance that the student did not have to spend a significant segment of the study period completing them.

Calculators

Whether or not to allow calculators on exams (and what kind) is up to the instructors. In multi-section classes the decision is by majority vote.

Out-of-Class Review Sessions

Given the number of evening classes and exams, review sessions are not permitted after 4:30 PM unless there are other such review opportunities at unrestricted times. Giving out-of-class reviews involves the erosion of free time and the tendency of students to forgo regularly scheduled classes to attend the review session. If in doubt, don't.

Links

- Class & Exam Schedules (math only) — www.math.cornell.edu/ADMIN/Teaching/schedules.html
- Exam Conflict and Extended Time Service — www.math.cornell.edu/ADMIN/Teaching/makeupexams.html
- University prelim and final exam schedules — registrar.sas.cornell.edu/Sched/exams.html
- Rules and policies governing study period and final exams — registrar.sas.cornell.edu/Sched/Rules.html

Grading Policies

Grades must be given in all courses. Instructors (and some TAs) are responsible for entering their own grades in the PeopleSoft grade roster, which will be available the first week of final exams. When the time comes, Heather Peterson (310 Malott Hall) will provide instructions for how to enter your grades. Direct all policy questions to the director of undergraduate studies, Birgit Speh (435 Malott Hall).

Grade Options

- The permissible letter grades are A, B, C, D, F, and + or – on all grades except F. The grade of F is failing, D is marginal, C is satisfactory, B is good, and A is excellent.
- A grade of S (satisfactory) or U (unsatisfactory) may be given if the student enrolls with that grade option. The university guideline for S/U grades is that S means C– or better. S/U grades are usually given for all courses numbered 7000 and above (except MATH 7900).
- When appropriate, extramural and graduate students may be given a mark of V (audit) if attendance is verified; otherwise, a grade of INC must be given.

Suggested Median Grades

The following suggested grade averages are advisory only. If there is good cause for deviating from them, do so.

- B for most 1000- and 2000-level courses.
- B+ for most 3000- and 4000-level courses.

Exceptions:

- In MATH 2230, 2240, 4010, 4130, 4140, 4330, and 4340, the median is up to the instructor but preferably A–.
- In MATH 1220, the instructor may prefer a B+ average if the course is taught substantially differently from MATH 1120.

In recent years, the undergraduate honors courses MATH 4130-4140 and 4330-4340 have drawn many graduate students. Whatever the composition of the class, such courses should always be taught at a level appropriate to honors undergraduates, and the undergraduates in the class should be graded accordingly.

College Minimums

- Engineering students must attain at least a C– in each of MATH 1910, 1920, 2930, and 2940 or repeat the course before the next course in this required sequence may be taken.
- Arts and Sciences students must complete 100 credits at Cornell at C or above and are considered in good academic standing for the term if they successfully complete at least 12 degree credits and earn no more than one D and no F or U grades. If a student completes only three courses, all grades must be above D.

Graduate Students and Graduate Courses

The following guidelines arose from discussions at a March 1967 departmental meeting. It is hoped that most people will follow these guidelines, but there is no question of having to adhere to them.

- The department recommends that grades in 6000-level courses range from A to C (and + or – on those grades), such that A means excellent, B means OK, and C means lousy.
- The A–C scale in 6000-level courses should work in favor of undergraduates and does not prevent an occasional D or F, but the grading procedure for undergraduates should be left completely to the instructor.
- The question of whether to grade graduate students more harshly than undergraduates in undergraduate courses is best left to the individual course instructors.

Deadlines for Entering Final Grades

Heather will notify you of the final deadline each term, but please enter your grades as soon as you possibly can.

- If your course has a scheduled final exam, grades should be entered at most three days after the scheduled date.
- Instructors of advanced courses with no final can do the office a great service by entering their grades early.

Failure to observe deadlines means that the great machine will cause your students all kinds of grief!

Incompletes

“The symbol of *Incomplete* is only appropriate when two basic conditions are met: (1) The student has substantial equity at a passing level in the course with respect to work completed; and (2) the student has been prevented by circumstances beyond his/her control, such as illness or family emergency, from completing all of the course requirements on time.” — taken from *The Faculty Handbook*

Giving a student an incomplete when he or she deserves an F is usually misplaced kindness. A common consequence of such an action is that, in addition to his/her regular schedule of courses the following semester, the student unofficially takes the course to be completed. The student’s entire program for that semester suffers because of the de facto course overload, and his/her already poor record deteriorates further.

Grade Changes

A change in grade may be made only if the instructor made an error in assigning the original grade. If this is the case, see Heather about submitting a Manual Grade Form.

Student Notification of Final Grades

Students can view their grades in Student Center roughly 24 hours after they have been posted in PeopleSoft, so posting final grades is largely unnecessary; however, if you feel you must:

The only legal way to post grades is by a totally random number. In other words, number the exam books and tell your students to remember the number, then post grades by the number written on the exam book.

Please keep the following in mind:

- Department staff never issue grades to students.
- Grades must never be sent through email, not even in response to an email query from the student.
- Posting grades by name, student number, net ID, or any other identifier that can be traced to the student is prohibited under the terms of FERPA. There is no legal waiver for this.

Storing/Exchanging Grade Information Electronically

- Don’t email grades. Do use the Cornell DropBox (dropbox.cornell.edu, NOT dropbox.com).
- If you store grade information on our Linux systems, make sure the file is not readable by other people. To do this, right-click on the file and choose properties, then permissions, and uncheck all “group” and “other” permissions. (Or be geekier and use the “chmod 600” command.)
- If you print out grade info, pick up the printout right away. Don’t leave it lying around.
- Delete files with grade information when you are sure they are no longer needed. Be sure to empty the trash!