

MAT 127: Calculus C, Spring 2022

Comments on the Midterm II Results

The letter grade splits for the second midterm are:

MTII score	60+	48-59	35-47	22-34	21-
letter grade	A-/A	B±	C/C+	C-/D	F

These cutoffs are fairly low due to the relatively hard nature of some of the questions.

If you would like to discuss how a specific problem was graded on your midterm, please speak with the primary grader for the problem as indicated below:

MTII Problem	2	3	4	5
grader	CD	MR	HC	AZ

When you meet with the grader, you must have a printout of the solutions to the midterm. Your grade will be changed, *up or down*, only if you convince the grader that your solution was graded in a way inconsistent with the grading instructions described in the solutions or with how other students' solutions were graded. If there is an issue with how Problem 1 on your exam was graded, or if your scores were added up incorrectly, or your total was incorrectly recorded in *Blackboard*, please let your instructor know. *All issues with Midterm II and HW5-11 must be resolved before Friday, May 6*; the grades for the first midterm and HW1-4 are no longer subject to change (as stated previously).

Problem 5 (systems of ODEs) went quite smoothly. The results on most of the remaining questions were very disappointing though. A number of systematic issues on the second midterm appeared to have been caused by difficulties carrying out basic algebraic computations, rather than the new concepts in MAT 127. For example, there appeared to be common difficulties simplifying fractions and seeing that

$$\frac{5^{n/2}}{3^{n+p}} = \frac{1}{3^p} \left(\frac{\sqrt{5}}{3} \right)^n, \quad \frac{2^n}{\sqrt{5^{n+1}}} = \left(\frac{2}{\sqrt{5}} \right)^n \frac{1}{\sqrt{1+5^{-n}}}, \quad \frac{2}{\sqrt{5}} < 1.$$

Proficiency with basic algebraic computations is necessary for applying the new concepts from MAT 127 and for passing this course. If you had trouble with such computations, please go through the practice placement tests (in particular, Parts 1 and 2) a few times; they are available on the math department website. They are much easier to master than systems of ODEs or sequences/series.

The middle third of MAT 127, tested by the second midterm, is by far the heaviest on new concepts. This generally results in very poor scores on the second midterm. On the other hand, the last third of this course provides plenty of opportunity in practicing with these concepts. This generally results in *much* higher scores on the final exam for those who put in the effort to master these concepts and similarly poor scores on the final exam for who do not; the latter generally leads to the unfortunate outcome of failing this course.

At this point, your standing in the class and the chances of getting any particular letter grade at the end of the semester depend on both your current *WeightedTotal* and on the trend in your exam scores. So, it is hard to give a reasonably accurate general description, except in extreme cases. If you'd like to discuss your own standing, please talk with your instructor directly (not by email). Since you can no longer leave the class, you have pretty much only two options:

- put in as much effort as possible in order to pass this course (C or better) or get as good a grade as possible;
- give up on this course and fail it in order to concentrate on your other courses.

The second option is advisable only if you no longer have a realistic chance of passing this course. This is indeed the case for some of you, but most of you do have a realistic chance of passing this course, though for a number of you this will require tremendous effort.

The *WeightedTotal* is currently out of 60 (not including the various bonus points). The final exam accounts for the remaining 40 points. However, your scores on the remaining HWs, 9-12, may still change *WeightedTotal* by a few points. If your HW score is currently very high, your *WeightedTotal* would drop by a few points before the final exam if you skip the remaining HWs; this could easily affect your letter grade for the semester, so keep your HW scores up. If your HW score is currently very low, your *WeightedTotal* would go up by a few points before the final exam if you do really well on the remaining HWs; this could easily affect whether you have to repeat this course.

The following guidelines regarding your standing are very rough.

- If your WT is in the upper 20s, your HW score is likely pretty low and should leave the potential for increasing your WT by at least a couple of points before the final exam. In this case, you can probably pass MAT 127 by heavily concentrating on this course for the remainder of the semester.
- If your WT is in the mid/upper 40s, you can probably manage to pull up to an *A*, but this may require tremendous effort. Unlike the previous case, getting even 80% of the remaining points would not constitute such an effort. However, past history shows that getting over 90% of the remaining point is feasible in your situation with sufficient determination.
- If your WT is somewhere between low 30s and low 40s, first and foremost make sure to pass the course. This should be quite feasible for you, as long as you do not fall behind.

In all cases, mastering the material covered by the second midterm is necessary for achieving the desired objective.

If you want to improve your standing in the class or to prevent it from getting worse, you may need to focus more on it than you have so far, and not just before the exams. Reading the book or the course summaries, attending lectures, or going to MLC or RTC is likely to be pointless unless you try to do lots of exercises **by yourself** and succeed in doing so in most cases. It may also help if you do not treat MAT 127 as some distraction from texting and web-surfing. Fortunately, there is still time left to catch up in this course. It is of course up to you to decide whether this happens.

If you fail MAT 127, you will need to ask for a retake permission from *Academic Advising* to repeat it; there is no guarantee it will be granted. So if you can still pass this course, try to do so the best you can.

Good luck in the rest of the semester!