

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 207 (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 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. 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. Regardless of the deadline to do this, try your best to purchase and input your access code in the first week of the semester. If you delay doing this and are, subsequently, locked out of courseware, you will receive a zero for all assignments you missed while waiting to regain access. To avoid this, take care of any access-code issues as soon as possible. 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. When completing 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. You will not receive an extension to the deadline for this reason. 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. As a suggestion, do not attempt to complete any assignment after 10:00 pm on the day that is due.

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.

Poppers will begin in the third week of the semester. These are short quizzes that will be done as a class during the lectures. The purpose of these is for attendance. Make sure you purchase a package of blank popper forms (for this section of the course) from the bookstore as soon as possible.

The Online Assignment tab in courseware currently only contains a Course Policy Quiz. You must complete this with a score of 100% before that tab will populate with other assignments. The information needed to complete this quiz can be found in the Course Policies Document, which will be linked to the main page of courseware. Regardless of the posted deadline for this quiz, you must complete it as soon as possible. Other quizzes which appear in this tab have deadlines that will expire starting in the second week of the semester, and you do not want to miss those deadlines.

All exams in the course will be handled through the casa testing center. You will be able to schedule them through the Proctored Exams tab in the courseware site. 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.

You will be required to download R Studio to complete a number of the content-related materials. Links to these (2 links that must both be done for R Studio) are available in the courseware site. For this course, all exams will have R Studio available through the testing center, or a calculator that you provide may be used instead. For purposes of the lectures, R Studio will be used primarily rather than a calculator.

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, uploaded assignments tab, and the EMCF tab), purchasing from the bookstore an access for the courseware site and the popper forms, 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 Spring Semester with all of you.

--Dr. C