

Math 285 G8, 241 Altgeld (W3), 24 Illini (MF3). Class Organization, Spring 2000

Instructor: Prof. Bruce Reznick, 243 Illini Hall, 333-4284, reznick@math.uiuc.edu. My phone has voice mail and I frequently check and reply to my email, including weekends. Office hours are by appointment. I take them seriously, and they can usually be arranged within 24 hours. You are also encouraged to ask me questions immediately before, during and after class. I'm terrible with names; don't take it personally.

The course assistants are Dave Knott (dknott@uiuc.edu) and, for the first half of the semester, Monica Shaw (mlshaw@uiuc.edu). They will be the experts on the interface between you and the C&M software. I will lecture on the math content of the course on Wednesdays, and be available for mathematical consulting during the Monday and Friday labs. There is an unmoderated newsgroup for this course, called uiuc.class.math285g8. I will post all announcements made in class to the newsgroup, as well as to CourseSpace (see below). You are encouraged to use this newsgroup to ask (and answer) course-related questions. In addition, I will post my answers to your e-mail questions, after anonymizing the source.

CourseSpace: I'm still figuring this out. I'll put announcements here as well as on the newsgroup and as well as in class. You should all have logins by now.

Text and Syllabus: The "text" is the disk *Differential Equations & Mathematica* by Davis and Uhl. The plan is to cover the whole thing. There are nine chapters. Each has Basics, Tutorials, Give it a Try and Literacy. The essential material is in the Basics and the Tutorials; the homework will be taken from the Give it a Try, and the exams will be very much like the Literacy. You will get hardcopies of the Literacy sheets from the various chapters.

Homework Policy: Written homework will be assigned to be due weekly, on Mondays at the end of class. You will get instructions on how to submit homework! **Collaboration in studying and working the homework is strongly encouraged! Collaboration without comprehension is a waste of time.** If you do not have a work partner, let me or one of the class assistants know.

If you work on a homework as a group, you may turn in one assignment with several names on it. However, you should keep a copy of what you turn in, and you will all be equally responsible for it. We will try to return comments on the assignment to everyone in the group. Our intention is to have assignments back within one week.

Late work will be corrected but not graded. Don't fall behind!

Exam Policy: There will be three Hour Exams, at the usual intervals. The Final must be held at the scheduled time, which is Friday, May 12, from 1:30 – 4:30 pm.

Grading Policy: Keep in mind that I am grading your work, not you as a person. The homework counts 40%. Each Hour Exam counts 15%, and the Final Exam counts 30%. The lowest 15% test will be dropped. That is, either your lowest hour exam will not count, or the final will only count as much as a regular hour exam. All grades are numerical. The highest possible grade cutoffs are: A/B – 90%, B/C – 80%, C/D – 70%, D/E – 60%, by which I mean "A-/B+", etc. I will try to keep you posted on any curving as the semester progresses. There are two exceptions to the numerical grading: anyone who gets 96% on the Final gets an A and anyone who gets 75% on the Final will pass. Experience has shown me that these exceptions are rarely relevant.

Philosophy: Learning, like life, is a great adventure. I've been teaching college mathematics since the mid 70's, and I've never taught another class in which I was more unclear how things were going to work out. But I have confidence in your sincere willingness to work through the course materials. Let's have fun and solve some differential equations!