Instructor: Jonathan Cox
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Office Phone: 342-6909 (Try also 342-1918 for help from the Dean’s office.)
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Web Page: http://www.ulm.edu/~jcox/algebra/

*While these are the official office hours, I am available at other times as well. If you want to meet at a time outside of office hours, the best option is to set up an appointment with me. You can also just drop by any time, but you may want to call first to see if I’m there.


Required Calculator: TI-83 Plus or TI-84 Plus. No calculator capable of symbolic manipulation (e.g. TI-89 or TI-92) will be permitted on tests or quizzes.

Resources
College algebra guidebook: http://www.ulm.edu/~jcox/algebra/guidebook.pdf – This handy and concise guidebook is currently under development by the instructor. Comments and suggestions are welcome.
Daily Schedule. See http://www.ulm.edu/~jcox/algebra/sch.pdf for a tentative daily schedule for this course.

Prerequisites. MATH 093 or an ACT math score of at least 18 or an SAT math score of at least 430.

Catalog Description. Real numbers, functions, inequalities, systems of equations, finance and a review of fundamentals.

Course objectives. The purposes of this course for the student include (1) Improving reasoning, critical thinking, and problem-solving abilities, (2) Obtaining a solid understanding of the fundamental concepts of basic algebra, (3) Developing computational skills in algebra, (4) Sharpening facility to mathematically interpret, model, and solve problems encountered in the student’s major area of study, as well as on the job and in life, (5) Preparing for successful performance in higher level mathematics courses, and (6) Developing or strengthening ability to work with a group in solving problems and completing tasks.
Content and Methodology. The course will cover all of the material in the first three chapters of the text and as much material from Chapters 4 and 5 as time permits. We will spend an average of about two days on each section. The beginning of each class period will be reserved for discussion of the homework and other questions. Up to 1/3 of the period may be used for this purpose. (Students are encouraged to ask questions and make relevant comments anytime during class.) The remaining time will be split between lecture and other activities including group work and board work. In particular, students will work together in groups to solve problems. Working in groups will form an integral part of both learning and grade assessment in this course. After considering student preferences and other factors, by the end of the second week students will be assigned to permanent groups for the duration of the semester. (However, the instructor reserves the right to modify group membership if conditions make it necessary.) Groups will be expected to meet regularly outside of class time and to submit joint work on certain assignments.

Homework. Daily homework will be assigned from each section, but will usually not be collected. At times the instructor will specify a few problems to be handed in either by individuals or by groups. Students are encouraged to present solutions to homework questions on the board for extra credit. Each such presentation successfully completed may net the student up to two points of extra credit. The solution need not be completely correct to receive credit, but evidence of thought and effort put into the problem beforehand is expected.

Groups assignments ranging from worksheets to more extended projects will also be given and collected. The group grade on each such assignment will be assigned to each member of the group, but a student must participate in completing the assignment in order to receive credit! Group members will be accountable to each other to ensure this happens.

Due dates for all assignments will be specified, and no late work will receive full credit, except when required by university regulations on absences. (See the Attendance Policy section below.) I define work to be late if it is handed in after the beginning of the class period following the due date. Late work can still be handed in and graded, but will receive credit for only 50% of the points earned. No late work may be handed in after the last day of class or more than one month after the original due date.

Do the homework! How well you do in the class is directly related to how much homework you do. If you don’t do the homework, you probably won’t pass. It is also to your advantage to ask questions about homework problems that give you difficulty. It may be helpful to read the sections in the textbook as well.

Exams. The purpose of the exams is to determine your level of mastery of the concepts of the course. They will test not only your ability to memorize, but also your ability to think. All work on exams will be individual. There will be four 50-minute in-class exams, essentially one at the end of each chapter covered, and a 110-minute final examination. The final examination will be comprehensive. The tentative dates of the in-class examinations are February 10, March 7, March 30, and April 25. The final examination for this course will be given from 1:00pm to 2:50pm on Thursday, May 11 in the room in which we normally meet.

Normal make-up exams will be given only in serious and unavoidable circumstances (or in other situations sanctioned by the University) and only if your request to make up an exam is approved by the instructor in advance when possible and in any case within 72 hours of the in-class exam. Make-up exams must be taken within three class periods following the day of the exam. If these
conditions are not satisfied, it is understood that the opportunity to make up the examination at that time is voided. In this case, exams may still be made up during the special make-up exam period during finals week. The special make-up exam period is 10:00am–11:50am on Wednesday, May 10. Students wishing to make use of this option must notify the instructor in writing during the last week of classes (May 1–May 5).

**Quizzes.** There will be up to two announced or unannounced quizzes given during class time each week. They will cover assigned homework and the lecture material. Sometimes quizzes will be taken by groups, sometimes by individuals. Successful group work *may* reduce the frequency of quizzes. **QUIZZES MAY NOT BE MADE UP,** except when university regulations dictate otherwise. (See the Attendance Policy section below.) Missed quizzes will result in a grade of zero. In order to compensate for the occasional missed quiz, each student will receive 20 free quiz points. These will be added to the point totals incrementally throughout the semester.

**Grading and Evaluation.** Performance in this course will be evaluated on a percentage system. Each of the 50-minute exams is worth 100 points, the final exam is worth 200 points, and each quiz will fall approximately in the 10 to 20 point range. Group and individual assignments will contribute at least 100 additional points. Extra credit opportunities will be available: See the Homework section above for one example. Depending on the number of quizzes and assignments, I estimate that the final grades will be based on a total of 800-850 points. To obtain your percentage at any time during the course, divide the number of points you have earned by the total number of points available and multiply by 100. Scores will also be available and regularly updated on Blackboard throughout the semester.

Letter grades will be assigned as follows based on a student’s final percentage:

- 90 and above: A
- 80-89: B
- 70-79: C
- 60-69: D
- below 60: F

The instructor reserves the right to lower the grade ranges. The grade ranges will not be raised.

**Attendance Policy.** We will follow the attendance policy of the University. (See pp. 44-45 of the 2005–6 ULM catalog.) Attendance is not a direct factor in the grades. However, you probably won’t be able to pass the course if you do not attend regularly. Learning algebra is a cumulative experience. If you miss class even once, you may have difficulty catching up. In addition, you must be present to contribute to your group, and you are also expected to attend meetings with your group outside of class. An attendance sheet will be passed around each time the class meets. **It is your responsibility to sign this sheet** each period in order for your attendance to be official. If you must be absent, please notify the instructor ahead of time.

The university policy defines excused absences. In a nutshell, you have a university excuse if you are participating in an official university function, hospitalized, at a doctor’s appointment, or attending the funeral of a close relative. In these cases alone, missed work can be made up with full credit possible. The appropriate documentation must be provided to the instructor within three days of returning to classes.

For this course, the University considers seven unexcused absences to be *excessive.* If a student accumulates excessive absences, the instructor may choose to recommend to the dean that the student lose the right to continue in the course while receiving a grade of “F.”
Special Accommodations. “Any student with a physical disability or learning disability who needs accommodations should inform the instructor at the beginning of the course. Students with special needs are encouraged to contact the Counseling Center at 342-5220.” (p. 52, ULM Catalog 2005–2006).

Withdrawal Policy. The drop policy for this course will be that of the University. (See pp. 46-47 of the 2005–6 ULM Catalog.) IT IS YOUR RESPONSIBILITY TO KNOW AND COMPLY WITH ALL DEADLINES. The last day to drop this course or resign from the university with an automatic grade of “W” is Wednesday, March 29.

Academic Dishonesty/Misconduct. The University has explicit rules governing academic dishonesty and academic misconduct. The policies are detailed in the ULM Catalog under the “Academic Cheating and Plagiarism” section pp. 63–65). The university policies will be followed in this class. The minimum penalty for an act of academic dishonesty will be the assignment of a grade of zero on the examination, quiz, or homework assignment.

In addition to the individual penalties, if I even suspect anyone of cheating, there will be consequences for the entire class. Consequences may include, but are not limited to, (1) Harder and more frequent quizzes, (2) Harder and longer examinations, and (3) Loss of extra credit opportunities. Do not inflict these things on your classmates. Do not cheat.

A substantial share of the work in this course will be done in groups, and I encourage you to work together, within or outside of your assigned group, on homework and in learning the material. However, in order to be successful in learning the material and preparing for the examinations, I strongly recommend that you try to work out the homework problems yourself as much as possible before discussing them with anyone else.

Any changes to this syllabus will be communicated in class by the instructor.