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Course Website: [http://faculty.bucks.edu/erickson/math250/diffeq.html](http://faculty.bucks.edu/erickson/math250/diffeq.html)  
Course Textbook: *A First Course in Differential Equations*, 10th Ed., by Zill  
Other Materials: A scientific calculator.  
WebAssign: Class Key is: bucks 8621 2844.

**Exam Dates & Sections:**
- Exam 1: June 5 – June 12 (1.1,1.2,1.3,2.2,2.3,2.4,2.5)  
- Exam 2: June 25 – July 3 (3.1,4.1,4.2,4.3,4.4)  
- Exam 3: July 17 – July 24 (4.6,5.1,6.1,6.2)  
- Exam 4: August 7 – August 13 (7.1,7.2,7.3,7.4,7.5)

**Course Grade:** Your lowest score among the first three exams will be dropped. The remaining exam scores, which must include Exam 4, will each constitute one-third of the total course grade. The letter grade is determined as follows: 90 – 100 = A, 87 – 89 = B+, 80 – 86 = B, 77 – 79 = C+, 70 – 76 = C, 67 – 69 = D+, 60 – 66 = D, 0 – 59 = F.

**Homework Policy:** Homework exercises are assigned for every section of the book that is covered, but they are not collected and therefore do 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 questions if you don’t know how to do an exercise.

**Announcement Policy:** The course website (see above) is where all announcements will be made. The announcement box is scrollable, and if you’re using an older browser you may sometimes need to refresh the home page to view new announcements.

**Withdrawal Policy:** If you need to withdraw, be sure to make it official with the administration to avoid receiving a big ol’ F on your transcript. The deadline is July 14, 2015.

**Other Policies:** Exams must be taken at a testing center. They are administered with pencil and paper, not online or on a computer. Cell phones and other internet-capable devices are not allowed during exams. See the college catalog for the policy regarding cheating and plagiarism. There is no extra credit. I only check voice-mail when I’m in the office, and strongly discourage its use in favor of e-mail.
Orientation:

Start by reading the front side of this syllabus, then take a look-see at the Assignment Sheet linked to at the [course website](#). The first exam will be available to take at the Newtown testing center June 5–12 and will cover sections 1.1, 1.2, 1.3, 2.2, 2.3, 2.4, and 2.5 in the textbook, so the assignments for those sections should be done by then. That should give you some idea of the pacing, which averages about two sections per week over the duration of the 12-week course. There will be at least 2 hours to complete Exam 1, and the 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, and 4. See the first page of this syllabus for dates and sections.

The dates of availability for the exams are fairly firm, but check the [course website](#) for possible 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. Exams are paper-and-pencil affairs (no computers). They are printed on a single sheet of paper and are completed with a blue book that the testing center supplies.

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 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 exam keys. Taking an exam late is therefore never allowed, and an exam may never be taken twice! A missed exam is given a score of zero. Do not e-mail me asking to take an exam after the deadline. Each exam is generally available at testing centers for about a week, so the risk is entirely yours if you decide to wait until absolutely the last minute to take an exam. If your car won’t start or your boss calls you in for an extra shift, I don’t see it as my duty to turn my schedule upside-down to accommodate the consequences of your procrastination.

Exam scores are sent out via your BCCC e-mail address, so get that set up if you haven’t done so already. It may take awhile to determine your exam score, however. By “awhile” I mean upwards of 10 days from the time you take the exam. This is because I adjust exam scores based on the performance of the class as a whole, but I can’t do that until I have all (or most) exams in my hands and graded. So if you take Exam 1 on June 12, understand that I won’t have all exams back from all testing centers until perhaps June 23 or later, and then I’ve got other classes keeping me busy that could protract the grading process out to June 27 or so.

Go to the website of the [college bookstore](#) to get the correct textbook. Do not use an older edition of the book or a book by a different author! If you’re stuck on a homework problem the solution manual should be your first recourse. Another book that may be helpful, but is not required, is the *Student Resource Manual* (ISBN13: 978-1-133-49192-7). I do not believe this solutions manual is offered at the college bookstore, but a quick search online using the ISBN number will turn up places where it can be purchased. When stuck on a problem, one of two things will usually occur when you consult the solutions 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 55 in section 4.3,” 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.

On the course website (click on Resources) there is also to be found exams from past terms, along with their keys. Old exams can help shed light on what my exams generally look like, more or less, but do not rely too much on the past exams when preparing for future exams, because I change things up fairly often! Exams are based on the homework assignments given on the Assignment Sheet, so if you do the homework thoroughly you should be well prepared. If you look at my old exams, you’ll see that there are no multiple-choice, true/false, or fill-in-the-blank questions. Whenever possible, I always want to see the work you did to get to your answer, and not just the answer itself. (This is another reason why the grading process may take awhile—I do it all my lonesome self, by hand, giving partial credit whenever possible.)

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 do not always respond to certain e-mails that seem not to require a response—like a message that says “I know I did terribly on Exam 1, 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 other courses running this term, so always tell me which class you’re in and include your full name somewhere. You don’t have to cram class and name into the title of the message, though—just include it somewhere within the message. Failing to do this may delay my response.

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. If you plan to take a one-week or longer vacation during this course, bail out now, because I don’t accommodate vacations and you cannot afford the loss of time. This concludes the Orientation.