LECTURER GUIDELINES, Math 104 - 152

Here are some general rules that lecturers should follow when teaching the large, lower division courses at OSU. Instructors of these huge courses should follow consistent polices in order to be fair to the students. Fairness and consistency will alleviate common problems and reduce student complaints.

Roles of Lecture and Recitation Instructor.
• The lecturer introduces the mathematical ideas and techniques to the students, discussing the main topics of each section.
• During recitation, the TA helps students work through exercises to reinforce the ideas set out in the lecture. It should be a hands-on experience in which students improve their skills and understanding by solving problems, with the TA as a guide.

Administrative duties:
TA: Keeps accurate grade records throughout the quarter.
Lecturer: Decides on all adjustments of Exam grades.
         Makes all arrangements for special make-up exams.
         Makes final decisions on letter grades.
         Is responsible for submitting letter grades on SIS.

Exams.

E1. Exam Grading.
Exams for large courses are usually graded after the exam at a “grading party”. This helps maintain fairness in grading. A grading guide is provided by the coordinator.
• The job of lecturer involves attendance not only at class meetings but also at the evening grading sessions. Joining the grading party is part of the job. For those courses where exam grading is done independently by lecture, the TAs and lecturer together are responsible for grading.
• If you are part of a group all grading one exam problem, TALK with other group members so that you all agree on policies for awarding partial credit. This process is especially important when different lectures are grading papers independently.
• Never write inappropriate comments on exam papers!
• Grading guides are not public documents: They should NOT be shown to students. This includes grading guides from past quarters.

Most large math courses offer a make-up exam the morning after each evening exam. Students who cannot attend the scheduled evening exam should contact the lecturer for a permission slip to take the make-up. Students attending the make-up should bring their ID and permission slip with them to that exam.

We tend to be lenient in allowing make-up exams, since there are many good excuses. Student performance is usually consistent throughout the quarter, whether or not the exams are taken with the class.
• It is the lecturer’s responsibility to deal with students who miss exams.
E3. Early Exams?

**Do NOT** give an exam early. Security problems are just too great. Exceptions arise in rare cases, but: All special exam arrangements are made by the **lecturer**, not by the TA. In those cases a different exam must be used, with proctoring arranged by the lecturer.

E4. Make-up Exam Proctoring.

Lecturers are expected to proctor the standard make-up exams. It is important to be fair to all the students. Here are guidelines for proctoring a Departmental make-up exam:

- Pick up the exam papers the day before the make-up exam since the Course Office is not open before 8:00 a.m.
- Arrive early at the exam room.
- Ask students to spread out, sitting at least one seat apart.
- Announce: Students without ID may not take the exam.
- Ask students to get out their OSU IDs, permission slips, standard calculator, and pencil. Have them put all other materials on the floor. NO coat, notebook, phone, etc.
- Distribute exams quickly and on time. Give only one exam per student!
- Ask everyone to check that they have all the exam pages.

**Check permission slips, IDs, and signatures.**

Does the student match his or her picture ID? Is the name and signature on the exam the same as the name on the ID?

If permission is missing, write “No Permission Slip” across the top of the student’s paper. It is up to that student’s lecturer to decide whether or not to accept the exam. We usually accept them after the student explains the lack of permission.

- Circulate around the room. Answer questions minimally, giving no hints.
- Watch for illegal calculators, cell phones, open notes, open books, or other aids.
- Count bodies in the room and later count test papers. Do they match?
- Periodically announce, or write on the board, the time remaining for the test.
- Pick up papers on time, moving quickly.
- Arranged exam papers according to TA, and take the papers to the Course Office.
- The proctor of the make-up exam usually sends an email to all course instructors announcing that the make-up exams are available at the Course Office.
- The TAs pick up the make-up exams and grade them.

E5. Changes to Exam Grades.

It is the lecturer’s responsibility to deal with changes in exam scores. TAs should not make changes to student exam scores, except when there is a simple error in adding the scores. It is best to have the student write a statement listing the questions that should be reviewed and indicating reasons why they requested a review. The lecturer can then make all adjustments in a consistent fashion.

- TAs should not comment to students on whether a particular problem will receive more points. The lecturer might decide that more points are not warranted.

- Lecturers need to inform TAs of any needed adjustments to the student’s score. **Do not send the student to the TA with a corrected paper to communicate a grade change.** Either give the corrected exam papers directly to the TA, or email a list of corrected scores to the TA.
E6. There is no curve.
Exam scores will not be “curved” or adjusted. We never curve individual exam scores. Letter grades depend only on total points at the end of the quarter, not on individual test performances. In rare cases, adjustments might be made to letter grade cut-off scores at the end of the quarter. Discuss grade adjustments only if they have been clearly announced by the course coordinator or a Vice Chair.
Do not tell the students your conjectures about future adjustments to the scores.
- Details about grade adjustment policies can be found in the “How to Teach Math X” booklet or from the course coordinator.

E7. Office of Disability Services (ODS).
Some students have disabilities and require special accommodations for testing. In order to get those accommodations they must go through ODS and have an official evaluation.
Do NOT allow any special accommodations to a student who says that the verification of his disability is still in the process of being approved.
EXAMS: All ODS paperwork for Midterm and Final Exams (in coordinated math courses) is done by the Course Office, but the students should show official ODS forms to all instructors. The student makes all exam scheduling arrangements through ODS. Completed exams are returned to the Course Office for the TA to pick up and grade.
QUIZZES: In some cases TAs will have to make arrangements for students to take quizzes through ODS. For further details on this process, check with Ann Logan in the Course Office.

E8. Exam Scores and Privacy.
There are federal rules ensuring privacy. Students should receive their graded papers and exams directly (not given to friends). Students have the right to check whether the scores and grades are recorded correctly in the instructor’s records. Students should be able to see their own scores on the course web pages, Carmen or Moodle. Instructors may email grade information to students using the student’s official OSU account.
- DO NOT send grade information to any other email address.
- DO NOT post grades publicly (even with secret codes hiding identities).
- DO NOT discuss grade information over the phone.
- Give grade information to the student only (not to parents!).
A student’s grade information should definitely be provided to authorized university officials, like the student’s academic advisor, the math counselors, the athletic advisors, etc. If you are unsure who is authorized, ask a Vice Chair or one of the math counselors.

If you notice cheating, report the information immediately to a Vice Chair. If there is sufficient evidence, the Vice Chair can begin the process of reporting the case to the University’s Committee on Academic Misconduct. That process results in the grade “I” (incomplete), with final actions depending on the outcome of a hearing.
- DO NOT take any action yourself in these cases.
Never state that a student cheated. Simply say: there is concern about the student’s work.
- Do not communicate information about academic misconduct cases to anyone else!
Even the student’s academic advisors are not authorized to know about a pending case.
**Final Grades.**

**F1. Recitation Points.**
Homework and quiz grading policies for each course are set by the course coordinator. It is the TA’s responsibility to make sure that the recitation grades are reasonable. The course coordinator should set guidelines to ensure some uniformity for recitation points. Please mentor your TAs to ensure that consistent levels of recitation points are given throughout the quarter.

**F2. Final Grades.**
*Note:* At OSU the grades A+ and D do not exist, and E is the failing grade. Moreover, the grade of C - or better is sometimes required before a student can enroll in a subsequent math course. The special grades I and EN are discussed below. Grades for “pass/non-pass” and “audit” are rarely used by students in mathematics. For more information about these grades, check with the Course Office or a Vice Chair.

The course coordinator provides letter grade cut-off scores. Each TA computes letter grades following those cut-offs, noting any borderline cases. TAs then meet with the lecturer to discuss all grades. It is best to set up appointments with your TAs well before grades are due. Final exam week is hectic for everyone and established meeting times are best set well in advance.

Borderline cases should be decided during a conversation between the TA and lecturer. Student grades should never be lowered below the cut-off percentages announced on the syllabus or set by the coordinator. “Nudging” student grades up for improved performance should be done sparingly. The lecturer makes the final decisions and submits the letter grades.

The grade of “incomplete” or I may be given only when the student:
- has satisfactorily completed more than half of the work in the class, and
- is earning a passing grade on work done so far.

An I usually means that the lecturer and student have discussed the situation and have agreed on the schedule for completing the missing work. If a student does not take the Final Exam and has no prior arrangement, don’t award an I. Instead, award an E or EN.

The EN grade is for students who stopped attending class. For this grade you must indicate the number of weeks (from 0 to 7) that the student attended class. An E (fail) is given to students who disappear after week 7.

The EN is computed as an E in the student’s GPA.

**F3. Submitting Grades.**
Grades must be submitted through the SIS. Usually this is done through the “Faculty Center” at [http://buckeyelink.osu.edu/facultystaff.html](http://buckeyelink.osu.edu/facultystaff.html). If records have been kept in Carmen there should be a standard way to upload them all in one batch.

**NOTE:** Once a letter grade is submitted for a student, it **cannot be changed** electronically. Grade changes are made using paper forms available in the Course Office. Therefore it is important to proofread the grades carefully before posting them!

You may submit letter grades for some students in the class, and then at a later time submit grades for other students.
F4. Departmental Grade Reports.
At the end of the Quarter, the lecturer submits the letter grades of students who are officially enrolled in the class. Please give to the Course Office a paper copy of the electronically submitted letter grades. In addition to that, the Course Office requires detailed Grade Reports (on paper) for each class section they teach. Those reports from the TAs records furnish the Department with an accessible permanent record of all the students’ scores. Even when records are kept electronically on Carmen, the Course Office needs a paper copy.
Make sure that the TAs you supervise provide those reports. Sample Grade Report are at the end of this document. You may want to collect all of your TAs Grade Reports and turn them in to the Course Office in one packet. You should also keep a copy of those Grade Reports for your own future reference. Students often return to ask about their grades.

Other Points of Concern.

P1. Student Messages.
Respond promptly to students email messages and phone calls! If a delay is needed, inform the student that you received the message and will get back to them later. The Vice Chairs frequently see students who are frustrated because they sent messages, left voicemail, and wrote paper notes, but got no response from the instructor.

P2. TA mailroom.
We try to keep that room as secure as possible.
• DO NOT send students to the TA mailroom.
• Do not leave sensitive materials (such as exams) in the mailroom.
Have students pick up or leave materials at the front desk in the Math Tower. If more than a few students are involved, make other arrangements. The Course Office handles exam papers that other instructors should pick up.

P3. MSLC: Review sessions and tutoring.
Students often have questions about the mathematical material. They should be welcome to go to instructors’ office hours, and to the Tutor Rooms in the Learning Center (MSLC). The MSLC often runs additional review sessions for the large math courses. They sometimes offer evening tutoring in the Younkin Success Center, or elsewhere. Instructors should find out about the schedules of those sessions and announce them to students.

Students who want to hire private tutors should check the MSLC website, where there is a list of qualified private tutors: http://www.mslc.ohio-state.edu/resources/tutors
Note: Tutors advertising on papers posted in classrooms are often un-qualified!
We recommend that you remove any such ads that are inside your classroom.

P3. Complaints.
Lecturers should handle student complaints. If that is not sufficient, send the student to the Vice Chair.
DO NOT send students to the course coordinators!
Don’t even mention the coordinator’s name to the students.
Keep in mind the mathematical level of the students that you are teaching.
• Stick with the announced course plan.
• Use the techniques provided in the textbook.
Real difficulties arise when math problems are solved by non-standard methods. Even if you think your method is simpler and clearer than the one in the book, follow the book!
• TECHNOLOGY. Some courses use graphing calculators, others use an automated homework system like Webwork or MyMathLab. Students are expected to use those technologies, so all the instructors should learn to use them too. Please let the Vice Chairs know if there is a problem with this.

P5. Communication and class visits.
It is too easy to have courses where the instructors never talk to one another. Email is an easy and effective means of communication, but face-to-face meetings help build good professional relationships.
Talk with your TAs!
You can talk about how the course is going, what topics in today’s section should be stressed, which exam problems were hardest for the students, etc. It is a good idea for each TA to attend some of the lectures, if only to be aware of the lecturer’s style.

Lecturers are expected to visit the recitation classes of each TA at least once or twice per quarter. After the visit, fill out a Departmental TA evaluation form. A PDF file for that form is posted on the faculty teaching support page: http://www.math.ohio-state.edu/teaching/Faculty

You represent the Department of Mathematics and OSU. Even though it might not be obvious, students often view their TAs and lecturers as mentors and role-models. Be professional at all times when you interact with students and TAs.
• Do not use offensive language in class.
• Do not comment on a student’s personal life, life style, ethnic group, or religion.
• It’s best not to discuss politics!
Do not have a close personal relationship with someone in your class! Such behavior can be grounds for dismissal from the University.

P7. Prompt return of student work.
Midterm exams, quizzes, homework, and other assessment should be returned to students as quickly as possible. Students need the feedback on their work, since there are firm deadlines for withdrawing and dropping classes.
Midterm exams should be returned within two days.

P8. Exam Papers and Shredding.
Students have a right to review their Final Exam papers, and make copies, but they may not keep the original exam papers. (If they want a copy, make that copy yourself. Do not loan them the exam paper overnight!)

It is the lecturer’s responsibility to keep Final Exam papers for one year. In special circumstances exam papers may be stored in the Course Office. Care must be taken with documents containing student information (like old exams and class rosters). Store them in a locked location. Dispose of them by shredding, not just by throwing them into the trash. Shredding can be done in the Department’s Printing Office.
P9. Be in class.
DO NOT cancel any classes. If you have to miss a class, arrange for a qualified substitute. If an emergency will cause you to miss class, quickly contact a Vice Chair (292-5101), or the Math Department front desk (292-4975), or Cindy Bernlohr (292-0911), to report your absence. Possibly someone will be able to arrange for a substitute.

DO NOT leave for vacation before the grades are submitted. Lecturers need to be available to discuss borderline cases with their TAs.
Don’t avoid that work by asking your TAs to submit the grades for you.

Students expect to find you in your office during scheduled office hours.
Lecturers are expected to have three scheduled office hours per week.
Please don’t schedule your office hours during the recitation meeting times!

Most large math classes use Carmen, a course management system provided by the University. TAs should enter quiz and Midterm grades promptly. However it seems wisest to “release” those posted grades for viewing only after the graded papers have been returned to students.

Lecturers have access to the Carmen records of all students in their classes.
Similar arrangements are made in Math 151 and 152 using Moodle for course management.

For further discussion of these policies contact:
Professor Daniel Shapiro <shapiro@math.ohio-state.edu>.

Document updated 9/2010
Here are two sample Grade Reports.

**COURSE : MATH 130  AU 2003  Call #: 27182-8**  
Lecturer: Prof. Rstt  Lecture: TR 8:30  
TA: Mr. Tsrr  Recitation: MW 9:30

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**TOTALS:**  
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Some people ask for more detail about quiz scores (which are part of the Recitation Total). That information allows us to read off which students did not attend recitation classes.

Some courses have automatic methods of modifying midterm grades depending on performance on parts of the Final Exam. Here is a sample:

**COURSE : MATH 148  AU 2003  Call #: 31415-9**  
Lecturer: Prof. Xyzz  Lecture: TR 2:30  
TA: Mr. Zyxx  Recitation: MW 3:30

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