Bucks County Community College
Dept. of Science, Tech., Eng. & Mathematics
Math 120.E60 ~ College Algebra
Spring 2017

Instructor: Joe Erickson
Office: Founders Hall 221B
Office Hours: TTh 5:00 – 6:30; by e-mail on MW 1:00 – 2:00
E-mail & Phone: erickson@bucks.edu & 215-968-8315 (e-mail is by far better)
Course Website: http://faculty.bucks.edu/erickson/math120/college_alg.html
Textbook: *College Algebra: Graphs and Models*, 6th Ed., by Bittinger, Beecher, Ellenbogen, Penna (ISBN-13: 978-0134179032)
Other Materials: A scientific calculator
MyMathLab: Course Name is Math120S17 and Course ID is erickson22046

Exam:	When Available:	Sections Covered:	Calculator:
Exam 1	February 10 – February 16	1.1–1.6, 2.1–2.3	No
Exam 2	March 3 – March 9	2.4–2.5, 3.1–3.5	No
Exam 3	April 7 – April 13	4.1–4.6	No
Exam 4	May 3 – May 10	5.1–5.6, 6.1–6.2	Yes
Final	May 5 – May 11	Comprehensive	Yes

Course Grade: Your lowest score among the first four exams will be dropped. If you miss an exam, then that will be your dropped score (and thus no make-up exams are allowed). The remaining exam scores, which must include the final exam, will each constitute 25% of the total course grade. The letter grade for the course is determined as follows: $90 - 100 = \mathsf{A}$, $87 - 89 = \mathsf{B+}$, $80 - 86 = \mathsf{B}$, $77 - 79 = \mathsf{C+}$, $70 - 76 = \mathsf{C}$, $67 - 69 = \mathsf{D+}$, $60 - 66 = \mathsf{D}$, $0 - 59 = \mathsf{F}$.

Homework Policy: Homework exercises are assigned for every section of the book that is covered, but homework is not collected and therefore does not directly influence the course grade. However, to have any realistic prospect of succeeding in the course it is essential to do the exercises, since all of the exams are based upon them. Ask a question if you do not know how to complete an exercise. The tutoring center on the Newtown campus is also available free of charge. Note: the homework assignments are listed only under "Assignments" at the course website, and are *not* posted in MyMathLab.

Announcement Policy: The course website (see above) is where all announcements will be made. The announcement box is scrollable, and depending on your system you may sometimes need to refresh the page to see new announcements.

Withdrawal Policy: If you need to withdraw from the course, make it official with the college administration to forfend automatic receipt of an F on your transcript. The deadline is April 4, 2017.

Other Policies: Exams must be taken at a testing center, and they are administered with pencil and paper (i.e. not online or on a computer). Cell phones and other internet-capable devices are not allowed during exams, and for some exams no calculator is allowed. Also any calculator that has "computer algebra system" capabilities, such as the TI-89, is forbidden. See the college catalog for the policy regarding cheating and plagiarism. There is no extra credit. I check voice-mail only when in the office, and so strongly urge against its use in favor of e-mail. Use of MyMathLab is recommended since it features a solution manual for the odd-numbered problems in the textbook.

Orientation

The Flow of Things

Start by reading the Syllabus above, then take a look at the Assignment Sheet linked to at the course website. The first exam will be available to take at the Newtown testing center February 10 – February 16 and will cover sections 1.1–1.6 and 2.1–2.3 in the textbook, so the assignments for those sections should be done before then. That should give you some idea of the pace of the course, which averages about two sections each week over the duration of the 15-week term. There will be at least 2 hours to complete Exam 1, and any testing center will insist on verifying your identification before allowing you to take the exam. If you want to take the exam at the lower or upper county campuses you'll have to let me know well ahead of time, because it can take up to two "business days" for deliveries to reach those far-flung realms. Once you complete Exam 1, the process repeats itself for Exams 2, 3, 4, and the Final Exam. See the Syllabus above for dates and sections.

Before the Exam

The date of availability for each exam is fairly firm, but check the course website for any changes before heading anywhere to take an exam. Also take note: the lower and upper county testing centers have more restrictive hours than the Newtown testing center! See for yourself: Lower/Upper County Hours and Newtown Hours. *Know the hours a testing center is open before you go, because they may change.* All exams are done on paper with a pen or pencil, without books or notes. Also, calculators are not allowed for Exams 1, 2, and 3. For Exam 4 and the Final Exam a calculator without "computer algebra system" (CAS) capabilities will be allowed. The TI-83 and TI-84 are two common calculators that have no CAS capabilities, whereas the TI-89 does have CAS features and so is forbidden.

On the course website (click on Resources) there is also to be found exams from past terms, along with their keys. Old exams should help shed light on what my exams look like, more or less, but do not rely too much on old exams when preparing for new exams, because we are using a new book this semester! Put simply: exams are based on the homework assignments given on the Assignment Sheet, and *any* homework problem (or something similar to a homework problem) has a chance of showing up on an exam. If you look at my old exams, you will see that there are no multiple-choice, true/false, or fill-in-the-blank questions.

Bear in mind this: on exams I *always* want to see the work that you did to get to your answer, and not merely the answer itself. This is the main reason why the grading process may take awhile: I look hard at your work. In general, the better your work is, the more credit you will get. How detailed should your work be? Look at the work on display in the student solution manual or in examples in the textbook. That is what you should strive to emulate.

After the Exam

So that everyone can learn about any mistakes they may have committed on a given exam as soon as possible, I put the exam and its answer key up on the course website as soon as the window of availability for an exam closes. (Click the link labeled Resources to find exams and their keys.) Therefore taking an exam late is never allowed, and an exam may never be taken twice! A missed exam is given a score of zero. Each exam is generally available at testing centers for about a week, so the risk is *entirely yours* if you choose to wait until the uttermost

last minute to take an exam. If your car won't start or your boss calls you in for an extra shift, thereby causing you to miss the exam, then you get a score of zero on that exam. Again: make-up exams are not allowed.

Exam scores are sent out via your BCCC e-mail address, so do get that set up if you have not done so already. When can you expect to receive an exam score? At the latest it will be the last day before the next exam is made available. So for example your Exam 1 score will be sent by e-mail by March 2. And this is important: *exams are not returned.* There is no practical way to give back hundreds of bluebooks each semester in an online course.

Help Beyond the Book

Use of MyMathLab (MML) is recommended since it contains a solution manual. To access MML, the course name is Math120S17 and the course ID is erickson22046 (you need to buy an access key first, of course). If you're stuck on a homework problem the solution manual should be your first recourse. One of two things will usually occur when you consult the solution manual: either everything will become clear, or the source of your confusion will be narrowed down to one or two steps. If the latter proves to be the case, that's still progress, and you should be in a position to formulate a specific question to ask me by e-mail. My ability to help you will generally be directly proportional to the degree of thought you put into your questions. As a rule, if you simply e-mail me saying "I can't do problem 25 in section 4.6," I'll respond by asking for specifics. If you supply none, then I'll just give you a hint about how to start the problem and let you have another go at it. That's my job: to facilitate your learning process. But you have to help me to help you: If you're short on answers, then put some work into your questions. There should also be access to tutors in MML. Note: the homework assignments are only to be found under "Assignments" at the course website, and are *not* posted in MML.

E-Mail

If you do not get a response to an e-mail within, say, 48 hours, try sending it again. Your e-mail could for some reason have been shunted to a spam folder, or perhaps the delivery simply failed. (The Internet works in mysterious ways!) Also, if I'm really pressed for time, I may not always respond to certain e-mails that seem not to require a response—like a message that says "I know I botched my last exam, but I plan to do better next time." Whatever the case may be, contact me first if you are having any problems. Finally, when e-mailing me, be mindful that I have many courses running this term, so always tell me which course you are in and include your full name somewhere. Failing to do this may delay my response.

Conclusion

Overall I try to keep a course like this as self-paced as reasonably possible, without too many deadlines or other nuisances that tend to defeat the purpose of an online format. You do have to be disciplined to succeed in a course like this, there's no doubt about it.

Final course grades are posted on WebAdvisor, which is accessed through the college website. So you should become familiar with WebAdvisor sometime soon. This concludes the Orientation.