Math 154, Elementary Algebra, Course Information

Instructor: Joseph Krause  
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Office Hours: M - Th, 11am – 12:30pm in Room 711E

Meeting Times: MW, 12:40 – 3:05pm, Rm 712  
Supplements: None  
Calculator: Any non-CAS calculator

Office Hours ... I will hold office hours in my office in Room 711E at the times listed above. Please take advantage of office hours ... they are an excellent opportunity to get questions answered outside of the classroom environment. Feel free to stop by, introduce yourself, and ask me any questions about the course and/or what it takes to do well.

Course Materials ... The textbook for this course is available at the college bookstore and a variety of other (possibly less expensive) places. Yes, it's possible to use the old (5th) edition, but it might get a bit tricky. I expect that you will have a calculator with you at each class meeting, but you may not use the calculator on your phone. If you do not already own a calculator, you should purchase one (they're pretty cheap). Before purchasing a calculator, think about which math courses, if any, you intend to take after this one. I would recommend at least a "scientific" calculator (with a 2-line display).

Evaluation ... Your understanding of the material presented in this course will be evaluated by a bunch of small, in-class, group quizzes (about 100 points total), 3 in-class exams (100 points each), and 1 comprehensive final exam (200 points). Missed quizzes cannot be made up, but I will drop the two lowest quiz scores at the end of the semester. The scheduled exam dates are on the reverse side of this paper. If you cannot make (or miss or choose not to take) an exam it will be linked to the final exam. Each class meeting I will assign sets of homework problems from the course textbook. These problem sets are intended to give you practice with the types of problems that I will expect you to be able to do. I do not collect nor grade homework … it is only for your benefit. We will have some time to go over homework questions in class (usually at the end of lecture).

Attendance ... I will take roll for the first 2 weeks. If you miss one of these days you will be dropped from the class (unless there are special circumstances ... call or email me as necessary). After this time, I will not take roll and attendance will be up to you. Please keep in mind that good class notes are much more helpful than the textbook. If you miss a class meeting, it is your responsibility to get the notes and assignment from someone else in the class, discuss the notes with others as necessary, then come ask me questions about the material if necessary. Even though I don't keep track of attendance, students who “disappear” tend to be dropped. The drop dates are listed in the schedule of classes. Please come see me if you have any questions about dropping a course.

Course Grade ... Your grade will be computed as a straight average: the total number of points earned divided by the total points possible. I do not “curve” grades but you may make corrections to the 3 in-class exams (see Rework Policy handout for details). I will use the standard grading scale, so letter grades correspond to the following ranges of averages: A [89.5-100+], B [79.5-89.4], C [69.5-79.4], D [59.5-69.4], F[0-59.4]. To go on to the next course in the math sequence you must earn a grade of C or higher in this course. This course is not available on a “pass/no pass” basis. Please keep all graded papers so you can verify your average in the event of a bookkeeping error on my part. You may verify your average with me at any point in the course.

Resources ... I am always willing to help: it's my job and it's what I enjoy doing. I am always available during office hours to discuss any aspect of the course, course material, or your educational goals. Your classmates are an excellent resource … form study groups early in the course. There is free tutoring available in the Math Learning Center (MLC) in Room 1074 as well as from a variety of other sources. Chances are you will need the help of outside resources at some point during the course … make sure you know what resources are available to you.

Classroom Atmosphere ... I like to keep things somewhat informal in the classroom, but we do need to maintain an environment that is respectful and conducive to learning. Please do not do things that are disruptive to me and/or your fellow students. Cell phones should not ring (nor appear) during class time and there is absolutely no texting allowed during lecture. Disruptive students will be asked to leave. Repeat offenders will be dropped from the class.

Success ... Your success in this class will depend on several factors. Mostly it will depend on your level of commitment to the course … I cannot help you with this. You have to decide how important this class is to your academic future. If you are not totally committed to this course, please do not take a seat away from someone else who might be. If you are committed to this course, do everything you can to get as much out of this class as possible. If you attend class, take good notes, go over those notes, do the assigned homework, and get help as needed you should do just fine. If you don’t do one or more of these things this course will be much harder … who needs that? If you will be taking other math courses after this one, do the best you can in this class. A complete understanding of the topics covered in this class will make future courses much easier … who wouldn't want that?