

Hello everyone,

I am writing to give you a brief introduction to the course you will be taking. First off, I am Dr. Matthew Caputo, and I will be the instructor for this course. My office is located in PGH 202 (it is the building at the end of the horse-shoe road across from the Stadium Garage).

You can contact me with one of two email addresses, (mgcaputo@uh.edu or mgcaputo@central.uh.edu). When you email me, please give your course and section number in the subject line of the email, so I know how which course you are referring to. Due to some previous issues, I like to make sure you review a guide to appropriate emailing at the beginning of the semester. While this only has been an issue for a small percent of students, issues stemming from improper emailing occur often enough that this should be addressed. This guide to emailing is located at the following link (<https://www.math.uh.edu/~caputo/Appropriate%20Emailing.pdf>). If you do not receive a response from your email, chances are you were not following the guidelines described in it. Many times, I have had students upset about missing a deadline or being unaware of a change in an assignment because they ignored an email I sent out assuming it was not important.

You can access course materials (blank notes, completed notes, course calendars, exam schedules, homework assignments, etc.) through the courseware site (<http://casa.uh.edu>). You will need to buy an access-code from the bookstore by the third week to continue accessing the site. On a weekly basis (minimum) you should be checking all the tabs in the Courseware site and well as my website to receive any information or changes that may occur. While the course calendar is on the main page for the course, it has a lag when in refreshing when new material is added into it. If an assignment “disappears” from the calendar, check the appropriate tab within casa to see if it is still there. Sometimes things change that are beyond my control, and I have to make an adjustment to the timeframe of certain lectures or assignments. This is why it is important to check this site as well as your email for updates. The courseware website will contain your electronic bubble-sheets (EMCF) to answer your homework assignments. When completing and homework electronically, please be mindful of the deadlines, and allow yourself enough time to upload the work. If you wait until 11:55 to upload an assignment that is due at 11:59, the server may be crowded and you will be unable to complete the assignment on time.

Do not wait until the last minute to try loading in your work. Also, keep track of all the deadlines for homework, exam dates, etc. I am not going to send you weekly reminders to complete your work.

**WE DO NOT USE BLACKBOARD AS THE COURSEWARE SITE.** Due to the number of symbols used in our text and equations, the math department tends to overload Blackboard and this can cause serious issues. The courseware site described in the paragraph above is what this course (and all other math courses at the university) will be using.

My website (<http://math.uh.edu/~caputo>) will contain general information about the course and certain university policies. This will include items such as course syllabi, my tutoring hours, Frequently Asked Questions, a guide to properly filling out popper forms (which will begin in the third week of the semester), and this letter.

Course exams will be administered in one of three testing centers on campus. You can use the Proctored Exams tab within casa to schedule these exams (the scheduler will open up two weeks prior to the exam date). Slots fill up quickly and you do not want to have an inconvenient or not possible for you. With all exams in this course, any difficulty with scheduling the exam should be referred to the testing center. I have no control over their scheduling of the exams or any of their procedures, so if you are emailing me asking for additional time slots, changing of test days, etc., I will not be able to help you.

Course work is a vital part of the learning process. Its purpose is to allow you an opportunity to practice problems before the exams. The popularity of online meeting apps (such as GroupMe) is something that has caused some concern. Sharing answers to quizzes or exams in a platform such as this will deny you that practice and significantly lower your chances of performing sufficiently on an exam. It is considered cheating and a violation of UH's policy on Academic Integrity. Any student who is caught giving, receiving, or requesting answers for any kind of graded work through a social media platform will receive a zero on those assignments. In addition, the use of these has caused widespread misinformation, which has caused a great deal of confusion over course policies and procedures. I will give you any announcements either in class or through email, so there is no need to rely on such a platform. Using the excuse, "my friend told me," is not a valid justification for missing an assignment. In addition, social gathering apps have been used to publish confidential and personal materials, which violates federal privacy regulations (FERPA). Any student posting material that is confidential will be dealt with in accordance with the UH Student Handbook depending on the severity of the infraction. The best way to avoid being caught in this situation (including being "guilty by association") is to not join an unsanctioned online group for this course.

A note about incomplete (I) grades: This is a grade assigned in rare circumstances only. There are two criteria required for you to be considered for a grade of I, and then your case has to be approved to the department chairperson. The criteria are (1) you having a passing grade at the time you put in the request, and (2) you are unable to complete to course to unexpected issue, such as an accident or illness. This is not an option to consider if you think you are going to fail the course and you missed the deadline to withdraw.

Some things to take care of within the first week (preferably the first day) of the semester include creating your log-in to courseware, familiarizing yourself with the courseware site (including the location of the textbook, the proctored exam scheduler, online assignments tab, and the EMCF tab), purchasing from the bookstore an access code for the courseware site and a package of popper forms (for the correct course), reading the syllabus, reading the frequently asked questions, the departmental policies for 13XX courses, and taking the Course Policies Quiz. (I know this sounds overwhelming, but within the first two weeks of the semester, all of this will be second-nature to you.)

The courseware site for this course will be populated with material for this course before the start of the new semester.

If you have any additional questions, please do not hesitate to ask. I look forwards to a great Spring Semester with all of you.

--Dr. C