Information Sheet

Introduction to matrix theory and linear algebra
MA 211, Fall 2015
MWF, 1:00–1:50, JXJ 2320

Professor: Phillips  Office: JXJ 2204  Phone: 2022  Office Hrs: TBA, by appt

Textbook. Contemporary Linear Algebra, by H. Anton

Topics. We will undertake an investigation of matrices, systems of linear equations, vector spaces, linear transformations, and characteristic roots and vectors. This means we will cover (parts of) chapters 1–8.

The project. Ours will be a serious attempt to understand the abstract nature of linear algebra, informed by attention to aesthetics, precision, and utility. This course is fundamental to your mathematics studies, in two ways: firstly, linear algebra plays a vital role in mathematics; nearly every branch of mathematics uses linear algebra in essential ways; secondly, this course marks the transition from the largely computationally based introductory mathematics courses of your past to the more abstract, conceptually based, and proof-oriented higher mathematics courses of your present and future. Mathematics studies are central to any liberal education—recall that the Greek root of the word mathematics translates roughly as “that which is learnable.” Mathematics is thus paradigmatic of all learning. And so bracing and accompanying all of our efforts in this class of signal importance in the mathematics curriculum, we shall attend purposefully to nothing less than learning itself, (re)learning how to learn.

Attendance. It is unwise to miss class.

Homework. Homework will be assigned at the end of each class, will include a few short papers and various other sundries, and will account for one fifth of the final grade. “A minimum of two hours out of class preparation is expected of all students for each hour in class.”

Exams. There will be three midterm exams and a final exam. Each midterm will be announced at least one week in advance. The final exam will be comprehensive. All four exams will be worth 100 points each. There will be no make-up exams.

Grading. The student’s final grade will be based on the four exams and homework. The grading scale is

- 450–500 points: A
- 400–450 points: B
- 350–400 points: C
- 300–350 points: D
- 0–300 points: F
**Disability services.** If you have a need for disability-related accommodations or services, please inform the Coordinator of Disability Services in the Dean of Students Office at 2001 C. B. Hedgcock Building (227-1700 or disserv@nmu.edu). Reasonable and effective accommodations and services will be provided to students if requests are made in a timely manner, with appropriate documentation, in accordance with federal, state, and University guidelines.