

MATH 573
HISTORY OF CALCULUS
Nicholls State University, Fall 2011

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My office hours are Mon, Wed: 9:00am-12:00pm and Tue, Thu: 9:00-11:00am and 3:00-4:00 pm. Please contact me (by phone, by email, or in person) during these times if you have any questions. If you need assistance at a different time, contact me and we'll work something out.

Prerequisite/Corequisite: MATH 509

Required Materials: There will be no text for this course. We will use class notes regularly posted to Blackboard.

Course Description (catalog): Selected topics in the history of mathematics. A general survey of mathematics normally includes developments in geometry, algebra, number theory, and calculus as well as biographies of significant mathematicians and their contributions to mathematics and society. May be repeated for credit if content differs. No more than six hours may be counted towards a degree.

Course Description (instructor): This course will be a humanities-style course that is approximately 75% history and 25% mathematics. Several years ago, a group of the brightest minds of our time got together to discuss mankind. Their goal: to vote on the most important achievement of all time. Their selection was not the wheel, relativity or the computer. This particular group chose The Calculus. My goal in this course is to help you understand and appreciate why it is deserving of such a title.

I view most of the history of mathematics as a beautiful story; sometimes funny, sometimes tragic, often poetic, and always fascinating. Unlike most stories, we'll begin at the end. Most of you are undoubtedly familiar with Newton and Leibniz, so rather than pretend that you are unaware of the coming punch line, we will begin there. But rather quickly we will jump back in time 2,000 years and then slowly make our way back to the 17th century and wrap things up with Newton and Leibniz once again...rightly so.

A few words need to be said about the Internet aspect of this course. All assignments, notes, and announcements will be posted on Blackboard. All students enrolled in an Internet course should have basic computer skills (such word processing, e-mail, navigating the Internet, etc). Some tips on preparing yourself for an online course are available at www.nicholls.edu/distance. As an online student, you will be somewhat self-paced. This therefore requires self-discipline and self-motivation. The problem sets need to be turned in on time. It is the responsibility of the student to notify the instructor of technical and/or personal problems that may interfere with online participation. All students must check their e-mail

account regularly. E-mail will be our primary means of communication. If you need more personalized assistance, I invite you to contact me (either in person or on the phone) during office hours. Just like a typical class, instances of academic dishonesty, such as plagiarism, will not be tolerated. Sanctions for such behavior are outlined in the *Code of Student Conduct* (Section 1.9).

Special Note: Section Five of the Code of Student Conduct, 'Academic Dishonesty and Disruptive Behavior,' includes a requirement that faculty file a charge complaint statement with their respective dean whenever a student is confronted or disciplined for cheating. The Office of Academic Affairs will maintain these records, and any student confronted and/or disciplined for multiple offenses of academic dishonesty will be brought before the Academic Affairs Integrity Committee for further review and potential sanctions. Please read the Code of Student Conduct for further details regarding this policy."

Course Objectives: At the completion of this course, a student will be able to:

- Demonstrate familiarity with the people involved with the development of The Calculus, including their personal stories, times, and places.
- Utilize techniques both old and new to address calculus problems.
- Analyze the environment in which various mathematicians operated and discuss their methodologies.
- Compare and contrast approaches taken to problems and evaluate their success.

Grading Structure: Your course grade will be composed of a problem set grade (50%), an “in-class” midterm exam grade (25%), and a take-home final exam grade (25%). The midterm exam will obviously not actually be in-class, since we do not have class. What I mean is that it will be a typical closed-book, timed exam that students will take at a specified time and place (as opposed to a take-home exam that you can complete when and where you want during the time you are working on it). ***Distance education students need to choose an approved testing center in their local area and complete a Proctor Approval Form (soon to be located under “Course Documents”) prior to taking the exam. Once the form has been uploaded, I will give you two weeks to inform me of your choice. That will allow me ample time to contact your designated proctor and approve (or not) the selection.*** Students located near campus will be able to arrange their midterm exam with me. The problem set grade will consist of fairly regular assignments, roughly one a week, such as problems to work out, discussion boards, independent research, etc.

At the conclusion of the semester, letter grades will be assigned based on the usual 10% grading scale (A: 90-100%, B: 80-89%, C: 70-79%, etc). Late assignments will not be accepted unless there are VERY unusual circumstances, and make-up exams will only be administered if the student provides a valid excuse. The instructor decides which excuses are valid and which circumstances are unusual. As I said above, academic dishonesty (i.e. cheating, plagiarism, etc.) will not be tolerated.

Important Dates

‘W’ Day – Wednesday, November 2, 2011

Academic Grievances: The proper procedure for filing grade appeals or grievances related to academic matters is listed in Section 5 of the *Code of Student Conduct* and at the following link: www.nicholls.edu/documents/student_life/code_of_conduct.pdf.

Continued Learning following an Extreme Emergency: In order to make continued learning possible following an extreme emergency

students are responsible for:

- reading regular emergency notifications on the NSU website;
- knowing how to use and access Blackboard (or university designated electronic delivery system);
- being familiar with emergency guidelines;
- evacuating textbooks and other course materials;
- knowing their Blackboard (or designated system) student login and password;
- contacting faculty regarding their intentions for completing the course.

faculty are responsible for:

- their development in the use of the Blackboard (or designated) software;
- having a plan for continuing their courses using only Blackboard and email;
- continuing their course in whatever way suits the completion of the course best, and being creative in the continuation of these courses;
- making adjustments or compensations to a student's progress in special programs with labs, clinical sequences or the like only in the immediate semester following the emergency.

Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) Students with a documented disability are entitled to classroom accommodations under the ADA. To receive accommodations, contact the Office of Disability Services at (985) 448-4430 or 158-A Shaver Gym. Additional information can be found at www.nicholls.edu/disability.