

Math 114 Precalculus  
Spring, 2011

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Course website: <http://faculty.valpo.edu/jcaristi/m114>

Office Hours: 10:00 daily. Other times available by appointment.

Grading: The Final Exam is worth 25% and is comprehensive

Exams 1, 2, 3, and 4 are worth 15% each for a total of 60%

Homework and quizzes are worth a total of 15%

Exam 1: Friday, January 28

Exam 2: Monday, February 21

Exam 3: Wednesday, March 30

Exam 4: Monday, April 25

Final Exam: Friday, May 6 from 8:00 a.m. to 10:00 a.m.

Textbook: Essentials of Precalculus by Aufmann and Nation

We will be covering most of the topics in the first 5 chapters and all of the appendix.

Honor Code: **Non**-graphing electronic calculators are authorized aid for any exam, quiz, or homework. For homework only, anything or anybody is authorized aid (provided you do not steal it). For any exam or quiz, there is NO authorized aid except the instructor and non-graphing calculators.

Goals:

1. Improve your algebraic problem-solving skills
2. Increase the chances of success in future courses that involve quantitative skills, especially calculus.

Expectations:

This course will develop your ability to manipulate algebraic expressions, a skill that is important in using all kinds of math. The only way to do this is to practice. It is not enough to “understand” the material; you have to be able to “do” it, and do it fairly quickly. Math is not really about algebra, it’s about thinking. But algebra is the language the thoughts are written in. It’s like the difference between writing complete and correct sentences in English and writing a novel. Just because you can write sentences doesn’t mean you can write a novel. But if you can’t write a sentence, there is no way you’re going to write a novel.

View this course as your **job**. You must show up every day and work actively, or else you risk being fired (failing). If you do your job (come to class, do all the homework, get help when necessary), you should easily get an A or a B.

I expect you to work together on assignments as much as you wish. Much of the learning that occurs in Mathematics takes place when you try to teach someone else an idea that you partly understand. By trying to explain an idea to someone else, you are forced to sharpen your own understanding of that idea.

#### Appropriate Behavior:

Come to class! If you fall behind, it's still better to come to class than to miss even more. Even if you're clueless about what's going on in class, you'll still benefit from hearing the language.

Bring your textbook to class; you will need it. It's heavy, but you can consider it part of your exercise program.

Turn off cell phones, iPods or other music players. Turn them **OFF** – **not** just on *vibrate*. It is **NOT** appropriate to send or even receive phone or text messages during class. This course will require your concentration. If you lose your concentration for the few moments it takes to read a text message (much less respond to it), you will lose the concepts we are trying to talk about, and you will find it extremely difficult to recover. Please tell your friends and family that your communication during class time will not be "normal".

Be considerate of the needs of others. It's not wrong to be bored, but it **IS** wrong when what you do distracts others (including me). There are lots of examples here of distracting behavior: reading other material, talking, coming in late, leaving early, being obnoxious with food, snoring, yawning, dressing in an overly distracting manner, kissing, playing games, working on next semester's schedule, trimming your fingernails.

Ask questions in class! It actually helps other people if I'm not the only one "talking math". Also ask questions on Blackboard discussion groups. Use that space to wonder about mathematical things, ask stupid or intelligent questions anonymously, ask what good something is without risk, etc.

Never ask a professor "Are you going to be doing anything important in class today?"