



Course Syllabus: Contemporary Math

Math 1053 Section 105

Fall 2026, Aug. 24 – Dec. 11

Contact Information

Instructor: Dr. Dawn Slavens

Office: Bolin Science Hall – 122D

Office Hours (located in Bolin Science Hall – 122D):

- **Mondays:** 10:30 – 11:30 AM & 1:30 – 2:30 PM
- **Tuesdays:** 1:30 – 2:30 PM
- **Fridays:** 10:00 – 11:00 AM

The following office hour will be held in TASP (located on the first floor of the library)

- **Wednesdays:** 4:00 PM – 5:00 PM

I am also available to meet outside these times by appointment, either in person or via Zoom.

Students may schedule an appointment by:

- **Stopping by my office** (when I am not in class or in a meeting, I may be available to meet on the spot), or
- **Emailing me** to arrange a specific day and time to meet.

Office phone: (940) 397-4013

E-mail: dawn.slavens@msutexas.edu

Class Meeting Days, Times, Location

Tuesdays and Thursdays, 9:30 – 10:50 a.m. in Bolin Science Hall room 316

Course Description from MSU Catalog

A survey of the use of mathematics in the modern world. Topics include: theory of elections and apportionment, graphs and networks, and statistics.

Textbook & Instructional Materials

MyLab Math digital materials for the text *Excursions in Modern Mathematics*, tenth edition, by Tannenbaum are required for this course.

This course participates in the MSU Texas Access & Affordability Program, which provides students with access to required course materials (e.g., MyLab Math) at a reduced, pre-negotiated price through the MSU Bookstore.

Students who wish to **opt out** of this program and purchase course materials on their own may do so. **Opt-out instructions will be sent to your MSU email address (@my.msutexas.edu) on the second day of class** by the MSU Bookstore. It is the student's responsibility to check their email and follow the opt-out instructions in a timely manner.

If you choose to opt out:

- You will need to **purchase access to the course materials independently**, at a cost that Pearson and the MSU Bookstore guarantee will be **higher** than the program price.
- You are required to **contact Pearson Support** directly after purchasing access to have your **access code verified**.
- If you do **not** contact Pearson for verification, your access to course materials will be **revoked immediately or later in the semester**.
- Loss of access may result in receiving **zeros** on all assignments completed in MyLab Math until access is restored.
- If access is not regained in a timely manner, you may need to **withdraw from the course** since completing homework is a mandatory component of this course.

Students are strongly encouraged to remain enrolled in the Access & Affordability Program unless they are fully prepared to manage independent purchase and verification of materials. If you do decide to opt-out, a phone number to Pearson is 1-833-585-1828. Please use it to contact Pearson Support to purchase an access code or to have an access code purchased elsewhere verified to insure your access to course materials.

Calculator Requirement: Each student will need to have a scientific calculator. Bring your calculator with you to each class meeting. The TI 30X IIS is a scientific calculator that sells for under \$20 through Amazon. You are not allowed to use a calculator on a phone while in class.

Desire-to-Learn (D2L)

You will access MyLab Math through the MSU D2L program. You can log into [D2L](#) through the MSU Homepage.

On D2L, I will post the following:

- Announcements and occasional reminders.
- Your grades on exams and quizzes, as well as periodically your updated MyLab Math Homework Average.
- Attendance (specifically absences and tardies)
- Links to video lectures that I may assign you to watch.

I recommend the mobile Brightspace Pulse App. It will allow you to have quick access to anything posted within D2L.

Attendance Policy

1. Attendance will be taken at the beginning of every class. Any student who is late or who leaves early may be counted as absent. Students are expected to arrive on time and stay for the entire class period. Leaving in the middle of class to go to the restroom, get a drink of water, etc. should be avoided except in a rate emergency.
2. After a student has attained two absences (excused or unexcused), ***each additional unexcused absence will result in a 1% deduction to the student's semester course average.** (For example, a third absence that is unexcused will result in a loss of 1% from the student's final average. A third and fourth absence, each being unexcused, will result in a loss of 2% from the student's final average. A third, fourth, and fifth absence, each being unexcused, will result in a loss of 3% from the student's final average.)
3. Any student who misses **more than five classes (excused and unexcused combined) may be instructor dropped from the course with a grade of F or WF.**
4. The best ways to ensure Dr. Slavens considers an absence as excused are
 - a. Provide a doctor's note for a non-routine appointment. (Routine appointments, such as dentist appointments, will not be considered excused. So do not schedule routine medical appointments during class.)
 - b. Provide a university signed letter or memo confirming participation in an athletic or academic event
 - c. Provide documentation of a mandatory military service obligation
5. If you do not notify Dr. Slavens of your absence in a reasonable amount of time before the class you miss, then generally your absence will not be excused. If circumstances beyond your control make it impossible to notify her before class, you must notify her as soon as reasonably possible after the missed class period for the absence to be considered for an excused absence.
6. Any student who violates the Electronic Device Policy (such as using a cell phone or wearing earbuds) may be counted absent.

7. A student who is counted absent will receive a 0 on any work submitted during that day's class.

If you miss class, it is your responsibility to do the following two things.

1. You need to get notes from another student for the day(s) you missed. Dr. Slavens does not give copies of notes to students.
2. See Dr. Slavens before the next class for any handouts from the day(s) you missed. You can stop by her office or come up and see her before she starts class. Dr. Slavens will not stop to give out handouts from previous days once class starts.

Grading

Course Grade – Your grade will be based on Homework (done in MyLab Math), Quizzes, and Unit Exams. The table below shows the weight of each category for computing your course average as an overall percentage score.

Assessments	Weight
MyLab Math Homework	10%
Quizzes	21%
Three Unit Exams (23% each)	69%

Grading scale for your final grade

Grade	Percentage
A	at least 90%
B	80-89%
C	70-79%
D	60-69%
F	Less than 60%

Homework

MyLab Math is the homework platform used for this course. Homework sets will be assigned over each section of the book that is covered in class. There are due dates given within MyLab Math for each homework set. Each due date time is the start of class on the day the homework is due. Students may work on an assignment past the due date until the Unit test day, but there will be a 25% penalty on any problem completed during this late period.

Note: When you do not get full credit when working on a problem within a homework assignment, you will generally have the option of working on a similar problem. If you work the similar problem correctly, you will then receive credit for the problem. When you have this option, there are unlimited attempts at a similar problem. After completing a problem, look for "similar question."

Students are expected to keep a **homework notebook** and **show work** on problems that require a multistep process for solving. Within your homework notebook you should:

1. Label each assignment with the name of the assignment from within MyLab Math.
2. For each problem within the assignment that requires a multistep process for solving, number the problem in your homework notebook with the corresponding problem number from the MyLab Math assignment and then show your work for solving the problem. Calculations in your work can be done on a calculator.
3. *Bring your homework notebook with you to each class meeting and to any office hours you attend for the purpose of getting help with the homework.*
4. Dr. Slavens may require any student to submit their homework notebook if there appears to be a discrepancy between a student's unit homework average and a student's unit quiz or unit test average.

Math is learned through practice. To be successful in this course, you should create a weekly schedule that allows sufficient time to complete and learn from the assigned homework.

Any student with more than 7 incomplete assignments (grades under 50% will be classified as incomplete) may be instructor dropped from the course with a grade of F.

Computer Requirements

This class requires access to a computer with Internet access to complete homework assignments. It is your responsibility to have, or have access to, a working computer and reliable Internet connection for completing assignments.

Assignments are due by the stated due date. Personal computer, Internet, or other technical difficulties will not be considered a reason for an extension of the assignment deadline. Computers are available on campus in various locations, including Moffett Library.

If you experience technical difficulties with MyLab Math, contact your instructor immediately. If you are unable to access your homework in MyLab Math due to a technical issue that is isolated to your account or device, contact Pearson Student Tech Support at 1-833-585-1828 or through [Pearson's Online Support](#).

Quizzes

Quizzes will be announced in advance and given during class. Each chapter will typically include one or two quizzes. Quiz questions will cover problems and concepts similar to those in homework assignments and class lectures.

- **Missed Quizzes:** A missed quiz will receive a grade of zero. Make-up quizzes will not be given under any circumstances, regardless of the reason for the absence.
- **Excused Absences:** If your absence is officially excused by me (see page 3 of the syllabus) and you miss a quiz within a unit, the grade for the missed quiz will be replaced by your score on the corresponding Unit Exam.
- **Tardiness:** Students who arrive late and after a quiz has been distributed may not be permitted to take the quiz and will receive a grade of zero.

If a student is going to be absent on the day of a quiz due to an approved university activity, the student should request to take the quiz early. Timely notification (generally two business days prior to the quiz) is needed to ensure the opportunity to take the quiz.

Exams

There will be three unit-exams during the semester. Tentative exam dates (subject to change with prior notice) are **Sept. 29** (Unit 1), **Oct. 29** (Unit 2), and **Dec. 8** (Unit 3) from 8 – 10 AM. The exam on Dec. 8 is during the final exam period for this course.

Note: Special rules regarding exams days will be announced in class and in D2L as part of Dr. Slavens' **Exam Environment and Device Policy**. The intent of the rules within this policy is to protect the integrity of the exam and ensure fairness for all students.

Exam Make-Up Policy

If a student will miss an exam due to an approved university activity, they must request to take the exam early at least one week before the scheduled exam date.

Make-up exams are **not generally offered**. However, under exceptional circumstances, a make-up exam **may be granted at the discretion of the instructor** in cases of a **medical or personal emergency** that the instructor deems **unavoidable**.

To be considered for a make-up exam, the following conditions must be met:

- **Timely Notification:** The student must notify the instructor of the emergency as soon as reasonably possible and no later than 4:00 p.m. on the day of the missed exam.
- **Documentation:** The notification should include appropriate documentation or at minimum, a **detailed written explanation** of the emergency.

Make-up exams will not be granted for absences due to vacations or other personal travel when classes are in session.

Taking Notes During Class

You are expected to take notes during every class lecture. These notes should be clear and legible so that you can refer to them while completing your homework or studying for the course. I reserve the right to ask students to upload a copy of their class notes to D2L at any time. Students that do not comply would be counted as absent since not taking notes indicates not being engaged in class.

When you need help with this course, where can you go?

1. To your professor
 - See your professor's office hours on page one of this syllabus, which includes an option for students unavailable during office hours to schedule an appointment.
 - When you meet with your professor you should have with you both your notes and all related work that you have done on the topics you are seeking help with.
2. To the *Tutoring and Academic Support Program (TASP)*, located in Moffett Library. This program offers free tutoring in math as well as other courses. You can find out more about their services by visiting their office or searching for *TASP* on the MSU website. Fall tutoring begins on August 31 and ends on December 3. *TASP* is not open during the week of final exams.

Academic Misconduct Policy

All work that you submit for this course must be your own. Submitting work that has been generated, in whole or in part, by AI tools, websites, solution manuals, or any external sources is a violation of academic integrity.

Academic dishonesty includes, but is not limited to, using unauthorized assistance to complete assignments, submitting someone else's work, or misrepresenting the source of your work.

Remember (see Homework section of the syllabus) that you are to have a **homework notebook** and **show work** on problems that require a multistep process for solving.

Any evidence that you submitted work that is not your own is considered an act of academic dishonesty. An act of academic dishonesty will be reported to the university and will result in one of the following academic sanctions:

- Receiving a 0 on the submitted work.
- Receiving a 0 on an entire assessment component of your grade (see table under Grading).
- Receiving an F in Math 1053.

- An F in Math 1053 that will remain permanently on your transcript and within your MSU GPA.

Electronic Device Policy

Earbuds and other headsets are to be removed, and cell phones silenced and stored in a bag or placed on your tabletop with screen side down, at the beginning of class. Other electronic devices (laptops, tablets, smart glasses) must also be appropriately stored prior to the start of class. A student with a cell phone or other device that is not appropriately stored, or a student with earbuds or a headset in or over their ears, will be in noncompliance with this policy and will be counted absent on the day of noncompliance. Students that continue to be noncompliant with this policy may be referred to the Dean of Students Office and/or the student may be withdrawn from the class by the instructor.

Services for Students with Disabilities

In accordance with Section 504 of the Federal Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990, Midwestern State University endeavors to make reasonable accommodations to ensure equal opportunity for qualified persons with disabilities to participate in all educational, social, and recreational programs and activities. After notification of acceptance, students requiring accommodations should make application for such assistance through Disability Support Services, located in the Student Wellness Center, (940) 397-4140. Current documentation of a disability will be required in order to provide appropriate services, and each request will be individually reviewed. For more details, please go to [Disability Support Services](#).

Instructor Drop

The Student Handbook contains information on the Instructor Drop policy at Midwestern State University. Dr. Slavens reserves the right to drop a student from the class with a grade of WF or F for any reason described in the policy. The reasons within the policy include excessive absences, consistently failing to meet class assignments, indifferent attitude, and disruptive conduct. More information can be found at: [Student Handbook](#)

Recording Classes

****Recording classes is generally prohibited without the professor's explicit permission.*** Such recordings, when permitted, are for personal use only and may not be uploaded to the internet or otherwise shared, transmitted, or published without the professor's prior consent. Some faculty may not permit recordings of their classes. When it is feasible and appropriate, students may record classes to accommodate disabilities under the Americans With Disabilities Act, with prior approval of Disability Support Services. Such recordings may not be uploaded to the internet or otherwise shared, transmitted, or published.

Teaching and Learning During Inclement Weather Days

If campus closes due to inclement weather during the time when class is scheduled, expect me to post, by 11:00 a.m. within D2L, a video over the topics planned to be covered on the day of the closure. There will be no change in the class schedule, except for possibly a slight extension for completing homework.

Topics

We will be covering topics from the following list.

- Voting Methods
- Weighed Voting Systems
- Methods of Fair Division
- Apportionment Methods
- Graph Theory and Networks
- Graphical Representations of Data
- Numerical Descriptions of Data (average, median, percentiles, etc.)
- Probabilities
- Normal Distributions

Assessment of Core Objectives

Samples of students' work from embedded exam questions will be used in the assessment of critical thinking, communications skills, and empirical and quantitative skills. One core objective will be assessed in each of the three exams given over the semester.

Emergency Aid Resources for Basic Needs

Unexpected life circumstances can affect anyone. If you are experiencing challenges meeting basic needs—such as housing, utilities, food, transportation, healthcare, technology, textbooks or other life necessities, resources may be available to help. Visit the [Student Emergency Support and Resources webpage](#) to learn more, and explore emergency support opportunities through MSU and how to access them. For additional information, please contact the Office of Student Affairs: Clark Student Center #108, (940) 397-7500, student.affairs@mstuexas.edu.

University Policies

Use of Tobacco Products

Midwestern State University seeks to provide a safe, healthy, pleasant environment for its faculty, staff, and students. To this end, the use of tobacco products, including smoke and smokeless tobacco, and the advertising, sale, free distribution, and discarding of tobacco products shall be prohibited in all indoor and outdoor facilities and in all university vehicles. The policy extends to faculty, staff, students, vendors, guests, and visitors. Information related to the Use of Tobacco Products policy is available in the Midwestern State University Operating Policy 74.08, Use of Tobacco Products.

Alcohol and Drug Policy

To comply with the Drug Free Schools and Communities Act of 1989 and subsequent amendments, students and employees of Midwestern State are informed that strictly enforced policies are in place which prohibits the unlawful possession, use or distribution of any illicit drugs, including alcohol, on university property or as part of any university-sponsored activity. Students and employees are also subject to all applicable legal sanctions under local, state and federal law for any offenses involving illicit drugs on University property or at University-sponsored activities.

Campus Carry

Effective August 1, 2016, the Campus Carry law (Senate Bill 11) allows those licensed individuals to carry a concealed handgun in buildings on public university campuses, except in locations the University establishes has prohibited. The new Constitutional Carry law does not change this process. Concealed carry still requires a License to Carry permit, and openly carrying handguns is not allowed on college campuses. For more information, visit [Campus Carry](#).

Active Shooter

The safety and security of our campus is the responsibility of everyone in our community. Each of us has an obligation to be prepared to appropriately respond to threats to our campus, such as an active aggressor. Please review the information provided by MSU Police Department regarding the options and strategies we can all use to stay safe during difficult situations. For more information, visit [MSUReady – Active Shooter](#). Students are encouraged to watch the video entitled “*Run. Hide. Fight.*” which may be electronically accessed via the University police department’s webpage: [“Run. Hide. Fight.”](#)

***Notice:** Changes in the course syllabus, procedure, assignments, and schedule may be made at the discretion of the instructor.