The Determination of Course Grades

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1 Accumulating Points

During the semester you will have several opportunities—described below—to earn points. At the end of the semester your points are totaled and your course grade is a function of your total number of points. The maximum number of points possible is 200, as detailed in Table 1. Below I will discuss the six categories of points in this table.

1.1 The Three Exams

The first midterm exam will cover Chapters 1–7 of the Course Notes. The second midterm exam will cover Chapters 8–14 of the Course Notes. The final exam will cover Chapters 15–22 of the Course Notes. Note that the final exam is not cumulative; it will not cover the material in Chapters 1–14.

When I create my exams, I make two versions of each page of questions. The two versions of each question cover similar topics and are, in my opinion, equally difficult. I have been creating exams in this way for many years and nobody has ever complained that one version of a question was more difficult than the other. If an exam contains, say, five pages of questions, then by mixing the versions of the pages, I can create 32 different versions of the exam. (I don’t create that many, but I don’t tell you how many I create.)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Source</th>
<th>Points</th>
<th>Source</th>
<th>Points</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Final Exam</td>
<td>75</td>
<td>Homework</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>First Midterm Exam</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>Project 1</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Second Midterm Exam</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>Project 2</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Total</td>
<td>200</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
I am announcing my method of creating exams to inform you. If my goal was to entrap people who are cheating, I would not tell you my method. Only a fool would believe that he/she has created an exam that makes cheating impossible; but my method does deter two common ways of cheating:

- Copying a neighbor’s paper; and
- Getting answers from a student who took the exam earlier.

This second item is particularly important in our class because I offer a great deal of flexibility as to when you take your exams. As described in another document (the Course Schedule), for each exam there will be three options for the day and time you take it.

If you have authorization from the McBurney Center for a private exam room and/or additional time on exams, contact me early in the semester so that arrangements can be made.

I will post practice exams, with solutions, in advance of both midterms and the final.

### 1.2 Homework

There will be 22 homework assignments, one each for Chapters 1–22 of the *Course Notes*. The due dates for the homework are given in the Course Schedule document. All or nearly all of you will be submitting your homework electronically to a *dropbox* on D2L.

After you submit a homework assignment, you will have immediate access to its solutions. At 12:01 AM on each Monday, the solutions for the week’s homework will be posted on D2L. Thus, even if you do *not* submit a homework assignment, you will have access to its solutions.

If you want to submit homework late, place it in the *late homework dropbox* and email your TA. Give your TA your reason(s) for requesting a waiver of the deadline. **Do not contact me about homework issues** unless you want me to mediate a dispute between you and your TA.

Your TA will examine your homework carefully and give you feedback on any incorrect answers. The feedback might consist of: referring you to the posted solution; providing additional detail (beyond what is posted); or a suggestion that you talk to your TA at discussion or during an office hour.

If it appears that you made a good effort to complete the homework problems, you will receive 0.75 points for your submission, regardless of whether it is totally correct, partially correct or totally incorrect. The main reason for my *casual approach* to rewarding homework points is that I want to encourage students to work together on homework; by definition, it is impossible to cheat on the homework.

We will drop your two lowest homework scores. Thus,

\[ 20 \text{ (homework assignments)} \times 0.75 \text{ (points per assignment)} = 15 \text{ (points)} \]

as listed in Table 1.

### 1.3 Projects

See the projects assignment document posted on D2L and on our course webpage.
2 Determination of the Course Grade

Your course grade will be determined by the number of points you earn in the course. There are no options for extra credit, so please don’t ask. The Department of Statistics has created guidelines for the distribution of grades in its courses and instructors are expected to follow them, at least approximately. I will give more or fewer A’s depending on my perception of: how hard the class works and how good the work is. The former is easier for me to determine; for example, if everyone submits both projects, that is evidence that the class is working hard.

I don’t like to give D’s or F’s in a general education course, but I will if either is the appropriate grade. If you find that you are having trouble in the course, please come to my office and we can talk about it.