

# Syllabus for Math 121: Linear Algebra

## 1 Contact Information

Professor: Stephen Robinson

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## 2 Text

*Elementary Linear Algebra*, eighth edition, by Bernard Kolman and David R. Hill

## 3 Office Hours

I hope that you will make a habit of visiting me during office hours. It is the best way for me to find out what my students are thinking, and it is the best way for my students to find out what my expectations are. No appointment is needed during the hours listed below. Just stop by. If you need help at another time, then it is best to check with me before stopping by.

TBA

Or by appointment

## 4 Quiz/Review Sessions

I would like every student to attend at least one session with me each week. We will discuss this on the first day of class and come up with a schedule. Although attendance at these sessions is voluntary, I will reward good attendance. Perfect attendance between one midterm and the next earns one free pass on the next midterm. No more than two absences for the entire

semester earns a free pass on the final exam. A free pass allows you to skip one problem.

## 5 Course Content and Goals

I am planning to cover the following sections in the following order:

1:1-6

2:1-4

3:1-8

4:1,4,5,6

6:1-5

7:1-5,9

5:1-3,5

Further applications, such as those in chapter 8, as time allows.

There are several sections of chapter 3 that I will either skip or treat lightly on a first reading (3:2,3,7). Given time, we will return to these sections for a more thorough discussion at the end. Although I am postponing chapter 5 until the end, I am planning to introduce several examples and ideas from that chapter within the context of the material that we will cover in other sections.

## 6 Homework

During most class meetings I will suggest problems for you to work on. I am expecting you to work on these problems before the next class meeting, and based upon this work I expect you to prepare questions for class and for office hours. I will not collect and grade the homework, but one of the first things that I will consult when creating midterms and the final exam is the list of assigned homework problems.

## 7 Exams

There will be three midterm exams (2/12,3/19,4/20). Each midterm exam will be worth 25% of your grade. Each midterm will have both an in-class and a take-home portion.

The final exam will be comprehensive. The final exam is scheduled for Monday, May 7, 2:00-5:00. The room will be announced later. The final exam is worth 25% of your grade. A high score on your final exam can also replace your lowest midterm grade.

## 8 Grading Policy

If you consistently demonstrate an ability to perform standard computations and solve standard problems, then you have a good chance of earning a C or better. If you can also solve some more difficult problems and provide some insight as to why the methods work, then you have a good chance of earning a B or better. If you become adept at solving standard and nonstandard problems, and if you can clearly justify all of the methods that you use, then you have a good chance of earning an A. Hard work is a prerequisite for earning a good grade (A, B, or C), but no amount of work will guarantee you a particular grade. Just do the best that you can, and then be proud of the grade that you have earned. If you are ever unsure about a grading policy, or if you are not sure where you stand, then you are welcome to ask. Here is the grading scale that I will use at the end of the semester. I reserve the right to make adjustments to this scale, but I will not adjust the boundaries to anything higher than those listed below. Pluses and minuses are assigned to grades that are near a cutoff point.

A: Total  $\geq$  90%

B:  $75\% \leq$  Total  $<$  90%

C:  $60\% \leq$  Total  $<$  75%

D:  $45\% \leq$  Total  $<$  60%.