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Homework Expectations: A Letter to Students

It is an indisputable fact that the best way to learn math is to do math. However, since most math courses have an ambitious amount of material to be covered, it is challenging to present all of the concepts in the curriculum and to use class time practicing problem solving. Thus, how you spend your time out of the classroom is vital. Also, the responsibility of learning falls on the shoulder of you, the student. This is why homework is so important. Doing homework is necessary for practicing the mechanics of problem solving and can develop a deeper quantitative understanding, as well as critical thinking skills. By shifting your perspective of homework as “annoying busy work” to critical practice and as a valuable learning experience, you will be one step closer to establishing a foundation and an appreciation of quantitative literacy that will benefit you in whatever future endeavor you undertake. And, of course, it will help you ace this class!

The “Homework Requirements” for this course are in place so that you learn how to effectively communicate mathematical ideas. This is a skill set that needs to be developed and that everyone, with some practice, can master. It is also a skill set that can be transferred to other courses that require quantitative work. Again, homework is not something to “plow through” or to get out of the way and never think about again. You will benefit by following these requirements as your instructor will be better able to assess your understanding and provide feedback. Also, your homework will end up as a “polished” document which you can then use later as valuable study aid.

Stay caught up. Read sections before they are presented in class. Ask questions in class. Form a study group. Use the tutoring lab. Come to an office hour. You have many resources available to you. Use them. Ultimately, though, your goal should be to develop understanding enough to be able to solve problems on your own, no book, no help, as if you were taking an exam.

Best wishes,

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