

# Getting Started: Teaching Classes

## Who Does What

- Michelle (Mikki) Klinger (318 Malott Hall) — class and exam scheduling, classrooms, textbooks, enrollments
- Heather Peterson (310 Malott Hall) — class lists, enrollments, and grades
- Marie MacDonald (227 Malott Hall) — TA assignments
- Xiaodong Cao (521 Malott Hall) — faculty teaching assignments, policy issues; director of undergraduate studies

## 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 who need enrollment help to Heather Peterson (310 Malott Hall, hko1@cornell.edu).

Class lists are available through Faculty Center. (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.

## Homework

Common practice is to collect homework in class. Students should never be directed to turn in homework to the Math Dept administrative offices or to the 5<sup>th</sup> floor mailroom, which is off limits to undergraduates.

## Office Hours for Instructors and TAs

Instructors and TAs are expected to hold at least 2 office hours each week to give their students the opportunity to stop by and ask questions. When scheduling office hours, be aware that the university has set aside the hours between 4:25 and 7:30 p.m. as student free time. Office hours may be held at that time only if undergraduates have access to an equivalent opportunity at another time (such as with another TA teaching the same course).

## 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. Graded work may be returned to students only in a manner that will preserve the students' privacy and should never be left unattended. Please take care not to leave course papers lying around.

## Links

- Cornell Academic Calendar — [www.cornell.edu/academics/calendar/](http://www.cornell.edu/academics/calendar/)
- Syllabus File — [www.math.cornell.edu/ADMIN/courseinfo/coursedoc.php](http://www.math.cornell.edu/ADMIN/courseinfo/coursedoc.php)
- Class & Exam Schedules (math only) — [www.math.cornell.edu/ADMIN/Teaching/schedules.html](http://www.math.cornell.edu/ADMIN/Teaching/schedules.html)
- Faculty Center (for current enrollments and class lists) — [www.facultycenter.cornell.edu](http://www.facultycenter.cornell.edu)
- University Faculty web site (for Academic Policies) — [theuniversityfaculty.cornell.edu](http://theuniversityfaculty.cornell.edu)

# Exam Scheduling and Policies

Michelle (Mikki) Klinger (318 Malott Hall) is your contact for questions regarding exam scheduling and policies.

## Prelims

- Evening prelims are scheduled for MATH 1105, 1106, 1110, 1120, 1910, 1920, 2210, 2220, 2930, 2940, 3110, and 3320 (fall only), on Tuesday and Thursday evenings at 7:30 p.m. Dates for these exams are negotiated in advance with other departments holding evening prelims.
- The department's exam conflict and extended time service provides make-up proctors on dates when our large courses have prelims scheduled. (See Links below.)
- 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.

- MATH courses 1105 through 4860 will have a final exam scheduled during the final exam period by default. The schedule will be announced after the term starts and the add period has ended. Instructors should notify Mikki if they would prefer to give a take-home exam or final project — due dates will be set by the university.
- University policy discourages more than two examinations for a student in one twenty-four hour period. 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. Each course will organize its own make-up exam arrangements. Contact Mikki if you need to reserve a classroom.

## Study Period

Be very careful not to abuse this time. Do not assign homework or schedule exams during the 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 made by the course czar, if there is one, or by majority vote.

## Out-of-Class Review Sessions

The department strongly discourages the use of out-of-class review sessions. Extra office hour opportunities for students are different from out-of-class review sessions and are up to the instructor(s).

## Links

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

# Grading Policies

Grades must be given in all courses. Most instructors (and some TAs) are responsible for entering their own grades in the Faculty Center grade roster, which will become available during 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, Xiaodong Cao (521 Malott Hall).

## 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 within 72 hours of the exam.

## 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) must be given if the student enrolls with that grade option. The S/U grade option is not pass/fail. 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 NGR (“no grade reported”) is 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.

## Minimum Grade Requirements

- 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.
- Prospective math majors must complete a semester or linear algebra (e.g., MATH 2210 or 2940) and a semester of multivariable calculus (e.g., MATH 2220 or 1920) with a B– or better.

## 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.

## 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 grade change form.

## Student Notification of Final Grades

Students can view their grades in Student Center roughly 24 hours after they have been posted in PeopleSoft.

- 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.

## Storing/Exchanging Grade Information Electronically

- Don’t email grades. Do use Cornell Secure File Transfer ([sft.cornell.edu](http://sft.cornell.edu)).
- 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!