

Course Syllabus: Pre-Calculus
McCoy College of Science, Mathematics & Engineering
Math 1534 Section 201
Spring 2025

Contact Information

Instructor: Dr. Dawn Slavens

Office: Pierce Hall Room 122

Office hours: Mon. 2-3 PM; Tues. 3-5 PM; Wed. 2-3 PM; Fri 11:10 AM-12 PM

Note: Office Hours are dedicated times I am available to meet with students. No appointment is needed to meet with me during my office hours. Simply come to my office and I will be there. For any student who has a conflict with above office hour times, other office hours are available by appointment. The best way to make an appointment is by sending me an email or by talking with me after class and then sending a follow-up email with the day and time we discussed for the appointment.

Office phone: (940) 397-4013

E-mail: dawn.slavens@msutexas.edu

Class Meeting Days, Times, Location

Mondays, 12-12:50 PM, AND Tuesdays & Thursdays, 12:30-1:50 PM, in DB 329

Catalog Information

Description: Applications of algebra and trigonometry to the study of elementary functions and their graphs including polynomials, rational, exponential, logarithmic and trigonometric functions. This course is intended for students planning to take Math 1634. Prerequisite: Math ACT 22 or MATH SAT 540 or satisfactory score on placement exam.

Textbook and Online Homework System

We will be using the mathematics platform ALEKS throughout the semester. A link to ALEKS is accessible through D2L. A short ALEKS student registration video is within D2L. The video will guide you through the steps of registering to use the ALEKS online platform. Within the online ALEKS platform, you will have access to the textbook for this course: Precalculus, 2nd Ed. (McGraw-Hill) by Miller and Gerken.

MSU Texas Access & Affordability

The ALEKS required digital materials for this course are part of the MSU Texas Access & Affordability Program. This program provides students access to course materials at a cost less than if purchased directly from the publisher. These course materials are available on the first day of class through D2L. Students are charged for these required course materials on their student account with the Business Office. The charge will appear as: *COSM Electronic Courseware*.

Course Modality

This class will be taught using a flipped class structure as described below. On average, twice per week, in preparation for class, students will complete, within ALEKS, pre-class homework assignments over sections of the textbook. These pre-class homework assignments will contain many short videos over the major topics covered in the course and the textbook. While watching the videos, students are to take detailed notes and bring their completed notes to class with them. The pre-class homework assignments may also contain problems for students to work after watching some of the videos. The purpose for the pre-class homework is to provide students initial instruction over course topics. After students have been provided the initial instruction from the pre-class assignment, they will work in small groups on problem sets in class to sharpen their understanding, and their peers understanding, of course topics covered in the pre-class assignment. The small group problems sets are also used as a scaffold to help students' extend their knowledge beyond what they obtained from the videos in the pre-class assignment. Working in small groups with class peers provides students with a collaborative and active learning environment. Student collaboration is an important part of this teaching method. Collaboration allows students to help each other, as well as help themselves, to develop a deeper understanding of course content. When you can explain a solution process to someone else in a way that helps that person understand a concept, you are deepening (or sometimes even challenging) your own understanding of the concept. An active learning environment is one that engages students in the learning process and encourage more complex thought. While students work in assigned groups, Dr. Slavens will walk around the classroom and interact with student groups to aid in the learning process. Dr. Slavens' interactions may involve answering questions of the group, as well as posing questions to the group. Weekly adaptive homework modules will be assigned over the content focused on during each week of the semester. On some class days, Dr. Slavens will spend ten to twenty minutes of class time leading a whole class discussion on solution processes to select problems within the weekly homework modules. The select problems will be problems in which the majority of the class appears to need additional instruction for solving. Dr. Slavens reserves the right to alter the course modality at any time.

Course Work Load Expectations

Math is learned through practice. Therefore, it is important that you create a daily schedule for yourself that allows you adequate time to spend working in this course. Since this is a 4 credit-hour course, you should expect to spend 8-to-12 hours per week outside of class working on learning the content of this course.

Desire-to-Learn (D2L)

On D2L, I will post the following:

- Announcements and occasional reminders.
- Your grades on exams and quizzes as well as your overall averages on homework and pre-class assignments done in ALEKS.
- Attendance (specifically absences and tardies).

Punctuality and Attendance Policy

Attendance will be taken at the beginning of every class. Students should arrive to class on time and remain for the entire class period. Arriving late or leaving early may result in being counted as absent.

In particular, what you need to know about being absent from this class:

1. A student who accumulates more than two unexcused or more than six total (excused and unexcused combined) absences may be instructor dropped from the class with a grade of WF or F. Once 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.

What is needed for Dr. Slavens to decide if an absence is excused?

Generally, documentation (such as a doctor's note for an illness or emergent non-routine appointment, etc.) is needed. However, Dr. Slavens may excuse an absence in which the student provides timely notification (verbally or in writing) of an emergent situation that prevented them from attending class, and also provides evidence of completing any assigned group work or class notes that occurred on the day of the absence.

2. A student who misses two consecutive class periods should send Dr. Slavens an email letting her know the reason for the extended absence. Further, the student may request in the email that Dr. Slavens send (via email) any handouts given in class during the days the student was absence.
3. Students are expected to arrive to class on-time and stay for the entire class meeting. Leaving in the middle of class to go to the restroom, take a phone call, etc., should be avoided except in a rare emergency. A student may be counted as absent for arriving to class late or leaving class early.
4. Any student who is physically present but not mentally present and engaged in class will be counted as absent.
5. Any student who violates the Cell Phone (Includes Electronic Devices and Earbuds) Policy will be counted as absent.
6. A student who is counted absent from class will receive a 0 on any work submitted during that day's class.

Grading

Course Grade – Your grade will be based on Pre-class Assignments (generally done in ALEKS), Weekly Homework Modules (done in ALEKS), Quizzes (done in class), Exams (done in class), and a Final Exam (done in class). There is no extra credit given in this course.

Table 1: Shows the weight of each category in computing your course average as an overall percentage score.

Category	Weight
Pre-class assignments and completed notes over the videos within these assignments, and any other non-adaptive assigned homework	3%
Participation within assigned group & Follows policies communicated within the syllabus	3%
¹ Adjusted Weekly Homework Modules Average	8%
Quizzes	16%
Exams	48%
Comprehensive Final Exam	22%

¹ Adjusted Weekly Homework Module Average is the minimum of 125% of your weighted average based on Quizzes and Exams and your Weekly Homework Module Average

Table 2: Total percentage points needed for final course grade

Grade	Overall Percentage		Final Exam
A	at least 90%	AND	at least 80%
B	at least 80%	AND	at least 70%
C	at least 70%	AND	at least 60%
D	at least 60%	AND	at least 50%
F	Less than 60%		

Homework

Working problems in the weekly homework modules is how one learns the Precalculus content that is needed for learning Calculus. Students in this course should be planning to talk Calculus in the near future. This course is to ensure you have the background needed to be successful, with continued work and effort on your part, to be successful in learning Calculus.

You should work on the weekly homework modules over a course of several days each week. Homework modules are not intended to be completed in one or two settings. When you seek help from me (which I hope you will do whenever you do not fully understand how to solve a problem type), bring with you your written work with your best attempt or attempts at solving the problem in which you are seeking help.

Any student that is not spending adequate time working problems from the weekly homework modules may be instructor dropped with a grade of F or WF. Dr. Slavens will provide a warning to any student that is in danger of being dropped from the class for not spending adequate time working problems within the weekly homework modules. As a reminder, students should expect to need to spend 8 to 12 hours per week outside of class working on learning the content covered in this course. Students with a sufficient amount of time logged in ALEKS but an insufficient amount of learned topics may be required to schedule time with a tutor in the TASP office in order to remain enrolled in the class.

At any point in the semester if a student's ALEKS weekly homework module average is more than 125% of their average based on quizzes and exams the student will be required to turn in organized written work for problems worked within future assigned homework modules. For students in which this applies, a meeting will be set-up so that Dr. Slavens can discuss with the student what is required. In addition, the student may be required to take a proctored Complete Knowledge Check in Dr. Slavens' office to reset the students learning path within ALEKS.

Any student that fails to complete, including taking adequate notes, more than five pre-class assignments may be instructor dropped from the class with a grade of F or WF.

Quizzes

Expect 5 or 6 quizzes (each approximately 20 to 30 minutes in length) during the semester. Quiz dates and the content focus of quizzes will be announced in class or through D2L. Quizzes will be over content from weekly homework modules and corresponding in-class group problem sets. A student that misses class on the day of a quiz will receive a grade of zero on the quiz. However, in a situation of illness or other unforeseen emergency that Dr. Slavens recognizes as excused, timely notification (on the day of the absence), may result in an opportunity to make-up the quiz. Once a graded quiz has been returned to the class, which is generally the class day following the day of the quiz, it becomes impossible to make-up a missed quiz.

Tentative Exam Dates

Exam dates (subject to change with prior notice) are as follows:

Exam 1: Tuesday, Feb. 25th

Exam 2: Tuesday, April 8th

Exam 3: Tuesday, May 6th

Final Exam: Thursday, May 15th, 10:30 AM – 12:30 PM

Some exams (or portions of an exam) will be required to be completed without a calculator. When a calculator is allowed, it must be an approved calculator. See the Calculator section of this syllabus.

Make-Up Exams

Make-up exams are not generally given; however, such exams may be given for an absence that is a result of a documented medical or personal emergency. If an exam is going to be missed due to an approved university activity, the student should request to take the exam early. For missed exams, timely notification (for emergencies, on or before the scheduled day of the exam, and for approved university activities, a week prior to the scheduled day of the exam) is necessary to receive consideration to make-up the exam or take the exam early. Once graded exams have been returned to the class, which generally occurs during the class meeting following the day of the exam, it will no longer be possible to make-up a missed exam. No student will be allowed to make-up more than one exam during the semester. No exams may be made up due to a student scheduling a vacation on a day when classes are in session.

Calculator

You will need a scientific calculator for this class. However, graphing calculators and certain scientific calculators will not be allowed to be used on assessments (quizzes or exams). With advanced warning, the instructor reserves the right to not allow a calculator for some assessments; however, for most assessments, an approved calculator will be allowed. When a calculator is allowed for an assessment, two approved calculators are the TI30XIIS and the TI30XS MultiView. Any other calculator will need to be approved by the instructor before a student is allowed to use it on an assessment. The instructor may need two weekdays to determine whether or not a particular calculator will be allowed to be used on an assessment. There are calculators that will work for this class in terms of doing homework or class group work that will not be allowed to be used on exams and quizzes. Two such calculators are the TI-36XPro and the Casio fx 991, which solve certain polynomial equations and/or provides exact irrational values of trigonometric functions of special angles. The instructor has several TI30XIIS calculators which students may generally borrow for an assessment if the calculator a student has is not approved. Any student who attempts to use a non-approved calculator on a quiz or exam may receive a zero on the quiz or exam. Further, additional penalties, as outlined under the Academic Misconduct Policy, may apply.

Bring a scientific or graphing calculator with you to class daily for group work and class lecture.

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

1. To your professor's office, Pierce 122. You should have with you both your notes and your written work with your best attempt or attempts at solving the problems you want to ask about.

2. To the *Tutoring and Academic Support Program (TASP)*, located in Moffett Library. This program offers free additional tutoring in math as well as other courses. You can find out more about their services by visiting their office or searching *TASP* on the MSU website. Spring tutoring and Homework Help Lounge will begin offering services on Tuesday, Jan. 28th. Their services will end on Thursday, May 8th. The TASP Learning Center (TLC) does not offer tutoring during the week of final exams.

Academic Misconduct Policy

All work that you submit for this course that contributes to your course grade must be your own work. Since the weekly homework modules contribute to your overall course grade, you are to complete problems within these modules without use of online sources that can provide answers to the problems in the assignment. The following is a list, not a complete list, of sources that are not allowed: Chat GPT, Chegg, Photomath, Symbolab. If you want to know if an online source is allowed, you should ask me. Otherwise, assume it is not allowed.

Any evidence that you submitted work that is not your own is considered plagiarism and is an act of academic dishonesty. An act of academic dishonesty will be reported to the university in accordance with the university's academic dishonesty policy found in the student handbook, and will result in one of the following academic sanctions:

- Receiving a 0 on the assignment, quiz or exam
- Receiving a 0 for all of the Adjusted Weekly Homework Module component of your grade (8%)
- Receiving a 0 for all of the Quizzes component of your grade (16%)
- Receiving an F in MATH 1534
- Receiving an F in MATH 1534 that will remain permanent on your transcript and within your MSU GPA

On homework problems, you may get assistance from other people, but you are responsible for understanding what you submit within ALEKS. Never let someone borrow your written notes completed when watching videos in the pre-class homework. If two (or more) students turn in written notes where it appears that one student copied from another student, all students involved will receive a grade of 0 on the submitted work, and further the students involved will be warned that if it happens again the students will be instructor dropped from the course.

Cell Phone Policy

Earbuds are to be removed and cell phones silenced and stored, in a bag, prior to the beginning of class. Other electronic devices 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 in their ears, will be considered to be using the cell phone/electronic device and will have their grade reduced by 1% for each occurrence of violating this policy. (Please refer to class guidelines.) Students that continue to be noncompliant with this Cell Phone Policy may be referred to the Dean of Students Office and/or the student may be withdrawn from the class by the instructor.

General Classroom Guidelines

- (1) As written above, all cell phones should be off/silent, and all cell phones should be stored in a bag.
- (2) You are not allowed to use tablets or laptops during class.
- (3) Remove earbuds.
- (4) You may not wear a hoodie or hat covering your ears during class.
- (5) You may not wear anything that covers your eyes when taking a test or quiz.
- (6) Using a cell phone, smart watch, or other non-approved electronic device during a test or quiz, or having earbuds in your ears when taking a test or quiz, will result in a grade of zero on the test or quiz, as well as possibly other penalties under the academic misconduct policy.
- (7) You are expected to be on time to class and to stay for the entire class. (It is disruptive to the rest of the class when people come and go in the middle of class.)

Teaching and Learning During Inclement Weather Days

If campus closes due to inclement weather during a time when class is scheduled, expect me to post no later than 1 PM an assignment in D2L (probably another pre-class assignment with videos) for you to complete on the day of the closure. There will be no major changes to the class schedule due to inclement weather days. Slight changes to the class schedule may include an extension for completing homework or a change in the day of a planned assessment (quiz or exam). Such changes will be communicated within D2L.

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 Clark Student Center, Room 168, (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](#).

Campus Carry Rules/Policies

Senate Bill 11 passed by the 84th Texas Legislature allows licensed handgun holders to carry concealed handguns on campus, effective August 1, 2016. Areas excluded from concealed carry are appropriately marked, in accordance with state law. For more information regarding campus carry, please refer to the University's webpage at [Campus Carry Rules and Policies](#).

MSU Class Attendance Policy

Midwestern State University's Attendance Policy, which is contained in the MSU Student Handbook, states that students are expected to attend all meetings of the classes in which they are enrolled. Among other things, the policy covers the university's position on authorized absences, including who students should contact to inform faculty in cases of personal emergency or illness requiring hospitalization or prolonged absence. You may wish to review MSU's Class Attendance Policy within the [Student Handbook](#).

Notice

Changes to the course syllabus, classroom procedures, assignment structure, and exam schedule may be made at the discretion of the instructor.