MA 242 (C1): Linear Algebra
Boston University, Spring, 2016

Syllabus

Course Information

INSTRUCTOR Timothy “Hudson” Harper, Boston University, Dept. of Mathematics and Statistics, email: hharper@bu.edu (Just put MA 242 in the subject, but you can email me about anything in the course.)

TIME/LOCATION 9-10 am, Monday, Wednesday and Friday, CAS B06 A, and 2-3 pm, Wednesday, MCS B19

OFFICE HOURS 2-3 pm Monday, 4-5 pm Wednesday, and 3-4 pm Friday in PSY 229. You should come by sometime and chat!


WEBSITE All info for the course including a tentative schedule can be found at: [math.bu.edu/people/hharper/ma-242.html](http://math.bu.edu/people/hharper/ma-242.html). This website will be our friend in keeping us organized together!

OVERVIEW Linear algebra is the study of solving and understanding linear systems of equations that have wide applications to dynamics, probability, scheduling, and most things involving math. In this class we will learn about matrices, vectors, vector spaces, eigenvalues and eigenvectors, and orthogonality, and how they simplify the task of understanding linear problems.

Attendance

In short, you should just come to lecture and discussion and try to be on time (I know 9 am is an early class, but I’ll be there with my coffee!). I promise to make it as engaging as I can, but it will involve you working with the students around you to solve problems occasionally during class. This is to make sure you get something practical out of lecture. I will have supplemental material on the website, but it can’t substitute for actually sitting in a room and working together. If for some reason you can’t make it, be sure to check the course calendar for details of what happened in lecture and let me know so that I can handle excused absences. Also, discussion sections are a key part of this course, so you’ll be expected to attend and participate. You’ll have the opportunity to ask questions about homework, work together on practice exercises, and take quizzes (see below!).
Assignments

Homework There will be homework assigned on the website every week to help you learn the material that we’ve covered in lecture. You should do everything assigned, but the homework will not be collected for a grade. Please let me look at it so I can make sure you’re on track! But you don’t have to hand it in.

Quizzes Every week in discussion (except for exam weeks), there will be a quiz. These quizzes will cover the material from the course and homework.

Exams There will be two midterms (see the course calendar) and a final on May 5 in our normal meeting place, CAS B06 A. Do NOT book flights, trains, cars, hoverboards, etc. until after the 5th!

Grades

Homework/Quizzes Quizzes will account for approximately 40% of your final grade. There will be no makeup quizzes. However, I will drop your lowest quiz grade at the end of the semester (just don’t use this as an excuse to skip class or not look at a section!).

Exams Each exam will be weighted equally and they will collectively account for approximately 50% of your final grade.

Attendance You will receive 10% for attendance and participating in lecture (based on what I can observe and measure).

Important Dates

Tuesday, February 23 Last day to drop the course without a grade of “W”

Friday, April 1 Last day to drop the course with a grade of “W”

If you are struggling with the material and falling behind on your work, come talk to me! Then, we can decide together whether or not you should drop or withdraw from the class. In the case of extreme circumstances (sudden/extreme illness, extenuating family circumstances, etc.), a student who would otherwise finish in good standing may receive an incomplete or “I” for their grade. We would then discuss when/how the course would be completed.

Academic Honesty

You are expected to know and adhere to the CAS Academic Conduct Code. While collaboration and sharing of ideas are good, plagiarism will not be tolerated, and relevant university procedures will be followed. This includes copying solutions from other students, books, or online sources without citation. Basically, don’t cheat, don’t steal, and respect yourself and others.