MA121 Calculus for the Life and Social Sciences
Spring 2026 Semester
Lecture B1: CAS 224
Tu/Th 3:30 PM - 4:45 PM

Discussion Sections:

B2:	Tue.	8:00 AM - 8:50 AM PYS B49
B3:	Fri.	11:15 AM - 12:05AM PRB 148
B4:	Wed.	10:10 AM - 11:00 AM PSY B35
B5:	Wed.	8:00 AM - 8:50 AM CAS B27
B6:	Wed.	9:05 AM - 9:55 AM CAS 229

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Office Hours: Mon, Wed 4-5

Teaching Fellow: **TBA**
e-mail: **TBA**
Office: **TBA**
Office Hours: **TBA**

Text: Calculus for Business, Economics, Life Sciences, and Social Sciences – Barnett – Ziegler - Byleen – Stocker (14th Edition) (Pearson)

Remarks: This is a course on calculus and its applications. Calculus is the set of mathematical tools one uses to analyze how functions behave. Central to this is the notion of 'rate of change' which separates calculus from subjects like algebra, trigonometry, and analytic geometry where you first learn about functions, but not about their intrinsic properties. The methods we shall develop will help you take many 'real world' problems, from economics as well as the social and life sciences, and translate them into mathematical language so as to work out their solution. Indeed, many of the methods developed in this class, already have a long history of being applied in different disciplines, proving their predictive power, so much so that many of you have seen, or will see, the results that these methods and models have provided.

Outline of concepts to be covered:
(Note: Some sections in a given chapter may be omitted due to time constraints.)

Ch.1	Functions and Graphs *(very briefly)*
Ch.2	Limits and the Derivative
Ch.3	Additional Derivative Topics
Ch.4	Graphing and Optimization
Ch.5	Integration

Exams: During the semester, there will be three hour-long exams, each worth 100 points. This includes the one at the end of the semester, but none of these, including the one given during the final exam period are cumulative. The schedule for these is at the bottom of the page.

Homework: During the semester, I will generally assign homework on a daily basis. This homework is your primary means of learning the material, more so than even the lectures. Indeed, it is only by actually working out the solutions to problems that one really learns this material. Not doing homework is a *bad* idea and will result in a poor performance in the course.

Additionally, there will be, throughout the course of the semester, 5 problem sets to turn in, each of which is worth 20 points for a total possible maximum of 100 points if you complete each perfectly. Each turn-in assignment will be due by the next class meeting after it was assigned. Late homework will **not** be accepted.

Grading: Your grade in the course will be based on the combined sum of your two exam grades together with the 5 turn-in homework assignments as well as the final exam. As such, your grade will be based on the number of points earned out of a total possible maximum of 400 points.

Makeup Exams: Except in cases of illness and only then with a signed doctor's note, exams will be given **only** at scheduled times.

Discussion Sections: In addition to registering for the lecture section, each of you should be registered for ***one*** of the four discussion sections (B2-B6 above) that are held each week by my teaching fellow. The primary purpose of these discussion sections is for homework review and occasionally for the discussion of certain topics that can be covered independently of the current material being discussed in class. These discussion sections are a valuable resource, do not skip them!

Calculators: In this course, we shall not be using graphing calculators. From time to time, I may use a computer to demonstrate certain concepts. The use of graphing calculators during exams will **not** be permitted. However, the usage of non-graphing calculators is acceptable.

Cheating: I consider cheating to be a very serious offense and any cases of it will merit action by the University Academic Standards Committee.

Important Dates:

Last Day to Drop (without a 'W') – February 26
Substitute Monday on Tuesday February 17th (Due to holiday on 2/16, so no class meeting)
Spring Break: 3/10 and 3/12
Last Day to Drop (with a 'W') – April 3rd

Exam 1 - Thursday February 19
Exam 2 - Thursday March 26
Final - TBA

The last **lecture** will be Thursday, April 30.

Web Page: **http://math.bu.edu/people/tkohl/teaching/current/121.html**