

Math 125 – Math for Elementary Teaching
Spring 2010

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Course Materials – The text for this course is *Mathematics for Elementary Teachers* by Musser, Burger and Peterson, Eighth Edition.

Course Goals – The primary goals of this course are to provide a deeper understanding of mathematical concepts, methods of reasoning, and techniques of calculation that are taught in the elementary grades. Specifically, a successful student will be able to:

- use the mathematical content of this course to model and solve realistic problems;
- use mathematical reasoning to find patterns, make and test conjectures, and create simple proofs of find counterexamples to prove or disprove these conjectures;
- communicate results and conjectures using words, tables, symbols, and graphs;
- make connections between mathematical topics and other areas of mathematics, other disciplines, or situations in daily life;
- use technology as a tool to help solve problems;
- use visual and tactile aids (manipulatives) to make mathematical concepts more concrete;
- work well as part of a team to define, solve, and report on projects.

Topics will include: sets, whole numbers, properties of numbers, fractions, decimals, numerical operations, decimals, ratios, proportions, percent, integers, real numbers, and geometry. These topics are covered in chapters 1 through 9 and chapters 12 through 14 in the text.

Homework and Quizzes – Each day there will be reading and homework assigned. Some assignments will be turned in and graded, some will be discussed in class, but not graded. The problems assigned to hand in will be collected at the beginning of the class meeting. In addition, we will have approximately weekly quizzes.

It is vital that you do all the homework problems assigned; you should keep all your work in a binder or notebook for reference. For every hour in class you should expect to spend at least 2 hours doing work outside of class. You cannot learn mathematics without lots of practice!

Exams – There will be three in-class exams and a cumulative final. The tentative dates for the tests are February 10, March 5, and April 9. The final will be on May 7.

Attendance – Mandatory. Regular attendance is vital. A late assignment will be graded with a reduction of 10% for each day it is late. There will be no make-up quizzes given, and make-up exams are given only in extreme, pre-approved cases. If you must miss an exam it is your responsibility to contact me in advance. Students who are unable to attend class are responsible for all assignments and material covered in that class.

Grading – Grades will be the result of quizzes, homework, and two tests. The breakdown is as follows:

- Culture Points – 5%
- Homework/Quizzes – 25% total
- In-Class Exams – 15% each
- Final Exam – 25%

Learning Disability Accommodations – Students who have documented learning disabilities and wish to request accommodations for this class should contact the Learning Services Department. Accommodations cannot be provided unless official documentation is received from the appropriate campus office.

Mathematics Department Academic Honesty Policy – The Mathematics Department supports and is governed by the Academic Honesty Policy of Moravian College as stated in the Moravian College Student Handbook. The following statements will help clarify the policies of members of the Mathematics Department faculty.

In all at-home assignments which are to be graded, you may use your class notes and any books or library sources. When you use the ideas or thoughts of others, however, you must acknowledge the source. You also may not use a solution manual or the help (orally or in written form) of any individual other than your instructor. If you receive help from anyone other than your instructor or if you fail to reference your sources, you will be violating the Academic Honesty Policy of Moravian College. You may work with your fellow students on homework which is not to be graded. You are responsible for understanding and being able to explain the solution of all assigned problems, both graded and un-graded.

All in-class or take-home tests and quizzes are to be completed by you alone without the aid of books, study sheets, or formula sheets unless specifically allowed by your instructor for a particular test.

Culture Points

To those who do not know mathematics it is difficult to get across a real feeling as to the beauty, the deepest beauty, of nature . . . If you want to learn about nature, to appreciate nature, it is necessary to understand the language that she speaks in.

Richard Feynman

One goal for this class is to provide some perspective of mathematics, and the role it plays in our modern world. Whether you plan to be a mathematician, a scientist, or simply a well-rounded liberal arts graduate, it is important to be aware of the role and nature of mathematics today. To help meet this goal, I am asking you to participate in “mathematical cultural awareness.” There are no specific assignments for this portion of the course. Rather, there are many opportunities for you to explore mathematics in our culture. Activities that foster cultural awareness include (but are not limited to): attending talks, discussing a mathematical topic with a fellow student or professor, giving a talk, reading a paper, or solving a problem.

Basic overview of culture points

Culture points activities will account for 5% of your final course grade. **To get full credit for this activity, you must accrue 10 points by the end of the semester.** You gain points by attending seminars, colloquia or other talks; discussing mathematics outside class; reading articles; giving presentations; and solving problems.

To get credit for an event, you will need to submit a short write-up for the event. This write-up will have two portions: (1) a short description of the event and (2) a reflection on the impact of that event on your own understanding of mathematics.

Points will be given based both on the quality of the event and the quality of the submission. The following sections provide details on this activity.

Culture point activities

This list below is not comprehensive – it is meant to illustrate some possible activities and to provide a calibration for how many culture points different activities might provide. Note that the actual number of culture points you get will vary depending on the quality of your particular write-up.

- Attend an ϵ -talk (3 points). These short (10 to 15 minute) talks are given weekly as part of the Math Society’s regular meetings.

- Attend a Math/CS colloquium (4 points).
- Attend a colloquium or conference off-campus (3-5 points). There are many opportunities to attend conferences throughout the valley, such as at Lafayette or Lehigh.
- Review an article on mathematics (3 points). I have attached a listing of places to look for articles, as well how many points you might get for different articles. Also look to sources such as the *New York Times*, the *Washington Post*, or PBS for mathematics in the news.
- Discuss a mathematical topic with someone outside the class (2 to 3 points) – this could be with roommates, teammates, family members, other professors. You can discuss a mathematical topic from the course or some other mathematical topic.
- Find mathematics in popular culture (2 to 3 points) – episodes of *NUMB3RS*, movies such as *A Beautiful Mind*, or references in *The Simpsons*. Also look for mathematics in the creation of movies by Pixar, LucasFilms or Dreamworks.
- Work on a problem outside the scope of the classroom (2 to 5 points). You might solve an interesting exercise or simply work on an interesting problem without quite reaching a solution.

Rules for submission

Your culture point write-up must be neat and well-written (complete sentences, paragraph structure, etc.). I prefer your submissions to be typed, but I will accept hand-written submissions – particularly if there is a great deal of mathematical notation. For each submission, keep in mind that there are two portions:

1. **Summary of the event:** This section of the write-up should constitute no more than 50% of your submission. Summarize the talk, conversation, article, or event. If you were working on a problem, discuss *how* you approached the problem and whether you were able to arrive at a satisfactory answer (provide the actual solution or work on the problem on an attached page).
2. **Reflection on the event:** How does the event affect your understanding of mathematics and mathematicians? Do you have a greater appreciation of the role of mathematics in society or the nature of mathematical research? Does the event connect with the mathematics you've learned in this course (or any of your other mathematics courses)? If you worked on a problem, explain how your work on that problem has influenced the way you solve problems or your understanding of the mathematics involved.

Be sure to clearly state what the involved event was. If you watched an episode of a series, be sure to include the name of the episode as well as the name of the series. If you read an article,

include a full citation of the article (do NOT include a copy of the article itself). If you attended a talk or seminar, include the name of the talk and of the speaker.

Miscellaneous rules

- You may make at most one culture point submission per week.
- At least one culture point submission needs to be based on a talk, colloquium or seminar. At least one culture point submission needs to be based on an article or reading.
- Culture point submissions that do not follow the above rules (particularly regarding neatness and making full citations) will be penalized or rejected.
- Culture points above the required number will be used as “extra credit” – how extra culture points translate to bonus points on the final grade will be determined at the end of the semester.

Places to go for articles and other writings

Books and Journals

- (3 points) – mathematical articles from popular journals such as *Popular Science*, *Scientific American*, or *National Geographic*
- (3 points) – teaching-oriented journals such as *Mathematics Teacher* or *Mathematics Teaching*
- (3 points) – articles from journals such as *American Mathematical Monthly*, *The College Mathematics Journal*, *Mathematics Magazine*, or *PME Monthly*. Many of these journals can be found in JSTOR and are available both in Reeves and the the Mathematics library.
- (3 points) – many books provide terrific insight to the nature of mathematics. Pick a chapter of almost any of the general mathematics books by Martin Gardner, Ian Stewart, Sherman Stein, or Keith Devlin.

There are many other interesting articles out there – look through some of the search engines available through Reeves to discover articles on your own.

Math in the news

Look through the newspapers, especially the *New York Times*, the *Chicago Tribune* and other major newspapers for articles on mathematics in modern culture.

You can also find mathematics on the History Channel, the Discovery Channel, or PBS.

Consider almost any topic: the war in Iraq, football, jazz music, security at the airports, global warming, sinkholes, overpopulation, Windows Vista, poker. If you search through the web facilities available in Reeves, you can find an article connecting your favorite activity to mathematics.

Web Resources

Below are just a few links to mathematical articles (and a rough indication of their point value)

- <http://www.maa.org/news/columns.html> (2 to 3 points)
There is a host of columns here – all quite readable. Be sure to look through the archives to find articles of particular interest.
- <http://www-groups.dcs.st-and.ac.uk/~history/> (3 points)
Look up a mathematician or mathematical topic here for a historical perspective on the mathematics you are learning. Start with those mathematicians that are mentioned in class (so who is that Simpson guy behind Simpson's rule for integration?).
- <http://www.cut-the-knot.org> (3 points)
Lots of interesting mathematical tid-bits, most of which include an interactive applet for you to experiment with.
- <http://plus.maths.org/> (3 points)
An on-line magazine devoted almost exclusively to questions in the mathematical sciences.