

INFORMATION AND RULES FOR THE COURSE

Math 101 Web

Course Content:

A full list of the topics can be found on Aleks once you have registered for the course. Overall, the course covers a standard curriculum for first year algebra, including the following topics:

Properties of the real numbers. Linear equations in one variable and associated word problems. Linear equations in two variables and their graphs. Systems of linear equations and associated word problems. Polynomials and Polynomial equations. Quadratic formula. Rational expressions. Radical expressions.

Student learning outcomes:

Sample student learning outcomes include, but are not limited to, acquisition of the following skills: solving a linear equation; setting up and solving a 2x2 system for a word problem; solving a quadratic equation; simplifying an expression involving square roots.

Contacting me:

All contact should be by email, to george.golitzin@marin.edu. Please include in the subject header the phrase **math101web**. Should email fail, leave a message on my office phone, 415 485 9521. But make sure you spelled my name right first! Please email me at any time with your questions. For my office hours this term please see my schedule, posted on this web site.

What to buy and where:

You will need a one-semester stand-alone subscription to the Aleks Online Learning System. This can be purchased at the following link:

<http://catalogs.mhhe.com/aleks/index.do>

The next-to-last selection reads "ALEKS MATH (One Semester) \$63." This is what you want. As far as I know, you can't get it cheaper elsewhere. In the right hand column is a link to down-load a PDF of the User's Guide for Math, which explains how the system works. When you purchase this one-semester subscription, you will receive a Student Access Code that allows you to register at Aleks.

Textbook:

There is no required textbook. You might like to have an Elementary Algebra text as a reference—older editions can be purchased at Amazon and elsewhere pretty cheaply. The current edition, for sale at the Campus Bookstore, is Bittinger, Elementary Algebra, 10th edition, published by Addison Wesley.

Registering for Aleks:

Once I have received information from you regarding your email address and prerequisites for the course, I will send you your ALEKS Course Code password. With this Course Code, together with the Student Access Code you purchased online, you can register at the ALEKS web site. You do this at:

http://www.aleks.com/sign_up

Once you have registered, you will log into the virtual classroom all other times at

<http://www.aleks.com>

To use the classroom you need a Java enabled browser—this is probably not a problem—all versions from 3.x or later of Netscape Navigator, Internet Explorer, AOL and Safari have this capability—but you may need to check that Java is enabled in your preference settings. When you first start to use the program, you will be asked to download a plugin for the ALEKS classroom. This plugin will not affect your computer in any harmful way. More than 95% of the students are able to use ALEKS after installing the plugin. But make sure you can access the site before committing to the course.

Course Work

All work for the course, **with the exception of the final exam**, is done online at Aleks—see <http://www.aleks.com>. The online portion of this class is self-paced, but must be completed within the time frame of the current single semester. Everyone starts on the first day and everyone will be graded on the work they have completed by the last day of instruction in the semester. A last optional assessment of your in-progress work will be scheduled on that day. This will be explained in more detail later in the course. It is possible to finish the course before the end of the semester, but **you may not extend beyond the semester**. See **More on Aleks**, below, for information about the online assessments.

Final Exam

The final exam must be taken at the Kentfield campus unless you live well out of the area. Below are three options. Be advised that a **valid photo identification** (such as your driver's license) will be required at the final exam. **If you do not have identification, you will not be allowed to take the final, and therefore you will not pass the course.**

Option 1. The final exam will be given on-campus during finals week. (I will have a room and time scheduled early in the term, and will notify you by email.)

Option 2. You may take the final in the College of Marin Distance Education Support Center **any time up until the date of the scheduled final**. If you choose this option, send an E-mail message informing me **at least three weeks in advance** of when you want to take the exam. You will be responsible for scheduling an appointment with the [Distance Education Support Center](#). Appointments fill up very quickly, so reserve your seat early.

Option 3. If you live outside the Bay Area and cannot make it to the College of Marin, please contact me by midterm. You must arrange for and I must approve a test proctor at a college or university where you are located. I will need the business phone number of the proctor, as well as that person's email address and professional affiliation. That person must be willing to sit with you up to three hours for the final, and sign a statement verifying your identity.

Grading Policy

Your grade will be based on two numbers: 1. the percentage of topics **completed and assessed** at Aleks (this is the blue portion of your progress bar), and 2. your score on

the final exam. For information on understanding your progress at Aleks, see <http://www.marin.edu/~lansing/ALEKSPies>

The final exam will be worth 20% of your grade, and your Aleks work will be worth 80% of your grade. Cutoff scores for grades are as follows. A: 90-100%; B: 80-89%; C: 70-79%; D: 50-69%; F: < 50%. However, you MUST take the final exam, and you must score at least 50% on the final in order to pass the class, regardless of your Aleks scores. Here are two examples: if you complete 100% of the Aleks topics, but score less than 50% on the final, you will receive a D or No Pass. On the other hand, if you complete, say, 90% of the Aleks topics and score a 65% on the final, your grade will be $90(.80) + 65(.20) = 85\%$, for a B. You need a C or better to move on to the next course. Also, you can take your grade on a Pass/NoPass basis—you need to register for this option online or at the Admission Office before the deadline. To earn a Pass, you need a C or better. A grade of Pass allows you to take the next course.

Waitlisted Students Only:

Students on the wait list should go ahead and send me the information I asked for at the top of this letter. But they should hold off on purchasing the Aleks subscription. At the beginning of the semester, I will either send waitlisted students an Add Code that they can use to register, or I will tell them that there is no more room in the class.

Preference will be given to students who respond in a timely manner. The process to add the course requires you to drop yourself from the waitlist, then re-apply for the course, using the add code. This can only be done once the term has started. Once you are successfully registered, go ahead and get the Aleks subscription.

More on Aleks.

I recommend you take a tour of the ALEKS classroom before you start work. You can do this at

<http://www.aleks.com/highered/math/tour>

You can also preview the Students' User Guide online at

http://www.aleks.com/user_guides/learners-he

The frequently-asked-question page is:

<http://www.aleks.com/faqs>

During the semester, students have the opportunity to move through the topics in an order of their choosing, although this may be restricted if one concept has another as a prerequisite. For example, you cannot learn about solving equations until you learn the properties of algebra. In addition, how much time you will need to spend on the material will also vary with your abilities. Assuming you have had no previous Introductory Algebra course, you should expect to spend 10 to 15 hours per week (as would be the case if you were taking an on campus class, including homework).

Testing, or "assessment" as it is called in ALEKS, happens at different times for each student. It occurs at intervals determined by your progress and the ALEKS program. Usually, you are assessed upon completion of about 20 topics, but that's just a rough estimate. Here is how it is described in the User's Guide:

The ALEKS assessment uses open-ended problems (no multiple choice). It is an adaptive assessment; that is, problem types are selected based on all the previous answers the student has given. It is impossible to predict which types of problems will appear, or in what order. Moreover, the problems themselves are generated algorithmically, with randomly selected numerical values. ... There is no reason for a student who has begun

using ALEKS to cheat on a "progress" assessment, as this will simply cause the system to suggest problems that are too difficult, and thus hinder the student's own work.

If you do not sign into the ALEKS classroom on a regular basis, the system may check to see if you remember your "old" work. That means you may have to demonstrate a quick understanding of the material on which you've already been assessed. If you can't do it, the program will require to to review and redo some of the old topics. So work regularly in the virtual classroom and avoid large time lapses.

The assessments do not allow for typing mistakes—so read and type carefully.

Finally, when you first log into ALEKS you will be given a "readiness assessment." This assesses what you know and do not know. Anything that you might be expected to know already but don't, ALEKS will help you to remember. Likewise, any topics from the course that you already know, ALEKS will not require you to do! ALEKS is always looking to see what you remember from before and what you might know about future topics. This sort of probing assures you that the material is presented to you in the best sequence for your successful learning: the program tailors itself to your specific needs.

Final Comments, Important!

Please be aware that all materials for the course are copyrighted, and are for your personal use only while enrolled in the course, and may not be duplicated, distributed, or reproduced without consent of the authors.

Finally, be advised that although the online assessments are open note and open book, NO ONE MAY HELP YOU in any way. Any instance of cheating will result in dismissal from the class with a failing grade.