

MATH 218D-1: FALL 2022 SYLLABUS

Note: the syllabus and course schedule are subject to change. Any changes to the syllabus and/or course schedule after the semester begins will be relayed to the students through Sakai and email.

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Office Hours: See the course website
Course website: <https://services.math.duke.edu/~jdr/2223f-218/>

Description

This is an introductory course on linear algebra that will focus on concepts, methods and applications. Gaussian elimination is presented as the fundamental process for solving systems of linear equations. Deeper understanding is developed by examination of matrix factorizations, orthogonality, and associated vector subspaces. Least squares problems, eigenvalue problems, the singular value decomposition and principal component analysis will also be studied as fundamental tools for solving data-driven applications. Computational considerations will be a major source of motivation for many of the techniques covered in this course.

This course will be more applied and computational than *Math 221* (for students heading to a math major), which goes into much more depth on theory and develops skills in writing rigorous mathematical proofs. Math 218D-1 is also significantly different from *Math 216*—we will spend less time covering differential equations in favor of more advanced topics from linear algebra.

Textbook

The official text for the course is *Introduction to Linear Algebra* (5th Ed) by Gilbert Strang, Wellesley–Cambridge Press/SIAM (2016). However, we will follow Strang only loosely. Another good reference is the online text *Interactive Linear Algebra*, by Dan Margalit and Joe Rabinoff; it can be found here: <https://services.math.duke.edu/~jdr/ila/>.

Organization

This course consists primarily of **two 75-minute lectures** and **one 75-minute problem session** each week.

Lectures focus on new theory, concepts, and techniques. They are held in large groups of around 50 students. They are conducted in-person. Your **attendance** in the lectures is strongly encouraged; we try to make them as interactive as possible.

Problem sessions are devoted to working through problems designed to elucidate the material presented in lecture that week. They are also conducted in-person. Problem sessions are meant to be entirely interactive, with students working in small groups. For these reasons, **attendance** in your problem session is required.

Homework will be assigned weekly and posted on the web page above. The homework is where you will directly engage with the concepts, and is absolutely essential for learning the material. As such, expect to spend **several hours** each week on the homework. (Learning math is **hard work**: you will not learn linear algebra just by attending lecture and problem sessions and Googling the answers to your homework questions.) You are strongly encouraged to collaborate with your classmates on homework assignments!

All homework will be submitted and graded on **Gradescope**. You will need to take photos of your homework or scan it in. Raw photos are very hard to read and are **not accepted**: you will need to use a scanner or an app. I recommend *Scannable* or *TurboScan* on iOS or *Genius Scan* on Android. You will also need to **tag your submissions** on Gradescope to indicate which problems are found on which page—otherwise the graders waste an enormous amount of time searching for your solutions.

Brief **quizzes** will be given every week during the problem session. These are group quizzes, meaning that you will solve the problems in a groups of 2–3 classmates. They will consist of one or two problems designed to check basic understanding of what happened in the previous two lectures. They are meant to oblige you to review your notes before the problem session.

There will be three **midterm exams**. Each exam will focus on the material covered after the previous exam, but due to the cumulative nature of the material, you will be responsible for knowing all of the material covered up to that point. Midterm exams will take place during the problem session time slots. Only **four-function calculators**¹ are allowed on exams (although they're not really necessary); if you don't have one, you can buy one for \$4 on [Amazon](#). There are no other aids allowed on midterm exams.

The **final exam** will cover all course materials, except those specifically excluded in class. A **two-sided 8.5×11" note sheet** is allowed on the final exam, as well as a **four-function calculator**; all other aids are prohibited.

Most **course materials** will appear on the course website. I will use **Sakai** for the gradebook, announcements, Ed Discussion, and two prerecorded Zoom lectures.

Grades for class work will be weighted as follows:

- 20% Homework
- 5% Quizzes
- 15% Midterm 1
- 15% Midterm 2
- 15% Midterm 3
- 30% Final exam

Cutoffs for letter grades will be determined at the end of the semester, subject to the following guarantee: a final score of 90% or above will merit at least an A-; 80% or above is at least a B-, etc.

Course Schedule

A calendar outlining the materials covered each day, the relevant sections of Strang, the midterm and final exam dates, and more can be found on the course webpage.

Policies

Late homework will generally not be accepted, as I will post solutions shortly after the homework is due. Students may be excused from a missed homework assignment on a case-by-case basis.

Make-up midterms will not usually be offered. If you must miss a midterm, then you will be excused from that exam and the others will be weighted more heavily (at 22.5% each instead of 15% each). The following exceptions apply: all students must take the first midterm (it is used to calculate your mid-semester grade), and no student can miss both the second and third midterms. If you qualify for one of these exceptions, then a make-up midterm will be provided. In any case, you will need a University-approved excuse for missing a midterm exam.

¹Namely, +, −, ×, ÷, but $\sqrt{\quad}$ is okay too since it's hard to find a calculator without it.

Your **final exam score** will count for **half your lowest midterm score**. More precisely, your final exam score will replace the lowest 7.5% out of the 45% of your final grade that is determined by the midterms, assuming you performed better on the final than on your worst midterm. For example, if you scored 50%, 80%, and 85% on the midterms and 90% on the final, then your first midterm score would effectively be computed as $70\% = \frac{1}{2}(50\% + 90\%)$.

Collaboration on homework assignments is encouraged: please work in groups! However, all students must write up their own work, in their own words. Collaboration of any kind on exams is strictly prohibited; suspected instances will result in a referral to the Office of Student Conduct. Please refer to the [Duke Community Standard](#).

How to Get Help

Your first stop for help should be **office hours!** Joe, Jesse, Chongyao, Zijun, and Chun-Hsien will be holding plenty, and you should not hesitate to show up with questions and chat with the other students there. If you can't make the scheduled office hours, send us an email and we'll set up a meeting.

If you have questions, post them on **Ed Discussion**, available as a tool on Sakai. It's likely that your classmates will have the same question, or maybe one will know the answer, so it's much better to post the question than to email one of us; plus, you'll likely get a quicker response on Ed Discussion. You can post anonymously if you wish, but I expect that **all of you will get stuck at some point**, so there's no shame in using your name.

The Math Department operates several **Help Rooms** to provide assistance to students in lower-level courses. Students are invited to drop by the Help Rooms whenever they are open. No appointment is necessary. Link:

<https://math.duke.edu/undergraduate/help-tutoring/help-rooms>

The **Academic Resource Center** (ARC) offers free services to all students during their undergraduate careers at Duke. Services include Learning Consultations, Peer Tutoring, Learning Communities, ADHD/LD Coaching, Outreach Workshops, GRE/MCAT Prep, Study Connect, and more. Because learning is a process unique to every individual, we work with each student to discover and develop their own academic strategy for success at Duke. Contact the ARC to schedule an appointment. Undergraduates in any year, studying any discipline can benefit! <https://arc.duke.edu> • theARC@duke.edu • 919-684-5917 • 211 Academic Advising Center Building, East Campus – behind Marketplace.