Syllabus
Math 1053-201/250: Contemporary Math
Spring 2026

Section Information

Instructor

Instructor: Dr. Sarah Cobb (she/her)
Office: Bolin 122D
Office phone: (940) 397-4441
E-mail: sarah.cobb@msutexas.edu
Drop-in Office hours:
- Monday: 9:00-10:00
- Tuesday: 11:00-11:25
- Wednesday: 9:00-10:00
- Thursday: 11:00-11:25
- Friday: 10:00-11:00

Office hours also available by appointment.

Schedule

Class meetings: MWF, 8:00—8:50 AM, Bolin 324

Unit Exams: Wednesday, February 25 and Wednesday, April 15 during class time, Bolin 324

Final Exam: Wednesday, May 13, 8:00 AM — 10:00 PM, Bolin 324

Catalog information

Course Description

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

Prerequisites

Prerequisite(s): Math TSIA2 Assessment score of 950, Math TSIA2 Diagnostic score of 6, MATH 1003 with a grade of C or better, math TSI Assessment score of 350, math THEA score of 270, math Accuplacer score of 90, or satisfactory score on placement exam.

Course Objectives

Upon successful completion of this course, students will:

1. Demonstrate the ability to choose and analyze mathematical models to solve problems from real-world settings, including, but not limited to, personal finance, civic engagement, and planning and logistics.
2. Apply mathematical ideas of fairness to assess methods of group choice and fair division.
3. Use mathematical formulae to analyze the value of loans and investments.
4. Demonstrate fundamental probability/counting techniques and apply those techniques to solve problems.
5. Interpret and analyze various representations of data.

Course Materials

Instructional Materials and Online Homework

Excursions in Modern Mathematics, tenth edition. Peter Tannenbaum.

You will need access to the MyLab Math online content. An electronic copy of the book is included in the purchase of the MyLab system. You do not need a physical copy unless you want one.

Additional materials needed will be posted or linked through D2L.

Follett Access

Access to online course materials for this course is provided through the Follett Access program. MyMathLab and the course textbook will be available through D2L beginning on the first day of class, and the cost of the materials will be billed to your student account.

If you wish to opt out of this program and purchase materials another way, you can do that by following the instructions in an email that will be sent to your official MSU email address on the second day of class.

Calculators

You should have a calculator that will add, subtract, multiply, divide, and take square roots. You will not need a graphing calculator, though you are welcome to use one. If you are buying a calculator, I recommend a TI-30 or similar calculator (costs about $15-30). If you already have a calculator, you can use that.

 You are expected to bring your calculator to class each day. You may not use a phone or any device with internet access as a calculator. You may not share calculators.

General Supplies

You should attend each class prepared with a pencil or pen and your own paper to write on. I will frequently give handouts, so I recommend using a three-ring binder to organize your course materials. You should also bring a calculator to class daily, as described above.

Coursework and Grading

Grading

Your grade for the course will be computed based on points in the following categories:

Category	Points
Attendance and Participation	20
Homework	40
Quizzes	40
Mini Project 1	25
Mini Project 2	25
Unit 1 Test	100
Unit 2 Test	100
Unit 3 Test	100
Total	450

Your final letter grade will be based on the number of points obtained:

Grade	Points
A	At least 405
B	At least 360
C	At least 315
D	At least 270
F	Less than 270

Final grades will not be rounded up and no extra credit will be given.

Attendance and Participation

Part of your grade for this class depends on regular attendance and participation, which will be assessed at each class meeting. To earn full credit for participation, you must:

- attend all class meetings
- arrive on time and stay until the end
- arrive prepared with appropriate supplies (pen/pencil, paper, calculator)
- participate actively in class
- refrain from using cell phones, computers, headphones, and other communication devices during class

Homework

Homework will be assigned using the Pearson MyLab system. A specific MyLab course has been created for this class and should be accessed through D2L.

Problems may be worked as many times as you like, so a perfect homework score should be attainable. Homework for each chapter will be due at 7:00 AM on the day of the chapter quiz. Homework can be completed after the due date and before the unit exam for partial credit. After the unit exam, your homework score will be final.

Quizzes

Eleven quizzes will be given during the semester. Quizzes will generally cover one chapter, will be announced ahead of time, and will be given at the end of class. You may bring one 3x5 inch notecard for each quiz with reference material.

A quiz missed for a university excused absence can be taken early as long as paperwork is completed at least two class days before the absence. With permission of the instructor, a portion of the score on the unit exam may be substituted for a missed quiz score. No make-up quizzes will be given.

Tests

The unit exams for this class are Wednesday, February 25 and Wednesday, April 15 during class time; and Wednesday, May 13, 8:00 AM — 10:00 PM.

If you must miss an exam, please let me know at least one week ahead of the test date and arrange to take the test early. In the case of unexpected and unavoidable absences (such as hospitalization), you must let me know on the day of the test and provide documentation.

There is no cumulative final exam for this class.

Course Policies

Attendance

You are expected to attend every class, in person, if at all possible. This includes arriving on time; staying to the end; being prepared; participating in class; and behaving respectfully. If you must miss class, please consult a classmate to find out what you missed.

Students who miss more than six classes or portions of classes for reasons other than university-excused absences may be dropped from the course with a grade of F.

I do understand that life is complicated, and that class attendance is not totally under your control. Attending class should be a high priority, but it can't (and shouldn't) be your only priority. If there are circumstances that cause you to miss a significant amount of class, please communicate promptly with me about it and I will work with you on a plan to stay caught up on course material.

Learning Environment

I am committed to providing an environment that promotes learning for all students. It is important to me that this class is a welcoming, inclusive, and accessible space for all students. I am available and willing to address your issues and concerns as they arise.

Classroom Behavior

Respectful behavior in the classroom is required. Any student who is disruptive will be asked to leave class. As much as possible, please avoid leaving or entering the room during class. Make sure all electronic devices are silenced. Use of cell phones in class is not allowed.

Electronic Devices

Use of computers is not allowed in the classroom. This includes laptops, cell phones, tablets, and other similar devices. (Calculators are allowed.) Students using such devices may be asked to leave class. If a cell phone or similar device is visible or audible during an exam, you may receive a zero on that exam.

If this policy presents a serious problem, please let me know; exceptions may be made in special circumstances.

Academic Misconduct

Any incident in which a student submits work for grading that is not wholly their own work is considered academic dishonesty. This includes using sources (by paraphrase or direct quotation) without proper attribution; collaborating on work where collaboration is not authorized; use of sources on an assignment or test where those sources are not authorized; and turning in work completed by another person.

In general, you may work with classmates on any out-of-class assignment unless instructed otherwise. Quizzes and tests must represent your own individual work.

Cheating on any work in this course will result in no credit for that work. Egregious or repeated incidents will result in more serious consequences, such as a failing grade in the course or dismissal from your academic program. All incidents of academic misconduct will be reported as specified in your student handbook.

Student Handbook

Make sure you are familiar with university policies as described in the Midwestern State University student handbook. This course will abide by all university policies.

Changes

Some portions of this syllabus may alter during the semester. When possible, I will announce changes in class and on D2L. You are responsible for knowing everything I announce in class, post as a news item on D2L, or email to your official university email address. If you miss class, make sure you talk to someone who was there.

Desire-to-Learn (D2L)

Extensive use of the MSU D2L program is a part of this course. Each student is expected to be familiar with this program and to regularly check posted information. D2L provides a primary source of communication regarding assignments, examination materials, and general course information. You can log into D2L through the MSU Homepage. Downloading the Brightspace Pulse app is also recommended. If you experience difficulties, please contact the technicians listed for the program or contact your instructor.

Drop-in Office Hours

Office hours are time that I have set aside to answer questions about the course or course material. I am happy to answer questions about homework problems, quizzes and tests, study practices, grades, and other topics. If you are unable to attend scheduled office hours, you can email me (sarah.cobb@msutexas.edu) to set up an appointment at another time.

Communicating with Me

The best way to reach me is by email (sarah.cobb@msutexas.edu). I will generally respond to email within 24 to 48 hours. I will be in my office during office hours each week and often at other times; feel free to stop by. Any communication not in writing or by email should be considered unofficial.

Services for Students With Disabilities

MSU is committed to providing reasonable accommodations to allow students with disabilities to participate fully in its academic and campus life. Any student who may require special arrangements in order to meet the course requirements should contact me as soon as possible to make necessary arrangements. Students must present appropriate verification provided by Disability Support Services. The best time to present this documentation in private is during office hours. Please note that instructors are not allowed to provide classroom accommodation to a student until appropriate verification from Student Disability Services has been provided. For additional information, please contact Disability Support Services located in Clark Student Center, Room 168 or call 940-397-4140.

Inclement Weather

If the university closes for inclement weather (or another reason), class will not meet. Any scheduled test or due date will be postponed until the next scheduled class meeting. Additional information will be posted on D2L.

Some Useful Advice

I hope that every student in this class will be able to earn a grade that helps them towards their educational goals. Contemporary Math generally has a high success rate, so I expect this to be achievable for all of you. The points below are not course policies, but they are advice that former students have found useful.

- Attend class and pay attention. The reason attending class is required is that it contributes to student success. You will get more out of class if you attend each class session, take notes, and put away your phone.
- Your phone is a distraction and will affect your grade. Research on use of phones and computers in class shows that it decreases learning and test performance even when used for class purposes. As much as possible, make a habit of putting your phone away and setting it to "do not disturb" in class and when doing homework.
- Do your homework to study. The purpose of the homework is to help you prepare for quizzes and exams. You should work on your homework until you are confident you understand the material. Getting the right answer is only part of the process.
- Study returned quizzes to prepare for exams. Not every test problem will be similar to a quiz problem, but the quizzes give you an idea of what kind of questions will be on the test. I try to write useful comments when I grade. If you can't read my writing, you can always ask.
- Do your homework after every class. Doing the homework will help you prepare for the next day's class by making sure you are familiar with the material
- If you have questions about the material, come to office hours. I am happy to talk about homework problems, quizzes, or things that weren't clear in class. You don't need to make an appointment—that time is set aside so I can be available to work with students.
- Find a study group. Explaining things to other people is a good way to solidify your understanding. A good study group will help everyone get a deeper knowledge of the material.

Calendar

January 19 MLK Day – no class	January 21 Elections	January 23 Elections
January 26 Elections	January 28 Elections	January 30 Ranked choice voting (online assignment) No class meeting
February 2 Elections/Weighted systems	February 4 Weighted systems	February 6 Weighted systems/Fair division Ch 1 homework due Ch 1 quiz: Elections
February 9 Fair division	February 11 Fair division Ch 2 homework due Ch 2 quiz: Weighted systems	February 13 Fair division/apportionment
February 16 Apportionment Ch 3 homework due Ch 3 quiz: Fair division	February 18 Apportionment	February 20 Review Ch 4 homework due Ch 4 quiz: Apportionment
February 23 Review Finance	February 25 ***Test 1: Chapters 1, 2, 3, 4** Late homework due, Ch 1-4	February 27 Finance
March 2 Finance	March 4 Finance	March 6 Finance
March 9 Spring Break – no class	March 11 Spring Break – no class	March 13 Spring Break – no class
March 16 Finance	March 18 Euler paths	March 20 Euler paths Ch 10 homework due Ch 10 quiz

March 23	March 25	March 27
Euler paths	Hamilton circuits	Graph theory (online assignment)
Mini Project 1 due		No class meeting
March 30	April 1	April 3
Hamilton circuits	Hamilton circuits	Holiday Break – no class
Ch 5 homework due		
Ch 5 quiz: Euler Paths		
April 6	April 8	April 10
Hamilton Circuits/Trees	Trees	Trees
	Ch 6 homework due	
	Ch 6 quiz: Hamilton Circuits	
April 13	April 15	April 17
Review	***Test 2: Chapters 10, 5, 6, 7**	Collecting Data
Ch 7 homework due	Late homework due, Ch 10, 5-7	
Ch 7 quiz: Trees		
April 20	April 22	April 24
Collecting Data	Collecting Data/Statistics	Statistics
April 27	April 29	May 1
Statistics	Uncertainty	Uncertainty
Ch 14 homework due	Last day to withdraw with a grade of W	Ch 15 homework due
Ch 14 Quiz: Collecting Data		Ch 15 quiz: Statistics
May 4	May 6	May 8
Uncertainty	Uncertainty	Review
	*Mini Project 2 due	Ch 16 homework due
		Ch 16 quiz: Uncertainty
May 11	May 13	
Finals week – no class meeting	***Test 3: 8:00-10:00 AM Ch 14, 15, 16**	
	Late homework due, Ch 14-16	