

Math 126 Syllabus

Spring 2009

Stan VerNooy

WELCOME to Math 126 (PreCalculus I)
Call Number 24412, Section HN102
Tuesdays and Thursdays, 4:30 till 5:50 PM
Henderson campus, Room B210

TEACHER:

Stan VerNooy: One of the world's truly extraordinary math teachers, and winner for the last 23 consecutive years of the prestigious "Stan VerNooy" award.

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Office Hours: MW 11:30 AM – 12:25 PM and 2:50 – 3:10; TR 3:10 – 4:25 PM

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OFFICIAL COURSE DESCRIPTION:

A rigorous discussion of algebra concepts necessary for calculus is the focal point of this course. Topics include an in-depth investigation of algebraic functions and their graphs, and solutions of systems of equations.

PREREQUISITE:

Math 96 or 97 *with at least a C*, or appropriate score on placement exam

OBJECTIVES:

At the end of the course, you will (if you know what's good for you!) be able to:

1. Solve polynomial, exponential, and logarithmic equations.
2. Work with Cartesian coordinate system, being able to graph linear, exponential, polynomial, absolute value, square root, piecewise-defined, rational, and logarithmic functions.
3. Understand function concepts, including operations on functions and inverse functions.
4. Solve systems of linear and nonlinear equations.
5. Apply and extend all concepts.

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TEXTBOOK: PreCalculus, Concepts Through Functions, A Right Angle Approach to Trigonometry
by Sullivan and Sullivan

EQUIPMENT:

The textbook, pencil, and paper (including some graph paper), and a *graphing calculator*. I strongly recommend a TI-82, 83, or 84 simply because those are the only ones I know how to use and can help you with. So if you get a different kind, then make sure you hang on to the Instruction Manual!! The graphing calculator is required, and you will be given some homework and test problems which can't be done without one. You will need to have the calculator by Tuesday, January 27. Also, **PLEASE NOTE** that I do **NOT** loan my own calculator out to students who forget their calculators for a test or a quiz, so *remember* to bring the calculator to class every day!

MATERIAL TO BE COVERED:

The first four chapters with a couple of exceptions, a few sections from Chapter "F" and from the appendix in the back, plus sections 10.1 and 10.6. Specific sections are listed in the Class Schedule that you will receive along with this syllabus.

GRADES:

The three full-period tests put together will be one-third of your grade; all the quizzes put together will be one-third of your grade; and the final exam will be one-third of your grade. I will translate the numeric averages into letter grades by the following formula:

90% - 100%:	A
80% - 90%:	B
70% - 80%:	C
60% - 70%:	D
0 - 60%:	F

Your attendance (or LACK of attendance!) could also earn you a "W". See the policy on Attendance, Punctuality, and Courtesy.

You should not take Math 127 unless you earn a grade of "C" or better in this class. **A "D" is not good enough, and either is a C-minus!**

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Quizzes and Homework

You have been given a homework handout, but homework is never "due" and never has to be handed in. However, you really do have to do the homework, because of the next paragraph:

There will be a quiz every day beginning Tuesday, January 27, except on days when we have a full-period test. That quiz will always have a problem (or sometimes more than one) taken directly from the homework, with some slight alteration in the numbers or something so that you can't get the quiz right just by memorizing the homework answers. So you need to do the homework in order to succeed on the quizzes.

The Class Schedule handout tells you the date that each section will be covered on a quiz. There is always a gap of at least two class periods between the time a section is covered in class and the time the same material shows up on a quiz. For example, if we cover Section 3.2 as new material on a Tuesday, then homework from that section will probably be on *the following Tuesday's* quiz. BUT you need to do the homework from that section as soon as we have covered that section in class, because the quiz is always the first thing we do in every class. I answer questions on homework problems **after** the quiz each day. **I DO NOT ANSWER HOMEWORK QUESTIONS BEFORE THE QUIZ.** So if you have a question about a homework problem, you need to ask the question in the class period between the class where I cover that section as new material, and the date when you take the quiz on that section. (Of course, you can phone me or come into my office with the question at any time.)

A perfect score on a quiz is 60 points. But that's just an accounting convenience; the real story is that all the quizzes put together will count as one-third of your final grade.

TESTS:

There will be three full-period exams, spaced roughly evenly throughout the term. A perfect score on a full-period exam is 400 points. There will be a comprehensive final exam (on which a perfect score is 1200 points) on Tuesday, May 12.

On Tuesday, May 5, you may retake a new version of whichever one of the three full-period tests you choose to take over. The new version won't be the very same test you took the first time, but it will cover the same material. The grade that counts will be the higher of the two tries.

Makeup tests are not given for any reason. There are no excused absences from a test or a quiz. **Those two sentences mean exactly what they say.** I am sometimes willing to give you a test or a quiz in advance if you know that you will be out of town, but that offer *does not apply during the week before Spring Break or for the Final Exam.*

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HELP:

I WANT YOU TO DO WELL IN THIS COURSE. ***You are welcome to call me at home at any time of the day or night.*** I try to get to bed by 11:00, but if you care enough about this course to be studying at 3:00 AM, then I can care enough to answer the phone and help you at the same hour. If I don't want to answer the phone, I'll just let my answering machine do the answering. I live almost right across the street from the school, and you will be welcomed with open arms if you want to come over and get help in person. Nobody will do badly in this course because he or she did not get enough help from me (at least within reason).

ACADEMIC HONESTY:

I try to conduct this class informally. I take it for granted that my students are honest adults. I don't treat people like potential criminals, and I don't look over their shoulders at everything they do. However, I have found a distressing increase in cheating over the last couple of semesters, and if you cheat (***and you don't need a definition of what cheating is!***) then there will be no second chances: your grade in the course will be an F or a W (at my option), and I will probably file formal charges against you.

MISCELLANEOUS RULES AND ADVICE:

1. The document on "Attendance, Punctuality, and Courtesy" is considered part of this syllabus. I'm giving you your own copy so you can sign it and return it to me. The policy is also posted online.
2. STUDY. EVERY DAY. The general rule in college courses is that you need to spend two hours outside of class for each hour in class. That means you didn't just sign up for 3 hours of class time per week, you signed up for a total of **9** hours (3 hours in class, and 6 on your own). If you don't think you can put in that much time, you should seriously consider dropping the course.
3. The school has a rule against food and drink in the classrooms. Please remember the rule so I don't have to mention it any more.
4. Please call me Stan. Well, you don't have to if it makes you uncomfortable, but I prefer it. It helps me pretend that I'm the same age as college students. Yeah, I know I'm not kidding anybody (I'm 62), but it makes me feel good.

