



Course Syllabus: Contemporary Mathematics

MATH 1053 Section 103
Fall 2026 TR 8:00-9:20am

Contact Information

Instructor: Dr. Michelle Knox

Office: BO 122A

Office hours: Monday 11-11:50am, Friday 12-12:50pm, Tuesday and Thursday 11:00am-12:20pm and other times by appointment

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Course 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.

Textbook & Instructional Materials

Required:

- My Math Lab associated with the textbook Excursions in Modern Mathematics Tenth edition by Tannenbaum.
- You are required to have a calculator and bring it to class every day. Your calculator must add, subtract, multiply, divide, take square roots, and have exponential functions. You do not need a graphing calculator, though you are welcome to use one.
- A physical textbook is not required.

Required digital materials for this course are part of the Courseware Access and Affordability Program at MSU Texas. Students are charged for required course materials on their student account with the Business Office. Any students who wish to opt-out of the Program and purchase the required course materials on their own must follow the opt-out instructions which are sent to students' official my.msutexas.edu email address after the first day of class. Please contact the MSU Bookstore if you have any questions about the opt-out process.

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 as it provides a primary source of

communication regarding assignments, examination materials, and general course information. You can log into [D2L](#) through the MSU Homepage. If you experience difficulties, please contact the technicians listed for the program or contact your instructor.

Instructor Class Policies

Please turn cell phones off or place on silent prior to the beginning of class. All cell phones and smart watches must be placed face down on the desk/table in front of you. Use of a cell phone or any other unauthorized electronic device (including earbuds or a smart watch or smart glasses) during class may result in the student being counted absent, and any graded work turned in on that day will receive a grade of zero. Continued violation of this policy may result in a referral to the Dean of Students and/or the student may be withdrawn from the class by the instructor. Using an unauthorized electronic device (such as a cell phone, smart watch, smart glasses, or earbuds) during a test or quiz may result in one of the penalties listed under the academic misconduct policy given in this syllabus.

Attendance

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 rare emergency.
2. After a student has attained three absences (excused or unexcused), ***each additional unexcused absence will result in a 1% deduction to the student's semester course average.** (For example, a fourth absence that is unexcused will result in a loss of 1% from your final average. A sixth absence that is unexcused will result in a loss of 3% from your final average.)
3. Any student who misses ***five or more classes may be dropped from the course.**
4. The best ways to ensure Dr. Knox 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 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. Knox of your absence in a reasonable amount of time before the class you miss, then generally your absence will not be excused.

6. Any student who violates an Instructor Class Policy (such as using a cell phone during class) 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. Knox does not give copies of notes to students.
2. See Dr. Knox 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. Knox will not stop to give out handouts from previous days once class starts.

Grading

This course will be divided into three units, each worth one-third of the final grade. Your three unit scores will be averaged to compute your final MATH 1053 score. In each unit, your grade will be computed using the following percentages:

Table 1: percentages allocated in each unit

Assignments	Percentage
Quizzes	20%
Homework	10%
Exam	70%
Total	100%

Table 2: Grading scale for final grade.

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

Homework

Homework is based on your homework score from My Math Lab. There are due dates given within MyMathLab for each assignment. Each due date time is the start of class on the day the homework assignment is due. Problems may be attempted as many times as you like, so a perfect homework score should be attainable. Homework can be completed after the due date and before the unit exam for 75% credit. After the unit exam, your homework score will be final.

****Assignments are due by the due date, and personal computer technical difficulties will not be considered reason for the instructor to allow students extra time to submit assignments.*** Computers are available on campus in various areas of the buildings as well as the Tutoring and Academic Support Program. ****Your computer being down is not an excuse for missing a deadline.*** There are many places to access your homework. If you have technical difficulties in the course, there is also a student tech support from Pearson available to you.

Quizzes

Quizzes will be given regularly throughout the semester. Once per unit, Dr. Knox will replace your lowest quiz score with that unit test score. The exception: if a 0 quiz is given for reasons of academic dishonesty, then that quiz score will not be replaced. ****Makeup quizzes will not be given for any reason for the first missed quiz in a unit.*** After the first missed quiz in a unit, makeup quizzes will only be considered if your first absence and the current absence are both considered excused.

Exams

The tentative exam dates are as follows:

- Exam 1: Thursday, September 24, 2026
- Exam 2: Thursday, October 29, 2026
- Exam 3: Thursday, December 3, 2026

There is not a comprehensive final exam. ****NOTE: Our final exam time of Thursday, December 10, 8-10am, is reserved as a make up exam time in case test 3 needs to be rescheduled for any reason by Dr. Knox.***

You will only receive a make up exam if your absence is considered excused by Dr. Knox. Please see the attendance portion of the syllabus for further description of an excused absence. If you email or call Dr. Knox due to missing an exam, please be sure to include a phone number so that she can call you back to discuss your options. Late policies do not apply on test days. ****It is better to be late to a test than to not show up at all.***

Assessment of Core Objectives

Samples of students' work from embedded final exam questions will be used in the assessment of critical thinking, communications skills and empirical and quantitative skills.

When you need help with MATH 1053, where can you go?

1. To your professor's office: You can attend office hours hosted by Dr. Knox. When you do so, you will get one-on-one help from the instructor who is teaching the course you are taking. You should have with you both your

notes and all of the related work that you have done over the topics you are seeking help with.

2. The *Tutoring and Academic Support Program (TASP)*, located in Moffett Library, 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. Please see their website for specific information on tutoring for Contemporary Mathematics, as they do not always have available tutors for Contemporary Mathematics.

Academic Misconduct Policy & Procedures

Academic Dishonesty: Cheating, collusion, and plagiarism (the act of using source material of other persons, either published or unpublished, without following the accepted techniques of crediting, or the submission for credit of work not the individual's to whom credit is given). Additional guidelines on procedures in these matters may be found in the Office of Student Conduct.

[Office of Student Conduct](#)

All work that you do that contributes to your course grade must be your own work. 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 homework assignment, quiz, or exam. If a 0 for a quiz is given for reasons of academic dishonesty, then that 0 will not be replaced in your unit score.
- Receiving a 0 for your entire unit homework score.
- Receiving a 0 for your entire unit quiz score.
- Receiving a 0 for your entire unit score.
- Loss of a certain percentage of your overall MATH 1053 grade.
- Receiving an F in MATH 1053.
- Receiving an F in MATH 1053 that will remain permanently on your transcript and within your MSU GPA.

On homework, you may get assistance from others, but you are responsible for understanding what you submit. Never let someone borrow your work. If you want to help someone understand how to work a problem, talk to them and give them advice or pointers, but never give them your completed work. In addition, copying solutions from online resources or using an app or AI to complete your homework is considered cheating. The university's academic dishonesty policy can be found at [student handbook](#)

Student Handbook

Refer to: [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.

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](#).

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.

College Policies

Campus Carry Rules/Policies

Refer to: [Campus Carry Rules and Policies](#)

Smoking/Tobacco Policy

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.

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.

Topics

We will be covering topics from the following list.

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