MAT 127: Calculus C, Fall 2010
Comments on the Midterm II Results

The letter grade splits for the second midterm are:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>MTII score</th>
<th>75+</th>
<th>57-74</th>
<th>45-56</th>
<th>30-44</th>
<th>29-</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>letter grade</td>
<td>A-/A</td>
<td>B±</td>
<td>C/C+</td>
<td>D</td>
<td>F</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

These cutoffs are fairly low due to the relatively harsh grading of some of the questions.

This exam indicates that many of you have at least some understanding of the content of MAT 127 so far, but have trouble with basic algebra, which makes it difficult for you to demonstrate your understanding and get points for it. For example, some of you have trouble simplifying fractions, such as 45/990; many of you have trouble with exponents. All of you know that 2+2=4, but this is the last third of calculus, and thus you should also see immediately that

\[
\sqrt{4^n} = 2^n, \quad \frac{3^n}{2^n} = \left( \frac{3}{2} \right)^n, \quad \frac{\sqrt{4^n + 1}}{3^n} = \sqrt{\frac{4^n + 1}{9^n}}.
\]

It appears that most of you have ignored the suggestion of trying out the practice placement tests (in particular, Parts 1 and 2) available on the math department website and ensuring that you can do them quickly and correctly (the expectations for how quickly and how correctly were available on the course website at the beginning of the semester). You are unlikely to pass this course unless you are very proficient with basic algebra, but most of you can fairly easily become proficient with some practice (this is much easier than predator-prey systems and sequences/series).

If you would like to discuss how a specific problem was graded on your midterm, please speak with the primary grader for the problem as indicated below:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>MTII Problem</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3a</th>
<th>3b</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>grader</td>
<td>JN</td>
<td>XC</td>
<td>ZZ</td>
<td>EG</td>
<td>AZ</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

When you meet with the grader, you must have a print-out of the solutions to the midterm. Your grade will be changed, up or down, only if you convince the grader that your solution was graded in a way inconsistent with the grading instructions described in the solutions or with how other students’ solutions were graded. If there is an issue with how Problem 1 on your exam was graded, or if your scores were added incorrectly, or your total was incorrectly recorded in Blackboard, please let your instructor know. All issues with Midterm II and HW5-HW10 must be resolved before Friday, December 10; the grades for the early exam, the first midterm, and HW1-HW4 are no longer subject to change (as stated in several previous handouts).

At this point, your standing in the class and the chances of getting any particular letter grade at the end of the semester depend on both your current weighted total and on the trend in your exam scores. So, it is hard to give a reasonably accurate general description, except in extreme cases; if you’d like to discuss your own standing, please talk with your instructor directly (not by e-mail). In any case, you can no longer leave the class, and you have pretty much only two options:
- put in as much effort as possible in order to pass (C or better) this course or get as good a grade as possible;

- give up on this course and fail it in order to concentrate on your other courses.

The second option is advisable only if you no longer have a realistic chance of passing this course. This is indeed the case for some of you, but most of you do have a realistic chance of passing this course, though for a number of you this will require a tremendous effort.

As of 11/04 (before HW7 scores are entered in the following week), the maximum possible weighted total is 59 (not including the various bonus points). There are still 41-42.5 points to be decided (depending on your current lowest HW score, because the lowest overall HW score will be dropped). How much of these you are likely to get depends on your current weighted total, the trend in your exam scores, and the effort you put into this course in the time remaining before the final exam. The following guidelines regarding your standing are very rough.

- If your WT as of 11/04 is above mid-20s, you can probably pass (C or better) this course by trying very hard (but how hard also depends on other factors).

- If your WT as of 11/04 is in the mid/upper 40s, you can probably manage to pull up to an A, but this may require a tremendous effort (unlike the previous case, getting even 80% of the remaining points would not constitute such an effort).

- If your WT as of 11/04 is somewhere between upper 20s and mid 40s, first and foremost make sure to pass the course. This should be quite feasible for you, as long as you do not fall behind (in particular, you must have a reasonable understanding of sequences/series in order to pass this course).

As always in this course, the above statements are intended to mean precisely what they say. In particular, the description of the first case above is not an euphemism for there is no way you’ll pass this course, but it is not nice to say so.

If you want to improve your standing in the class or to prevent it from getting worse, you may need to focus more on it than you have so far, and not just before the exams. Reading the book or the course summaries, attending lectures or review sessions, or going to MLC or RTC is likely to be pointless unless you try to do lots of exercises by yourself and succeed in doing so in most cases. It may also help if you do not treat MAT 127 as some distraction from texting and web-surfing, as some of you seem to do during lectures and review sessions and even more likely do so when working on exercises. Fortunately, you’ll have a four-day weekend two weeks before the final exam; hopefully, you will use some of this time to review Chapter 7 and to catch up on Chapter 8. It is of course up to you whether to do well in this course and if so how to do this.

If you fail MAT 127, you will need to ask for a retake permission from Academic Advising to repeat it; there is no guarantee it will be granted. So if you can still pass this course, try to do so the best you can.

Good luck in the rest of the semester!