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 620 or PGH 207 (it is the building at the end of the horse-shoe road across from the Stadium Garage). They are in the process of moving my office from one location to the other, so your best bet is to email me when you arrive to find out where I am.

You can contact me with one of two email addresses, (mgcaputo@uh.edu or caputo@math.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. Also, please do not email me expecting a response within five minutes. I do try to reply to emails promptly, but I cannot always reply immediately. Please do not email me to complain about the difficulty of the course or an assignment, and certainly use respect when sending me messages. Emails that have an abrasive tone to them will not be answered. I do not send out emails to talk about the weather or to remind you to attend class. If I am sending you an email, it contains important information, so make sure you read 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 July 19 to continue accessing the site. You will not have access to the full textbook until you enter that code. 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 these two sites 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 (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 hours in the casa tutoring center, Frequently Asked Questions, and this letter. This will material will be updated by the first day of the class. My tutoring hours will be Monday-Thursday from 2:00-3:00 in the Garrison CASA Center.
The first exam for this course will be within the first three days. You must create an account with the courseware site to schedule this exam. The content of the exam will cover the prerequisite material for this course. This is information you should already have mastered in your previous courses. While we will be doing a brief review of this material, this should not be the only thing you are basing your exam preparation on. Review your old notes, and old final exam review materials from your previous mathematics course. Do not hesitate to schedule any exams (in the Proctored Exams tab in the courseware site). Slot fill up quickly and you do not want to have an inconvenient or not possible for you. With this and all future 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.

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, signing up for the first exam, familiarizing yourself with the courseware site (including the location of the textbook, the proctored exam scheduler, online assignments tab, uploaded 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.)

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

--Dr. C